



PRESIDENTIAL CONSULTANTS

# What Does It Mean To Be Trauma-Informed

## Course Guidebook

**Presidential Consultants, Inc.**

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# Course Objectives

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- ✓ Establishing school-wide understanding of trauma and its impacts.
- ✓ Creating a school-wide culture that welcomes and supports all students.
- ✓ Providing skills to the school community that encourages self-regulation for trauma-exposed youth while providing social, emotional and practical support.

## Definitions

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- **Trauma** – The word “trauma” comes from the Greek word for “wound”. It has evolved over the years to encompass both physical and emotional wounds.
- **Secondary Trauma** – Secondary Trauma is the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the first-hand trauma experiences of another.

# Resources

## "WHAT DO I DO?"

### TRAUMA-INFORMED SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

01

#### Create safety

If the child is overwhelmed, perhaps guide them to a quiet corner or allow them to decompress by visiting the restroom. If you are in a classroom, maybe you have a peace corner that you've outfitted with blankets or a screen so that it feels like a safe place.

02

#### Regulate the nervous system

Stress brings a predictable pattern of physiological responses and anyone who has suffered toxic stress or trauma is going to be quickly stressed into hyperarousal (explosive, jittery, irritable) or hypoarousal (depressed, withdrawn, zombie-like) and the child has to find what works for them.

03

#### Build a connected relationship

This is the number one way to regulate the nervous system. When we are around people we care about, our bodies produce oxytocin, which is the hormone responsible for calming our nervous system after stress. If we stay connected, then eventually the calm discussion of each person's feelings and needs can take place.

04

#### Support development of coherent narrative

Creating predictability through structure, routines and the presence of reliable adults helps reduce the chaos a child may feel and allows them to start creating the kind of logical sequential connections that are also the fundamental requirement of many types of learning.

05

#### Practice 'power-with' strategies

When someone is wielding power over you with no regard to your thoughts or feelings, the toxic shame of the original trauma may come flooding back. If we model a 'power-with' relationship with children it's our best chance of creating adults who will treat others with dignity and respect.

06

#### Build social emotional and resiliency skills

Trauma robs us of time spent developing social and emotional skills. The brain is too occupied with survival to devote much of its energy to learning how to build relationships and it's a good chance we didn't see those skills modeled for us.

07

#### Foster post-traumatic growth

There are qualities and skills that allow people to overcome the most devastating trauma and find new purpose and meaning in their lives. Problem-solving, planning, self-control and seeking support are all known to lead to post-traumatic growth and are skills we can foster in children.

# Questions to Consider

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- In your role, how can you make students feel safe?

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- What specifically can I do to have more effective inter-personal relationship with the students I serve?

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- In the past 30 days, have I contributed to a positive school environment? If so, then in what ways?

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- What should I look for to know if a child is trauma exposed?

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# Post Work/Action Plan

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- Write specific scenarios where you could use the ideas discussed today.

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- Write your plan to;

- Help other staff, volunteers & caregivers understand trauma & the impact on the learning process.

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- Help create a positive school climate where every student feels physically & emotionally safe.

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- Use Psychological First Aid to support students & fellow staff.

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- Create a “Bully-Free Zone” in all classrooms & facilities.

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- Create healthy habits that promote the 8 dimensions of wellness.

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- Use the signs & symptoms of trauma to support your students.

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- Include Knowledge about trauma in all aspects of schooling.

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