

Welcome to Webinar

Nancy Poole:

Welcome. This is Nancy Poole here from the Justice Institute of BC, and my co-presenters today with me are Lenora Marcellus from the University of Victoria and Betty Poag from Camosun.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Nancy Poole:

Next. Yeah, so we acknowledge and honor the territory and the lands on which we're gathered. And all of us are in Victoria, which is the traditional territory of the Lekwungen people, of the Songhees and Esquimalt nations, and the Saanich. And if you want to, you could type in the various locations that you're coming from in the chat.

Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) Review

Nancy Poole:

Next. So this is Nancy, and I'm going to start off with some background or review on trauma informed approaches and about trauma itself, as there are a lot of misconceptions out there. And just this is the only slide I'm going to actually want you to read through, which is really thinking about how trauma informed approaches are relational ones and really take into account how common trauma is and how enduring the effects can be if we're not using our trauma informed approaches.

Nancy Poole:

But most importantly, trauma informed practice is not a counseling technique, instead it's a paradigm for us as we're structuring our learning environments and thinking about culture change within our institutions. And it's not about getting students to disclose trauma, but at quite differently is really about us fostering resilience and noticing how people are coping and doing well. And it's really based on some principles that we're going to go into in depth as we move along.

Nancy Poole:

Next. So trauma informed approaches have really been found helpful by many different fields. And here's three examples I've been involved with. With the substance use field, with MCFD, and with the Justice Institute and the whole justice and public safety fields. And then the two on the far right, are from the education, not examples from areas of education, that we're going to talk about as we go along.

Being Informed about Trauma

Nancy Poole:

Next. So we're going to talk now just about being informed about trauma and about resilience.

TIP Connects Up Knowledge from Different Fields

Nancy Poole:

Next. So trauma informed approaches connect up knowledge from really different fields. And that's why I think it's so relevant in an enduring way across so many locations. So built on decades of work, about violence against women, the wisdom of indigenous scholars and community-based knowledge keepers, research from public health and really an understanding of neurobiology.

Defining Trauma

Nancy Poole:

Next. So what do we mean by trauma? And I think it's important to recognize that it's a response to experiences that are overwhelming and that really disrupt our understanding of the world as safe or as predictable, and also disrupts our cognitive and emotional regulation. And which is really important for you to be thinking about as educators. So important to think about it, not as an event, but really as a response to events that we can notice as we're teaching.

Why do we need to understand trauma?

Nancy Poole:

Next. So it's really critical, I think, that educators have knowledge of the effects of trauma and how people are coping and managing. So really so that we can honor what's happening for people, that we're not retraumatizing, that we're noticing how people are coping in their strength and resilience. And really thinking about how we can foster them building positive skills for coping or healing.

Nancy Poole:

So we're not doing counseling or mental health work here, we're really thinking about skill building and teaching and social justice as that document from SAMHSA says.

Types of Trauma

Nancy Poole:

Next. So lots of different types of trauma. And I think that we can really see that the students that we're teaching at this point in time, in the COVID crisis, may be coming with other experiences from the past of these various other forms of trauma.

Group and Historical Trauma

Nancy Poole:

Next. And most especially, I think it's really important for us to recognize how important it is in all the work we do, that we include how colonization has worked cumulatively to create complex trauma.

We Can Make a Difference

Nancy Poole:

Next. So the good news is I think there's that we can make a difference. And so often when we're thinking about trauma informed, we're thinking about, oh, everybody is going down the burnt orange side there of having a traumatic exposure to a traumatic event. And then having effects that do not resolve quickly.

Nancy Poole:

However, I think if we really think through our work as educators, we can help people go down the green path there of really learning to stabilize and self-regulate, and be healthy in the long run. So it's not an inevitable journey towards serious health effects if we do our work well.

Responses to Trauma

Nancy Poole:

Next. And you know, many, many responses to trauma in all these areas, bio, psycho, social, spiritual. And I just wanted to point out two of them here, the second point under biological, that there are in the moment trauma responses that you may see that are triggered in the educational setting that might look like people clenching their fists or having shallow breathing or feeling numb or agitated or whatever. So that's one thing we really have to be ready to notice, and I'm going to talk more about that in a minute.

Nancy Poole:

But secondly, under the social responses, those are the ones I think you'll most notice. This difficulty in the navigating relationships, et cetera.

Immediate Effects of Feeling Threatened or Overwhelmed

Nancy Poole:

Next slide. And so, in that immediate one, those in the moment responses, I just wanted to remind us all that people can't... it is an autonomic system response and that people can't benefit from learning until they feel safe again and they've been able to self-regulate.

Nancy Poole:

So I'm going to turn it over to Lenora now to be a little bit more specific about what trauma may look like in your students.

Trauma in Post-Secondary Learners

Lenora Marcellus:

Nice, Nancy. Thank you, Nancy. Hi everyone. I think I'll share a little bit about my background so you know where I'm coming from when it's related to learning about trauma. My background is nursing and I worked for many years in Island Health, working primarily with perinatal population. That's where I first

came across Nancy and Betty working together to support women who have substance use challenges, mental health challenges, and experiencing violence and trauma. So that was the big, big learning curve for me.

Lenora Marcellus:

I also I'm quite interested in early childhood development and so really starting to dive into the literature on neurobiology and the impact of stress and trauma on younger children. And of course, now I'm in an educator role and I am a professor in the School of Nursing at the University of Victoria. And in my role as associate director of the undergraduate program, I work with multiple college partners. I chair our progression committee, which is where student challenges or issues may come. And I'm often meeting with faculty and students to kind of do some problem-solving about supporting students to be successful and move forward in their program. So it's really interesting to take the trauma literature and apply it then to the post-secondary environment.

Lenora Marcellus:

What's interesting right now, of course, we started to plan this talk focused on the impact of COVID-19 on our students, but I just want to acknowledge that the last few weeks too, our students may also be involved in or reading about or hearing about or doing some self-assessment and learning about the anti-racist activities and activism that's happening globally. So there's so many layers for our students right now. And I also want to add that already in post-secondary institutions, a lot of work being done across Canada to recognize that mental health is a substantial challenge for our students. And many institutions have developed specific mental health strategies, have been developing additional resources and supports for students and faculty to support students.

Lenora Marcellus:

And then layered on top is moving to an online environment. So as we move ahead and talk about trauma and recognizing what we might see, how does that translate then to working with students in a virtual context as well?

Lenora Marcellus:

So this is taken from a resource that I'll put a slide up towards it at the end. I did a scour of resources related to trauma informed practice or trauma informed pedagogies specific to COVID and also to [inaudible 00:10:11] secondary. We all decided we didn't find as much as we thought we might find. So it's an interesting area to focus on. I would also invite anyone online, I see a wide range of participants, feel free to chat in if you have any resources that you think might be of interest to this group today.

Lenora Marcellus:

So this resource, and I'm also going to chat in a link right now because I just found this today and we were saying how timely this is, and this is from Cathy Davidson, who's the author of this, so timely right now, the author of this toolkit. And Cathy has just said that trauma informed practice and pedagogy is not an add-on, it's the most single most essential requirement to build into all of our elements related to teaching and supporting our students.

Lenora Marcellus:

So we can think about designing a syllabus, entering a classroom, creating a virtual safe space to learn, developing assignments, all those type of things, and just infusing the principles that you're going to hear into that work. So, here's some of the symptoms, not symptoms, that's probably the wrong word here, some of the signals you might see in your students.

Lenora Marcellus:

And I'd also like to point out that these can be related to many other things as well. And Nancy's also said we don't have to be experts in trauma counseling, but it's imagining that our students in some way, shape and form are experiencing some stressors and this is how it might manifest in the classroom.

Lenora Marcellus:

As far as difficulty focusing, attending, and retaining and recalling, a tendency possibly to miss a lot of classes. And so, the challenge to us here moving into an online environment will be how do we create that opportunity for engagement? And keeping an eye on students being able to engage and participate and being with the materials that we're teaching. Challenges with emotional regulation. Fear of taking risks. Anxiety about deadlines, exams, group work, or public speaking. Again, public speaking is going to happen in a whole new environment and context with different platforms and software. So we're laying a lot on here for ourselves and our students. Anger, helplessness, or dissociation with stress and anxiety. Withdrawal and isolation. Again, thinking about a COVID environment where some of our students may be living alone and be feeling isolated already from that experience. And involvement in unhealthy relationships.

Lenora Marcellus:

So I don't know if these, feel free to chat of course as we progress through our time together, but these are some signs that you might see in your students. And we'd just like you to think that that might be trauma.

COVID-19's Effects on College Students Survey

Lenora Marcellus:

Next slide. This on the left is a survey that has been done, as you can see there, very recently in April of several thousand college students. And you can see that the majority are identifying that COVID-19, the context of this pandemic, has had a lot of impacts on their mental health in particular related to stress and anxiety and disappointment or sadness. And so, loneliness and isolation.

Lenora Marcellus:

So if we can think about our students entering teaching right now, or coming to join us in the fall about this being some underlying experiences for them. And Naomi has chatted in that Gabor Maté has some great information in trauma, and certainly he has some excellent material to review. Thanks for chatting that in.

Lenora Marcellus:

On the right, is an excellent infographic. I've already shared this with the faculty that I work with, looking at how our post-secondary students in Canada impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. And this is based

on a statscan survey. And I think probably a great principle for us moving ahead is to think about the context of our student lives. And I know in our nursing program, and Betty will speak a little bit to this because we're nurses, often we're already kind of framing working with students in this way from a social justice perspective, from a social determinants of health perspective.

Lenora Marcellus:

And when you look at the... many of the issues are related to financial instability. That's really something that impacts students. This summer as we... Our nursing students are actually in practice as we speak. And so, you can imagine the planning that went into having students enter into healthcare environments during COVID. So we had a lot of anxiety that was expressed and stress expressed by our students, but our leading comment was really a lot of concern about the fact that they were losing their employment for the summer and their finances were going to be impacted. So this is quite a nice infographic. I encourage you to have a peek and see if it's relevant for sharing with your students or your co-workers.

Reflection Piece One

Lenora Marcellus:

Next slide. So just to pause for a minute and think about what Nancy shared and what I shared so far related to applying the trauma perspective to what's happening right now related to COVID. Is this view of trauma and trauma informed practice or pedagogy aligned with your previous understanding? And has anything new emerged from you?

Lenora Marcellus:

And I noticed in the chat too that a number of people are signing in working with women's health programs, so you've probably already got a strong understanding of trauma. Thank you, Paula, for chatting that in. And so, has anything new emerged?

Lenora Marcellus:

And really I think what's exciting right now is to think about taking what we know about trauma and really thinking it through from a system's perspective in our post-secondary institutions and having it inform our practices from the ground up.

Lenora Marcellus:

One thing we've worked on as our college partnership, I'm not sure if anyone's on live from our college partnership, is we developed a student persistence plan. And rather than looking at attrition, we're really trying to flip it to what supports students to be persistent and resilient in their programs and how can we support them in that effort as well.

Lenora Marcellus:

And thanks. A chat in from Jacob. Great to have some students participating. Yes, about risk averse. Thank you. And feel free to chat in a little bit more about that or respond to that everyone from how students would be risk averse. And we'll talk a little bit later about strategies and how there may be some possibilities to kind of co-design some of the evaluation approaches we're using with students that can be done in a different way.

Working from Principles

Lenora Marcellus:

Next slide. So Betty and I are going to introduce you to four principles that help us apply these trauma informed approaches. And what we're going to do is introduce the principles to you, and then Betty and I will go along and walk through each of the principles. And there'll be an opportunity, we'll put up a whiteboard and we'll get instructions on how to do that, where everyone can kind of co-create some strategies to address these principles. And Nancy feel free to chime in along the way too.

Lenora Marcellus:

So I'm going to turn it over to Betty to walk us through these principles.

Original Principle: Awareness

Betty Poag:

Okay. Thanks. Thanks, Lenora. So the principles, there's four principles that you can see on the screen. And it begins with awareness and some of the things that we can do in our classrooms, whether they're virtual or whether they are face-to-face, to bring an awareness of what we might be seeing and developing kind of another story for ourselves about how we assess or evaluate what we see in the students in the classroom.

4 Principles

Betty Poag:

As Nancy and Lenora have said, we don't need to be experts on trauma, but we do want to sort of have an understanding of what we might see in the classroom in terms of what's going on with students also in our colleagues, as colleagues are switching and learning to teach online. So there's a kind of a parallel track right now in post-secondary, where folks that have never taught online are learning to do that as well as developing content and curriculum differently.

Betty Poag:

So being aware of what is the prevalence of trauma, being aware of what we might see in the classroom in terms of our student's behaviors and responses and looking at it from a new set of eyes or a new set of lenses. Really important to create a sense of safety and trust in the classroom. That becomes sometimes a little more challenging in the online format, so we'll talk a little bit about that.

Betty Poag:

As Lenora alluded to, offering a sense of choice and control and collaboration in the work throughout the term and finding ways to do that. And then of course, helping students to develop skills around managing some of the feelings that they're having in their sense of maybe overwhelm and anxiety. So again, we don't need to be counselors and we're not asking for a lot of time in meetings, but there are some very simple, easy things that we can do and having some knowledge around that. So we'll explore each of those things.

Principle: Awareness

Betty Poag:

Next slide. So one of the things we're going to invite is for you to be thinking about what you believe some answers to these questions would indicate an awareness for you. What would you see and what are some of the things that you might do when you're working with students in the classroom, again, virtual or face-to-face, being aware of what are we doing, what might we be doing to demonstrate an awareness of trauma and coping in our own work.

Betty Poag:

So for me that looks like understanding what are some of the symptoms. So if I see someone who seems very aggressive, not happy with their marks, constantly challenging, that's an opportunity for me to sit down and have a conversation and maybe explore what's going on. And often, it's just feeling overwhelmed and needing an A in order to continue. Those are some of the effects as some of those.

Nancy Poole:

Yeah. And you know Betty, I think really the awareness principle of the four principles is really all about the educator. It's really about us doing this background work on the effects of trauma and the implications for learning and what resilience looks like more than it is about the other three are more about what we do with students, this one is really about how we get ready in ourselves. Yeah.

Betty Poag:

Yeah. Yeah. So be, looking at what are some of the things that can cause trauma with students in the classroom and what do I need to know and understand about trauma and its expression in my classroom? So I think that...

Whiteboard Exercise One: Bringing Awareness

Nancy Poole:

So let's move to the next slide and let people write in some of the ways in which they're bringing in awareness.

Duane Seibel:

In order to put anything into this whiteboard at the bottom of this screen, you can go into view options and select annotate, and that'll allow you to write, draw, and so on, in that box.

