

The Four C's

A Practical Approach to Trauma-Informed Classrooms



Strategies that support students who have experienced trauma should be rooted in creating safe and supportive environments. The Four C's is a simple and impactful roadmap for promoting a sense of belonging and connection for all students.

Use the RISE UP 4 C's along with tools from Healthier Generation to cultivate a compassionate, trauma-informed classroom. These resources will also help you further your trauma-informed mindset, shifting from asking "What is wrong with this person?" to "What has happened to this person?"

A trauma occurs when a circumstance harms or threatens an individual, and that event leads to short or long-term adverse health impacts because of the experience*.

Not everyone who experiences a traumatic event will have a difficult experience with it or have long-lasting effects. Even so, a trauma-informed approach creates healthier school experiences for everyone.



CURIOSITY



Ask questions and wonder what might be going on under the surface.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCE:

The [Sensory Profile Worksheet](#) aids in understanding your students' unique orientation to your classroom environment, while the [Responding to Students in the Learning Environment Using a Trauma-Informed Approach](#) tool helps you stay curious during stressful interactions without diagnosing students.

CONNECTION



Show empathy and extend support.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCE:

When we slow down and focus on regulating ourselves first, students are able to follow our lead. Keep the [Pause to Reframe](#) printable on hand to shift your perspective and make it easier to calm your body language and tone of voice, maintaining connection during a stressful situation.

CHOICES



Give students voice and choice and honor their perspective.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCE:

It can be especially easy to jump to directives when dealing with challenging behavior. Use the [Guide to Supportive Discipline Conversations](#) to engage students in choosing solutions to problems they've been a part of. This approach to discipline turns challenges into learning opportunities and grants agency to the students who likely need it the most.

CONSISTENCY



Create consistency by using common language and routines across the school environment.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCE:

Choose 1 or 2 practices from the [Strategies to Promote Student Motivation](#) resource with the adults in your teaching team to implement daily or weekly. The more students know what to expect from you in the learning environment, the safer it feels to take risks and engage in deep learning.

*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (n.d.). Trauma and violence. <https://www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence>