



HEARTS Core Guiding Principles for Responding to Coronavirus (COVID-19) in ECE

Principle	Trauma-Informed Lens Rationale	Strategies
<p style="text-align: center;">Understand Trauma & Stress</p>	<p>The novel coronavirus (which causes COVID-19) can affect anyone in any country. People respond to this rapidly spreading pandemic in a variety of ways that includes reacting with no fear, having reasonable amounts of fear, and being extremely fearful. As with any trauma, fear results in a stress response that can include panic, sweating, diminished executive function, and difficulty following instructions. Times of great stress may also worsen effects of previous traumas.</p>	<p>Remembering how trauma and stress can affect individuals, families, relationships, organizations, work, and learning can help to reframe otherwise confusing behavior. This can assist us in recognizing the socio-emotional effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, which can lead to more compassionate, strength-based, and effective responses to yourself, students, family, and peers. If you, your students, your family, or peers behave in a way that signals agitation, frustration, trouble following directions, or seem disengaged, they may be responding to the panic in their homes or the national panic depicted in the media. If an extreme situation arises, please refer students, family, or peers to mental health resources as needed, such as the Colorado Crisis Line: 1-844-493-TALK. Pass this information along to parents and caregivers as well.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Cultural Humility & Responsiveness</p>	<p>We come from diverse cultural groups that may react to the outbreak differently. One cultural group may focus on the economics of the pandemic, for example, buying lots of groceries; another cultural group may focus on a religious perception of the pandemic, for example, focusing on prayer during this time. All responses should be honored equally.</p>	<p>We do not want students or families to hold misconceptions about COVID-19, and therefore, we must share accurate information while holding respect for cultural backgrounds that are different from our own. It is also important to recognize instances of xenophobia, particularly against Asians/Asian Americans, if and when they occur and respond in ways that mitigate this form of oppression. Engage parents in these efforts for added effectiveness. When we are open to understanding trauma and cultural humility, we can work together to mitigate harm and encourage equity.</p> <p>Additional resources: https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/speaking-up-against-racism-around-the-new-coronavirus https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/how-to-respond-to-coronavirus-racism</p>

<p>Safety & Predictability</p>	<p>When our physical, social and emotional safety are compromised, we can go into the stress response (flight, fight, freeze, or cringe). Although social distancing is required to decrease the spread of COVID-19, it can leave us feeling lonely, withdrawn, or isolated. Human connection is very essential to maintaining a sense of safety.</p>	<p>Although teaching online does not require as much focus on physical safety, we can establish social and emotional safety to help the students connect and flourish in a caring and structured online environment. Focusing on creating safety is essential to learning. Strategies for creating emotional and social safety include incorporating daily check-ins or connection circle meetings, such as a virtual community meeting, before beginning the academic portion of the class, or phone calls/emails with individual students. Offer support to parents on checking in with their children during this circumstance as well. To foster predictability, establish routines and rituals for the online learning space (i.e., providing students with a daily overview of expectations, having regular meeting hours for students/caregivers to check in and/or ask questions).</p>
<p>Compassion & Dependability</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic can cause us to feel uncertainty and panic; social distancing can leave us feeling isolated and overwhelmed. These factors may make it difficult for us to feel like we can trust or depend on others. But without a sense of trust, we cannot feel compassion, and compassion is a key component to building connection and addressing trauma.</p>	<p>We can demonstrate compassion and dependability by communicating with our students, co-workers, friends and loved ones over the phone, via text, and via online platforms, such as Zoom, Google Meet, Facetime, or Skype. Consider ways that you can develop personalized connections with your students, family, and peers throughout the week, making sure to prioritize your most vulnerable students and loved ones. Consider providing a schedule for students/families to sign up that offers a variety of times to connect and make certain to be available. Although it is not as easy to be attuned to other people’s non-verbal cues as it is when we are face-to-face, we can notice their tone of voice. As little as three minutes a day of authentic, compassionate communication with another individual has been shown to have therapeutic results. Listen to the messages your body is sending.</p>
<p>Resilience & Social-Emotional Learning</p>	<p>COVID-19 is both a pandemic and a worldwide trauma. Trauma can lessen our cognitive functioning, undermine our ability to regulate emotions, change our behavior, and compromise healthy interpersonal skills.</p>	<p>To foster resilience during this time of uncertainty, it is important to continue to actively work on and promote self-care amongst our students, family, and peers. Despite spending more time at home, it is helpful to maintain daily schedules, get adequate sleep, and keep up with hygiene. Create space for students to express their feelings (verbally or in writing) and provide opportunities to practice (and model) social-emotional skill building with your students (e.g., taking deep breaths, journaling, gratitude). Allow students the opportunity to develop and practice their coping strategies/activities. This can be a handout that is available to students and they can practice at any time. You can also consider providing reminders to spend time outside and limiting screen time. Many apps are offering free access, such as <i>Calm</i>, <i>5 minutes of Gratitude</i>, and <i>Down Dog</i>. Utilizing these strategies gives us a</p>

		<p>higher likelihood of maintaining a socio-emotional balance. By setting boundaries you will be able to stay present in the moment and acknowledging that emotions can present differently based on the individual. Consider incorporating the zones of regulation and others SEL techniques. By sharing this information with parents and caregivers, we are encouraging consistency.</p>
<p>Empowerment & Collaboration</p>	<p>Like any trauma, the physical and socio-emotional effects of the COVID-19 pandemic include feeling a loss of power and control, which may contribute to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. While social distancing is necessary, it can also lead to feeling isolated and detached.</p>	<p>When we feel like we have a choice, we feel empowered to advance the growth and well-being for ourselves and others. Consider creating a schedule with a consistent wake up time, preparing for your day, getting dressed and ready for your day, teaching, socializing, and walking outdoors (maintaining a distance of 6 feet from others). Share personal experiences of adjusting to and following your schedule with students and families. Consider what routines and rituals you can put in place with students and at home to increase connectedness and sense of community. Continue to provide opportunities for students to express their voice and have choice in their online learning. For example, students can choose from two to three activities per day at home to do. When you communicate with parents, stress the importance of incorporating empowerment and collaboration into their family routine.</p>

Adapted from: UCSF HEARTS; Dorado, J., Martinez, M., McArthur, L., & Leibovitz, T. (2016). Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools (HEARTS): A whole-school, multi-level, prevention and intervention program for creating trauma-informed, safe and supportive schools. *School Mental Health*, 8, 163-176.

Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching Through Coronavirus

https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-teachingthroughcoronavirus?utm_source=Teaching+Tolerance&utm_campaign=1be1caaaa1A+TraumaInformed+Approach+to+Teaching+Throug&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a8cea027c3-1be1caaaa1-101113153

<http://passageworks.org/present-times-fear-worry/>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/ways-to-become-more-resilient-2795063>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/lifting-the-veil-trauma/202003/trauma-pandemic-proportions>

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