Betty Poag:

And while people are figuring out how to write in anything that they're already doing about bringing in awareness, I don't know, Lenora, if you want to add in some of the things you're already doing?

Lenora Marcellus:

Sure. And Betty, this is where... So just so you know, Betty and Nancy and I do a lot of work together and we're used to barging in on each other. So you'll hear us just all pouncing in to kind of co-offer some thoughts while you're typing things in.

Lenora Marcellus:

Certainly, I know in my role as in a kind of an administrative leadership role, I'm working more and more closely with our student supports and our student advisors and really becoming aware of the resources that we have on campus and how we create the connections for students to those and being very, very particular about how some of the things we do can impact students. I'm going to go kind of to more of an extreme example, but it gives you an idea of how we're walking through things.

Lenora Marcellus:

So if we have a student who is going to fail a course or is going to be asked to leave the program, those are more significant outcomes, but we're actually thinking through from a student-centered approach and how is this going to feel for them and how can we do this in a supportive and trauma informed way? Who's there to support them? What time of day or what day of the week are we doing this? What kind of supports are already set up? And so, our student advisor may be actually walking with a student to a service on campus.

Lenora Marcellus:

Of course, now we got to figure out how to do that in a virtual way, but I'm sure we will be able to figure out how to do that in a virtual way. So for faculty, some it's a lot to know, but the most important thing is to know who knows. And so, finding out who's the person who really knows the resources on your campus and being able to, to be able to activate those in a quick way, really thinking from that student perspective.

Lenora Marcellus:

So I'm going to see if Nancy and Betty want to add something and then we're going to focus on what you have on the screen there.

Betty Poag:

Yeah. One of the things for me, my background has been in, I'm a nurse, is also perinatal. I've worked internationally and I've also done a lot of work in violence against women. And then most recently in public health, so before I started teaching. And one of the things that I have learned is that it's not enough to know what programs or services are available, I make it part of my practice to find out what does it take to access and connect to them and how long does that take.

Betty Poag:

So if it's a counseling service, there's a two or three week wait maybe, because it's busy at midterm and final time. So knowing that, knowing that the first person that they'll talk to would be a receptionist, and so they'll tell their story maybe to a receptionist or an intake worker and there's a few questions that they'll ask just so that they know what to expect. So I think it's knowing the resources, but then also what is the procedure? Because sometimes when students are really anxious and feeling like they're not coping and they're not doing well, then they don't have a lot of capacity to wait on the telephone or to answer all those questions. They need help and they need it now.

Betty Poag:

And as Lenora was saying always to is when possible walking someone over if they need company, that sometimes I don't even have the courage or the capacity to go by myself, I don't know what to say. So it really depends.

Betty Poag:

The other thing that you might see online is students that are missing a lot of classes. I usually do a reach out, just checking in, anything you need. Do you want to chat? And I have recently been meeting with students, some just want to talk. And so, finding a way. And this has been brought up by a number of people, finding different ways to connect with students, multiple methods of connecting with students.

Nancy Poole:

So it looks like we're getting lots of great ideas that people are mentioning here. I love the pink one in the center about really understanding that a lot of it's about us to being really able to view student behavior through the lens of being centered in ourselves.

Nancy Poole:

And I noticed that Mel has put up a thing here about concern about will there be enough supports in the institution. And I think that's an important one. And to recognize that not everybody who experiences trauma responses needs counseling, they also can be directed to a whole lot of other things like mindfulness apps and whole range of other ways. And just even taking the moment, like you said, Betty, to talk about what's going on for them. Acknowledging that this is a stressful time as Lenora has mainly well described.

Nancy Poole:

And a lot of it is really not necessarily something that requires formal counseling, and many students may not want to access formal counseling. So it's always good to recognize that piece.

Lenora Marcellus:

Yeah. And I think the other piece to me in this is, what about my colleagues? So trauma awareness is about what about my colleagues and how they're managing and coping and what am I seeing that maybe tells me a little more support and a little more frequent check in with my co-workers offering to share the load maybe... For us it's marking, marking, postings right now, but just to kind of lift that load and check in as well with our colleagues. Because I noticed that impact parallel [inaudible 00:28:38].

Nancy Poole:

Yeah. Yeah. And I love that idea on the screen of Wellness Wednesday, an event for students with a focus on self-care and that all of us can benefit from. And all the groups I've worked with that have brought trauma informed approaches in, have often done mindfulness or some other form of self-care exercises together with themselves as faculty or as program providers, even as they're trying to help their program participants or students as well. So really a lot to think about [inaudible 00:29:16], yeah.

Betty Poag:

The healing circle as well.

Nancy Poole:

Yeah.

Betty Poag:

Certainly on campus at Camosun, we have an amazing group that does circles every [inaudible 00:29:29] for students and they find so much strength and connection and healing in those circles. So I think that's really good [crosstalk 00:29:37].

