

Designing a Trauma-Informed First Day

Student Impact

**Executive
Function**

(learning brain)

VS.

**Stress and
Trauma**

(survival brain)

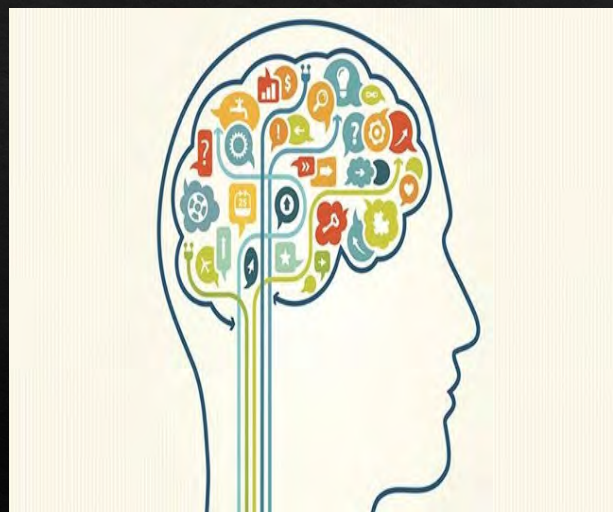


Image from: <https://steemit.com/science>

Why focus on the first day?

- ◆ The first day sets the tone for the rest of the quarter. It is an opportunity to put students at ease, clarify expectations, and build community.
- ◆ The first day is a transition for most students back to campus which can be disorienting.
- ◆ Helping students make a plan for success from day one grows their confidence and persistence.



Goals of Trauma-Informed Teaching

Work to create opportunities to empower a person and rebuild control since the circumstances of traumatic events commonly include helplessness, loss, pain, abuse of power, or betrayal.

- Safety
- Trust and Clarity
- Choice and Control
- Compassion and Support
- Collaboration
- Strength-Based
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Empowerment

Creating a Trauma-Informed First Day

- ◆ Communicate before the first class meeting. Welcome students, introduce yourself, share the syllabus and the plan for the first day.
- ◆ Be clear with expectations, purpose of assignments, directions, etc – in writing and announcements
- ◆ Offer compassion and support – acknowledge difficulties, give encouragement, detail opportunities for help

Creating a Trauma-Informed First Day

- ◆ Create community – make time for introductions in small groups or online. Design a low-stakes activity or discussion.
- ◆ Focus on strengths over deficits – share what success looks like, detail how students can be successful, have students reflect on personal strengths
- ◆ Normalize asking questions – pause for questions or solicit questions online, explain office hours

We feel before we think

Thank you!

I'm happy to take questions