

Bridge Trauma-Informed Culturally-Responsive (TICR) Program



Top 5 Tips for Creating a Trauma-Informed & Culturally-Responsive Classroom

Creating a TICR Classroom

It's critical that teachers have the tools needed to develop trauma-informed and culturally responsive "TICR" classrooms. Students who can better connect with their teachers have better academic achievement and stronger social-emotional health in the classroom. iOpening Enterprises suggests these top 5 tips for creating a TICR classroom.

1. Set expectations from the beginning of the school year and each day

- Establish rules and consequences in advance of students misbehaving.
- Create a system of rewards that involves building intrinsic value of work and connect with others in a healthy manner.
- Promote importance of communication.
- Apply rewards and consequences consistently.
- Explore consequences and rewards based on students' strengths and cultural value.
- Post schedule/agenda for the day and remind students frequently about transitions.



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2. Identify triggers and stress reactions

- Document triggers and stress reactions in an effort to eliminate triggers from the classroom as feasible.
- Identify healthy ways that student has dealt or can deal with triggers.
- Verbally reward student when they managed triggers and stress reactions in a safe and healthy manner.
- Ensure that students receive information (i.e., assignments, directions, etc.) in a manageable form. Too much information or information students don't understand can be triggering.

3. Create a Calming/Safety Zone

- Include self-soothing objects in the safety zone
- Allow students to use it without penalty and make it separate than any punitive area such as a timeout.
- Have signs of emotions and encourage discussion of emotional responses following a crisis situation.
- Figure out ways that students calm down at home and when appropriate attempt to recreate those opportunities in the calming/safety zone.



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4. Practice calming behaviors in non-crisis situations and refer to them when a youth is first triggered.

- Start the class with 30 seconds of mindful breathing. For younger students may tie the breathing exercise to breathing in your favorite color and breathing out “icky greyness”.
- Practice progressive muscle relaxation.
- Translate students’ behaviors when it is clear they feel a particular feeling and do not know how to express it (i.e., “I see you aren’t doing the assignment and that tells me you are upset”).
- When interpreting a student’s behavior ask whether you are reading them right and invite clarification. Encourage them to use the words that best describe their behavior to support culturally responsive approaches.

5. Create a safe environment for communication

- Clearly communicate that you care about the wellbeing of the students. Do not assume it is understood.
- Create ways for students who are having overwhelming feelings to connect with you before they go into crisis.
- Eliminate threats to safe communication by directly addressing teasing/bullying and modeling safe communication that refrains from trying to over power students or embarrass students.
- Have routine for learning about student’s culture and integrating into lessons.

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