Principle: Safety and Trustworthiness

Nancy Poole:

Yeah. Now let's go to the next slide and talk a bit more about that check-in activity as a way of starting off in creating safety and trustworthiness, because I think that's a really important one that someone put up here in the awareness slide.

Betty Poag:

Yeah, I think. So there may be some overlap with some of these strategy, wow, right? Between the principles. Really most important is finding a way to build community and instructors. I know we do this every time a term starts with a new group of students. So building safety and trustworthiness, and that is in the connection between the student and instructor and then the student and the classmates. And that is really key. And in our college students usually are in the same sections for the time that they're at Camosun. And so, by the end of it, they do get to know one another.

Betty Poag:

One of the musings and some of the postings we've had is how will this affect our communication when we're back together in the classroom, this whole online thing? But creating a space and a way of communicating that allows for respectful exploration of ideas and concepts from the courses, and that can be, I found that to be sometimes really challenging for students because they are kind of acculturated to there's a right or a wrong answer, and they don't want to be wrong. And they're afraid of what they're thought of by the teacher, but also their classmates. So they're often afraid to engage in open conversation. Thanks, Paula. Yeah, peer-to-peer safety is huge.

Betty Poag:

So one of the things-

Whiteboard Exercise Two: Bringing Safety and Trustworthiness into Our Work

Nancy Poole:

Let's put the next one up while you're talking, Betty, the next slide up, so people can begin to type in some of theirs, even as you're giving examples. Sorry to interrupt.

Betty Poag:

It's okay. No, that's good. So some of the things that we might ask ourselves are, what are the things that I'm doing to create or to bring in kind of a culture of safety and trustworthiness in my classroom?

One of the big things is maybe creating rules for engagement online. I do it in a classroom and I'm figuring out how to do it this year in September, and that sort of a netiquette rules for how do we engage in post and converse online.

Betty Poag:

But the other thing I have done, because I need to risk, I need to put myself out there as well, is I always have what is the absolute worst class ever that you have ever been in and what was the best class ever, and then what were the students doing and what did the teacher or instructor do. And then together, we sort of start theming it, and then together that's the classroom contract, and then we all sign an agreement. So it gives us a way to talk and explore ideas and explore how do we disagree and how do we engage in discretion?

Betty Poag:

Other things are, what makes the learning environment sort of calm and inviting? Certainly in some way is more challenging online, but virtually the things that instructors can do are to post welcome videos, just something brief that makes a connection because they can see your face and they can hear your voice and they have a sense of you.

Betty Poag:

Breathing or grounding exercise is a great strategy. Yeah, identifying all of our differences and experiences that they're valid. And I also think that they help us view the world with another set of lenses and expand and deepen our thinking about whatever those concepts are.

Lenora Marcellus:

Can I add a point, Betty? And then I know Nancy wants to add a point. On the previous slide, it mentioned about trying to move away from being directed in the classroom. And I'll just throw out there that there's a fine line because there's something calming about a little bit of structure. Again, even better if you co-develop that structure, but especially when right now there's a lot of things that are changing very rapidly and are really unknown, a little bit of structure is okay. And so, to think about that with your students.

Nancy Poole:

Absolutely. You know, Lenora, that's exactly what I was going to jump in and say, is that you mentioned the idea of predictability before, and I think creating a container that where people know what they can expect is a really important thing to have their safety in that. And if we're thinking about someone who may have had an experience of being completely overwhelmed, it makes much, much more sense that they can be in a place that has rules of engagement, as you say, Betty, or some level of collaboration in terms of defining what feels workable for them.

Nancy Poole:

So I think that that idea of transparency and involvement and setting expectations and recognizing from the start that people are going to feel like they can't meet the expectations and that's fine. And to be sure that they come and speak to you about it rather than feeling like they have to sift in shame about where they are relative to the expectations.

Lenora Marcellus:

Thanks. I just finished doing an orientation to a practice course and our first session the whole week was online, but really thinking through that, but in our first session welcome people to bring their tea or coffee, to be prepared if they so chose to introduce their pets, so we had a lot of cats and dogs coming into the screen, and to open the space to say, if you have kids, don't worry about kids in the home.

Lenora Marcellus:

And so, I'm thinking about the diversity of our students currently, and we have a lot, I know in our program, we have a lot of parents taking the program and their kids are at home and not in school. And so, to kind of create that welcoming environment knowing that you're trying to learn under some challenging circumstances and we can be flexible with you about that.

Nancy Poole:

Yeah, I think that's great. Well, let's go to the next principle because there are so many things people are piling in here, but we have a limited amount of time there.

Principle: Choice, Collaboration and Connection

Lenora Marcellus:

And can I just ask our facilitators, these PowerPoints, will they go to the participants then so everyone will get to see the comments that people chatted in? Just checking with our facilitators there. Maybe you could chat in, it'd be nice for people to see, there's some really great responses in there.

Nancy Poole:

Yeah, really good.

