



TIPS FOR CREATING TRAUMA SENSITIVE SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS

- **UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA:** Make sure you and other staff members are educated on the impact that trauma has on the brain, body, and behavior.
- **ROUTINE:** Create consistent routines and let students know ahead of time when something out of the ordinary is going to occur.
- **CHECK-INS and COMMUNITY:** Daily morning group check-ins before academic learning starts, regular community conversations for celebration, mourning, and discussion of important issues. Regular individual check-ins with students where you can ask how they are doing and what they might need to be their best self.
- **POSITIVE DISCIPLINE:** Use restorative justice, peer mediation, and conflict resolution to build community and to address challenging behaviors.
- **CONNECTION TO BODY AND CREATIVITY:** Offer plenty of movement breaks in the classroom. Offer mindfulness, art, dance, yoga, and other movement programs.
- **MODELING:** Model empathy, practice compassion and forgiveness.
- **RELATIONSHIPS:** Build genuine relationships with your students and with your fellow staff members.
- **BIAS AND OPPRESSION:** Be aware of your own bias based on gender, race, culture, and ethnicity, and so on. Strive to understand the experiences and backgrounds of all your students. Look at your school's data to ensure that students of color and students with different abilities are not receiving harsher discipline than other students.
- **CURRICULUM:** Teach culturally relevant material, allow students to see themselves in what they are learning, allow them to learn the truth about our history.
- **BE AN ALLY:** Speak up when you witness microaggressions, bias, racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination and make sure students know they can come to you if they experience discrimination.
- **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING:** Name feelings and behavior when you see them. Teach social emotional skills.
- **REGULATE YOURSELF:** Center/ground yourself regularly and regulate your own reactions to challenging behavior.
- **SELF and COMMUNITY CARE:** Seek out support when you feel overwhelmed. Offer support to colleagues.
- **EMPOWERMENT:** Provide opportunities for social justice and civic engagement.
- **REFER OUT:** Make referrals to counseling or therapy as necessary.
- **CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT:** Provide support for families and provide a variety of meaningful ways for all caregivers to engage with their children's experience at school. Remember that not all parents are as available as others but keeping the lines of communication open are important. When you must call a caregiver about challenging behavior, start with something positive about the student.
- **MENTORING:** Offer mentoring programs (adult to student or peer to peer).