

Trauma-Sensitive Approaches to Supporting Student Success

WHAT IS TRAUMA?



“Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”

-Patricia Jennings, *The Trauma-Sensitive Classroom*

WHAT DOES TRAUMA-SENSITIVE MEAN?



“Trauma-sensitive is the term more typically used to refer to educational practices and approaches that are intended to cultivate a safe learning environment and mitigate the impact of trauma symptoms on student learning.”

-Patricia Jennings, *The Trauma-Sensitive Classroom*

HOW DO STUDENTS REACT TO TRAUMA?



- Hyperarousal
- Hypervigilance
- Dissociation
- Anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances
- Substance use or abuse
- Feeling a sense of helplessness
- Feeling the need to be in control

WHAT CAN FACULTY AND STAFF DO?



- Embrace flexibility for yourself and your students
- Practice empathy by showing students you understand their experiences and can relate to them
- Communicate regularly so that students can predict what will come next and prepare for it
- Connect students to relevant resources