Lenora Marcellus:

So, all great. Thank you. So the third principle is choice collaboration and connection. Again, as Betty mentioned or Nancy mentioned, trauma informed practice is a relational practice. And so, it's coming together to get to know the individual and the relationship together. And really important, particularly in a teaching and a post-secondary relationship, it's all about power. And so, really thinking carefully from that instructor perspective about how we can reduce some of the impact of that. We can't take it away, but we can certainly acknowledge it and work with it and reduce it.

Lenora Marcellus:

And again, thinking about past experiences with school, I'm thinking about Trump in general, but other people's past experiences with learning and teaching and learning and how they see themselves as learners and to give them confidence and build their confidence in being a participatory learner.

Lenora Marcellus:

And I know our post-secondary systems, it's challenging. If you have a syllabus you have to follow, and there's regulations that you need to follow, but thinking about within those parameters, what gives you some space to create opportunity to co-develop the learning that you're going to do?

Lenora Marcellus:

I'm just going to channel my director right now, and she often will say, "COVID is the great teacher." And it may be that this opportunity, this sudden shift to online, the strategies we're using, and I know I saw in previous slides, many people talking about multiple methods, and we all know that we're all different learners and we need different methods to teach and learn and take in and pace things. And this might be our opportunity to really play around and try out some of the ideas we've been moving towards in our teaching and encouraging that collaboration within the classroom setting.

Whiteboard Exercise Three: Promote Choice, Collaboration and Connection

Lenora Marcellus:

So I'm going to pause for a minute, we're going to go to the next slide, which has space for you, and I'll just stop chatting for a minute and see if Betty and Nancy want to add something here.

Lenora Marcellus:

You're muted, Betty.

Betty Poag:

I plan my class and then I tell the students what I'm planning to do. And then when we talk about collaboration and connection, I ask if there's anything that they want to add or do they want to do something differently? And it's been quite funny because I think they're like they've been very quiet, and then I said, "Just so we're clear, I do know how to teach and I do have a plan. However, this is not my classroom. Our agreement at the beginning is that it's ours. So what do you need from me that maybe is not in my plan? And that's where we'll go."

Betty Poag:

So now they are really much more active in participating and collaborating in what they need, what they want, what they'd like to focus on. Sometimes switching up what we're going to do, the way we're going to do it, expectations and making suggestions. So it actually makes it a lot more fun for us. And I think that they're more open and like to be part of those decisions. So I enjoy working with them.

Betty Poag:

You know, we both acknowledge that still the teacher marks the papers or the assignments or whatever, but that it feels like they are co-owners of the classroom. And I think that buys a lot of goodwill on both sides.

Lenora Marcellus:

Oh, here comes something on the screen.

Betty Poag:

Yeah. Sharing feedback is great. And some students really like hearing your voice and the verbal feedback, like the recorded feedback.

Lenora Marcellus:

Some wise comments coming in. I just want to add a comment because Paula chatted in about meta learning skills. And I know we're looking at our program. We're probably going to introduce a whole week at the beginning of starting the program, which really actually helps students situate themselves in the program as a whole.

Lenora Marcellus:

How we teach and learn, I don't think we do as good a job as we can and how we go about that and how they can be successful in developing some of their meta learning skills. So thanks for chatting that in.

Betty Poag:

Yeah. And someone had just posted sort of assessing the mood each day. And I think that that's a little harder to do if you're doing asynchronous, but you can tell certainly by the postings, but yeah, I found that really helpful. And I remember a student when we... Worst class, best class, saying that her teacher once bought hot chocolate and I'm like, "I don't think I'll be doing that."

Betty Poag:

But one day it's midterm and I, in the classroom itself, I just stopped by Tim's and bought a couple of jugs of coffee and then boiled a kettle and bought some tea and some cream and some donuts. That's all I did. You'd think really that I'd done something amazing. They were just so appreciative.

Betty Poag:

So they just want us to care about them and to see that they're struggling. They do like the Zoom and the video options, but, yeah. And some just don't engage, they just want to get the work done online.

Lenora Marcellus:

[inaudible 00:42:38].

Betty Poag:

[inaudible 00:42:40] food is food is food. That is strategy number one, yeah.

Lenora Marcellus:

Yeah.

Betty Poag:

Yeah. I just want to point out that I think this is a place where as educators, we need to challenge ourselves a little bit more. And I know the syllabus is our contract with the students, but how can we, and this is about someone else chatted in in an earlier slide about being transparent all the way. And so, if we're connecting in on a regular basis, we're really, I like to keep touching on assignments throughout the whole terms as a heads up and being really kind of intentional when you start this assignment in week, whatever. So there's a lot of planning time so that you can actually talk through.

Betty Poag:

And I don't know about you guys, but I've found that my syllabus descriptions of assignments have been getting a little bit more lengthy without being overwhelming, because I think it helps to reduce stress to students. Now, I know they want every detail often, and those of you who are students out there, feel free to chat in, finding that happy medium between providing enough so that students can say, "Okay, I have a really good idea about what this is going to be," and we're going to talk about it as we go along. It's not going to be me working on this in isolation, we'll work on this and learn on this together.

