

FACULTY RESOURCE FOR RESPONDING TO TRAUMATIC EVENTS

IMPORTANCE OF FACULTY RESPONSE

1

Research indicates that students appreciate faculty response to incidents, rather than ignoring them (Huston & DiPietro 2007). Faculty are not counselors and are *not* expected to take on this role, but there are many ways to respond that can make students feel supported.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

2

The foundation for effective trauma-informed classroom practice is the educator's grasp of how trauma impacts students...A trauma-informed educator never forgets that students bring their entire lives into the classroom every day, and that on some days, students will be actively responding to trauma (Perkins & Graham-Bermann, 2012).

FACULTY WELL-BEING

3

It is also important for faculty to also consider their own well-being in responding to traumatic events. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about strategies for addressing secondary traumatic stress, compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

IUP SUPPORT

Care Team

The IUP CARE Team exists to assist students who may be struggling and/or exhibiting behaviors which are unexpected. Submit a CARE report on the IUP website and the team will reach out to the student to provide additional support.

INCIDENT OF CONCERN

To report racist or hate-based incidents, students, faculty, and staff can report through the Incident of Concern form found at the bottom of every IUP web page or by contacting the
OFFICE OF SOCIAL EQUITY
SOCIAL-EQUITY@IUP.EDU; 724-357-3402

STRATEGIES FOR TALKING WITH STUDENTS

From [Trauma-Informed Practices for Postsecondary Education](#):

Check in with students. Identify learning as the primary goal—and students’ emotional safety as a necessary condition for it. Educators should never underestimate the impact of sincerely asking a student, “What’s going on?” This simple question can open up a dialogue and provide information educators need to better understand and meet students’ needs. Along those lines, asking this question lets students know their teachers and the community care about them.

You may decide to take any number of approaches when talking with students after a traumatic event. Here are a few examples:

From [Responding to Racist Incidents](#):

- **Sending an email** to students to acknowledge what happened and how it might be influencing students’ learning
- Setting aside a **few minutes at the beginning** of class to express your care, concern, and commitment
- Providing students time to **privately reflect** on their own experience and the action they can take
- **Facilitating a conversation** with all your students about their reflections
- Explicitly **inviting students to office hours** if they’d like to discuss the event or talk with you about how it might be impacting their learning
- **Applying course content** to the event in order to better understand and respond to it
- **Sharing resources** available on campus to support students

To prepare for a classroom discussion, consider the following:

From [Guidelines for Discussing Incidents of Hate, Bias, and Discrimination](#):

- Plan the discussion
- Identify a clear purpose
- Establish ground rules or guidelines
- Provide a common basis for understanding
- Create a framework for discussion
- Be an active facilitator

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [IUP DEI Syllabus Language](#)
- [IUP Sparks Vol. 2 Issue 3](#)
- [“What to do before, during, and after difficult dialogues about diversity” \(Noah & Souza, 2018\)](#)
- [Teaching After an Election, Boston College \(2021\)](#)
- [Hofman, “Creating a Safe Space in Your Class During a Crisis” \(2020\)](#)
- [Improving Learning and Mental Health in the College Classroom \(2023\)](#)
- [University of Oregon, “Teaching in Turbulent Times Toolkit”](#)
- [Journal of Applied Instructional Design-Trauma Informed ID \(2/2023\)](#)
- [The How and Why of Trauma-Informed Teaching](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Pedagogies: A Guide for Responding to Crisis and Inequality in Higher Education](#)
- [Trauma Informed Teaching Toolkit](#)
- [Trauma Impacts Adult Learners: Here’s](#)