

Video and Discussion Guide

Good Intentions Are Not Enough:

Flawed Responses and Best Practices in Responding to Student Trauma

[Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyueEUA_rbl]

Intended Audience

Faculty, student affairs staff, counseling and wellness services staff, student advisors, academic and athletic coaches, administrators, and policy makers.

Unit leaders can invite interdisciplinary and cross-divisional groups to view the video asynchronously, then gather for synchronous dialogue and action planning (at a staff meeting, for instance). Consider the voices, perspectives, and experiences that are historically undervalued on your campus and identify specific ways to elevate them in the discussion space.

Video Topics and Themes

Definition(s) and effects of trauma, student support, official and unofficial campus first responders, faculty/staff training, mandatory reporting, various roles and responsibilities in responding to student trauma, flawed responses, intent versus impact, trust, boundaries, culturally sustaining pedagogy, reactive versus proactive approaches, and healing.

Statement of Intention

This video and discussion guide are intended to prompt reflection, help campus personnel ask critical questions about policies, practices, systems, and start identifying tangible action steps around the question of “where do we go from here?”

The outlined questions are not meant as rhetorical or theoretical. Audiences are encouraged to engage in dialogue with these questions and to identify clear responses with actionable objectives (i.e., specific changes to services, policies, and practices).

Connection to Statutory Requirements for Institutions

This video and discussion guide reaffirm the critical importance of the definitions, objectives, and statutory requirements of postsecondary institutions in relation to sexual harassment and violence, as outlined in [Minnesota Statute 135A.15](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/135A.15) (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/135A.15>).

Engagement with these resources or adoption of the speakers' highlighted best practices, on their own, do not fully satisfy campuses' statutory requirements; these resources are intended for use as one (of many) interconnected campus efforts to uphold survivors' rights and provide comprehensive campus training around sexual violence prevention and response. For additional questions on this matter, please contact svpr.ohe@state.mn.us or 651-259-3921.

Discussion Questions

The speakers provide an expansive definition of trauma, including historical, generational, complex, and acute forms of trauma (11:06). They also identify bodily, emotional, and cognitive signs of trauma response in students (20:21).

- What signs or symptoms of trauma are you seeing in students?
- How does your campus define and discuss trauma in students' lives? Does this definition vary across different areas of campus?

In various education contexts, we sometimes witness changes in students' engagement with academics and co-curricular activities. In the video, the speakers suggest that these changes might be attributed to students' navigation of various types of trauma (20:21). Additionally, the speakers discuss the influence of social identities (e.g., race, gender identity, etc.) on students' experiences of trauma and our own interpretation of students' experiences (24:27).

- What meaning have you previously made of students' behavior/engagement that may be related to trauma? How have your assumptions and biases influenced this meaning making?
- How have your own social identities and positionality shaped the way you have responded to student trauma?

The speakers call attention to the shame, fear, need for control, uncertainty, and expectation to have the "right answers" that may arise when responding to student trauma (42:49), as well as the institutional barriers we may feel inhibit our ability to respond to student trauma.

- Identify and discuss examples of your own experiences of responding to student trauma. How have you navigated some of the challenging emotions named in this video?
- Identify and discuss examples of your own flawed responses to student trauma. What instincts led to your flawed response(s)?
- What barriers exist for you related to incorporating trauma-informed principles into your work with students? What might your work with students look like without these barriers?

Faculty and staff may also be navigating their own past or current experiences of trauma.

- What supports need to be in place in order for faculty and staff to be able to respond to student trauma effectively and equitably, while also protecting their own boundaries and healing?

The speakers acknowledge the agency that all educators have in cultivating campus cultures that foster student trust and in which students can expect that their lived experiences will be honored, believed, and responded to with trauma-informed principles.

- What does this cultivation of trust among students look like?
- What proactive trauma-informed practices could you incorporate in the specific contexts in which you work with students?
- What action steps will you and your department/division/unit take to incorporate trauma-informed principles into policies, procedures, and practices in your work with students?

Key Topic Timestamps for the Video

Timestamp	Key Topic
11:06	Second Result
20:21	Effects of trauma and signs of trauma response
24:27	Trust, masking, and the nuances of complex, historical, and generational trauma
29:30	Culturally-sustaining pedagogy and cultural humility (returns around 1:29:45)
40:48	Re-centering focus on impact versus intent
42:49	Feelings of shame, fear, uncertainty, and vulnerability as responders
46:20	Types and examples of flawed responses

Timestamp	Key Topics within Types and Examples of Flawed Responses
46:20	Interrogating trauma

Timestamp	Key Topics within Types and Examples of Flawed Responses
51:26	Minimizing or comparing trauma
51:55	Fear of discomfort
55:18	Assuming monolithic experiences of trauma
58:07	Remaining silent
1:02:14	Gatekeeping validation and resources

Timestamp	Key Topic
1:04:40	Important considerations in approaching trauma response
1:07:49	Student trust and shared responsibilities for responding to student trauma
1:13:30	Tools and strategies for use in practice
1:18:38	Balancing empathy and validation with mandatory reporting requirements
1:24:49	What this work looks like for faculty
1:32:22	Recommendations specifically for faculty
1:33:52	The power of allowing testimony and bearing witness

Resources Referenced in the Video

Hammond, Z. L. (2014). Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students (<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/23468051-culturally-responsive-teaching-and-the-brain>). Corwin.

Love, B. L. (2019). We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom (<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/40642377>). Beacon Press.

Okun, T., & Jones, K. (2000). Dismantling racism: A workbook for social change groups, Durham, NC: Change Work. Retrieved from

https://meetings.portseattle.org/portmeetings/attachments/2022/2022_10_25_RM_11a_Attachment_02-Duwamish-Valley-Equity-Program.pdf

Shalka, T. R. (2019). "Saplings in the hurricane: A grounded theory of college trauma and identity development." (<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/712614>) The Review of Higher Education 42(2), 739-764.

Shalka, T. R. (2022). "Re-envisioning student development theory through a trauma lens." (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ss.20417>) New Directions for Student Services (177), 81-93.

Shalka, T. R. (2023). Cultivating Trauma-informed Practice in Student Affairs. (<https://www.routledge.com/Cultivating-Trauma-Informed-Practice-in-Student-Affairs/Shalka/p/book/9781642674613>) Taylor & Francis.