Betty Poag:

So I usually set up a chat for each assignment. So if there's questions, they're not coming one-to-one, it's the class learning as a whole about the assignment. And sometimes the learning is even grappling with what does that assignment mean as well.

Betty Poag:

So the heart, the comment with the heart there, removed an assignment that would have too much cognitive load. I think this is particularly important as we switch to online. Imagine students doing their whole term online and really thinking through as a teaching team, what their term looks like.

Betty Poag:

So the other thing we've done in our program is we have term teams. So all the instructors who teach in the team, we develop a course grid that's got all the assignments and we try and plan this out before. It takes a lot of planning. Plan it out beforehand so you can see, we've not asked them to do 10 papers in this term, we have quite a structured program so it's easier to do that than a broader program. I certainly appreciate that.

Betty Poag:

But even having students map out their term and then working with them to see about how they can plan, what their work is going to be. And a key thing is, early in the term, again, highlighting for students, "If you need to have some changes like an advance on an assignment, identify it as early as possible, come and talk to me, well, most likely, just fine," but really having them take control of what their learning is going to look like for the term and knowing what their needs are going to be, and then see if you can collaborate to design or develop a term that's going to work for them.

Nancy Poole:

That's so great. You know, I think all of this is showing that sometimes people criticize me about trauma-informed practice, when I talk about choice and collaboration and connection, and just saying, "Oh, that's way too undoable," because we have things we have to do here. And I think you've described really well, just how you can promote choice and collaboration within parameters so that you can create some choice, but without giving away the entire syllabus. Right?

Betty Poag:

Yeah.

Principle: Strengths Based

Nancy Poole:

And I think that's really critical. So let's move on to the last principle of skills and skills and strengths.

Lenora Marcellus:

Okay. So trauma informed practice aligns well with what indigenous experts have identified as the importance of starting from strengths, not deficits. And I'll also add that those of us who've been in a child development or family fields, know that, or public health fields, is that starting from a place of strength not problems, and what's going well and then what will help you stay well and help you manage.

Lenora Marcellus:

I know I can't remember the name of the author, but the approach was high expectations, but high supports. And so, those expectations around we're knowing you bring a lot of strength with you. And our students right now, apologies, lots of nursing examples, but the lived experience right now, are entering practice and they're really, really nervous because they haven't been in a practice environment for a while.

Lenora Marcellus:

And so, part of our work is reminding them that they're bringing a lot. They already have learned a lot in their program to date. They bring a lot of life experience already and that we'll be building on that and moving it forward. And then building in their learning strategies around that and giving them some confidence to keep moving forward as learners.

Whiteboard Exercise Four: Enhance Strengths, Recognize and Build Resilience

Lenora Marcellus:

So if we could go to the next slide, again, your opportunity to chat in some ideas, and here's our questions. What are we doing to enhance strengths in our students, recognize and build their resilience? Which of course are lifelong skills. It's not just to do with being a student, but it's for moving our lives forward. And how do I incorporate students as experts in their own learning experiences? And finally, how have I acknowledged and addressed what might be some biases that I may have as an educator and what impact that might have on student teaching and learning?

Lenora Marcellus:

So we'll open it up to everybody for some ideas, but certainly I have been quite interested lately, there's a growing movement on student engagement and lots of work happening in Europe. For example, I just went to a conference, not just, in the fall, out East, and it was about student engagement in their programs. And I think we've not given away enough of our power yet as educators.

Lenora Marcellus:

So I think we've got, I'm lining this up with the Patients as Partners Movement that's happening in healthcare and with healthcare research, and how can we bring some of those principles into education? So our students are much, much more actively engaged in co-designing, co-developing,

evaluating. We have students on our curriculum committees attending our operation meetings and they are valuable partners. They're so professional and they're bringing in such a lot to the work.

Lenora Marcellus:

So I'm going to turn it over to the others. In the meantime, I'm going to chat in a really nice link to the work that Scotland is doing with student engagement. Over to the others.

Betty Poag:

Number one for me is incorporating students as experts in their own experiences, just trying to design activities where they pull in that expertise and then finding ways to acknowledge it. So whether that's just in a discussion, the interesting perspective, I haven't thought of that. And then being really present in their discussion to help to highlight that that's a new way of looking at whatever this concept or idea was, so that they know that you, they A, see that you hear them, but also that their life experiences validated in some way.

Nancy Poole:

I like that comment about starting groups with about what went well. And I think that idea from appreciative inquiry and positive psychology is a really important one. And I think it's really strongly associated with my concept of trauma informed approaches, is really, let's really acknowledge the strengths and the skills for coping that people already have and encourage them to really notice those and bring more of that in rather than talking about problems, really talking about what's working well.

Nancy Poole:

And I'd love that idea about sharing tips about, with other students, about how they're doing assignments. And I've really noticed that even with the researchers I work with, we often share ideas to each other about how can you quickly do abstract screaming and whatever with each other, and we have such good help from each other. It just makes such a difference to your stress level when you realize that other people have figured out really great ways to make things work.

Lenora Marcellus:

And the other thing is I've created an open, we use blackboard, so they have a student blackboard for meeting and studying and working together online if they want to. I am in the LMS that we have at the college. So some of them have found that really helpful as well so that they can share some of their thinking and ideas.

Skills Building

Nancy Poole:

Great. Well, we've only got five minutes left, it looks like, so let's just turn to a couple of more informational slides and we can leave what people have learned. Yeah, I guess, I just feel strongly that we can teach or offer people ways to find how to learn more about grounding activities and skills that are not going to a therapist, but are really easy things to do. And there are some things on the Centre Of Excellence website like this, that offers 10 easy, quick grounding activities.

Nancy Poole:

Next. So let's move on from this one, just because we only have five more minutes. So let's... Yeah. And Lenora, do you want to speak to this one that you noticed this particular place for turning people to skills?

Lenora Marcellus:

Sure. I'll talk really quickly about this slide and the next slide, and then Nancy will finish up with some final resources for everyone. These are some, as you know, many more resources related to mental health where have been developed for post-secondary in response to some of the different reports developed across Canada.

Lenora Marcellus:

And this is just a link to a recent announcement for the Here2Talk resource that's been made available in BC. So that's just like, I think, reminding everyone that's there.

Post-Secondary Strategies Summary

Lenora Marcellus:

And next slide. The next slide is just a summary of many of the things we just heard as we went through the four principles. A couple that I'm just going to touch on that we maybe haven't covered as well, is the third bullet. I think about this a lot as far as being flexible with enacting a syllabus and disciplinary processes, balancing with maintaining academic integrity and the quality of the program. And I would say that's probably the fine line we really walk as far as if you're seeing signs of trauma, is it trauma or is it academic misconduct? And sometimes the lines are going to be really blurry, but really finding out who our partners are at our institutions to help us figure our way through some of these things.

Lenora Marcellus:

So again, in a nursing program, as you might imagine, we want our graduates to be very safe and very knowledgeable. And so, we do have to maintain the academic integrity of the program yet also create this flexibility. So those are conversations to have with our teaching teams.

Lenora Marcellus:

Again, being open to different forms of accommodation. Again, accommodation related to anxiety and stress, which is turning into being a real leading cause of why students are requesting some accommodation. We may also need to think about the different accommodation they might need because of the virtual learning environment. So that might introduce some different challenges for us.

Lenora Marcellus:

So the rest, I think we've talked about. Well done. See, we... Just [inaudible 00:55:11] usually by the time you come to the end, you've covered what you said you were going to [inaudible 00:55:14], even when it's really kind of co-developed.

Lenora Marcellus:

So I'm going to pause and turn it over to Nancy to wrap us up.

Being Trauma Informed at the Organizational Level

Nancy Poole:

Okay. Next slide. Yeah. So we'll just skip through this one because we don't really have time to ask another question. I just wanted to leave with saying that the onus for being trauma informed can't only fall on your shoulders, it has to fall on the whole organization.

Self-Care and Debriefing – For Educators

Nancy Poole:

Next slide. And so, you may do some great self-care work and debriefing with your other colleagues. And to just really know that that is important work for you to be able to do.

Nancy Poole:

Next slide. But then I'd really like us to think about whole in educational institutions, thinking about their responsibility to support educators as they in turn, try and support students. And I really like this image from Trauma Transformed group in the Bay Area that just talks about how often our institutions are trauma reactive, there is no felt sense of safety, and that we can move to being trauma informed that really brings in the kinds of things we've talked about today.

Nancy Poole:

And there's even another [inaudible 00:56:40] that we could be going down the road to, to actually moving towards being trauma reducing organizations that are in fact healing.

Principles of TIP

Nancy Poole:

Next slide. So a reminder of these principles, they're useful in many different locations, also in education. And I think Betty and Lenora have really shown a lot of, and you all, really a lot of great examples about how we can bring them in and many that you're already doing and many prompts to think about it further more.

Trauma Responsive Pedagogy

Nancy Poole:

Next slide. We've put some of these things in the chat for you, but just so that you know, that these resources are ones that we've seen as really super helpful in developing trauma responsive pedagogy.

Webinar Wrap-Up

Nancy Poole:

And I think there's one more slide. Yeah. So just to leave you with this idea that you could type in the chat or just think about as you go as something that you'll take away from today or build in to your practice that has struck you as you've listened in today.

This transcript was exported on Jun 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

Nancy Poole:

And I guess on behalf of all three of us, I'd just like to say, thank you so much for coming and sharing great ideas, and I really wish you well in this work.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. And this brings us to the conclusion of the webinar today. I'd like to thank Nancy, Betty and Lenora for the session today. Also want to send thanks to Kelsey and Paula who are in the background and did all the technical support today.

Duane Seibel:

This as all of our other webinars during COVID are available, they're recorded, and you can go back and get them.

Duane Seibel:

(silence)

Nancy Poole:

Thank you.