Trauma-Informed Principles Can Help Create Access
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There are a varying number of principles for trauma-informed care or teaching, depending on which research study you are reading. But there is a consistent list of principles that shows up on every list. If we take a look at these principles and apply them to supports needed for students with print disabilities, we can see that while some of these students will have experienced trauma that is affecting their learning, even the students who have not will benefit from the environment that is set up by incorporating these principles into the education setting. Below is a list of ideas to think about specifically for students with print disabilities. This is not meant to minimize the principles for trauma-informed teaching but rather to focus them on the needs of students with print disabilities. These principles are much more involved, and just thinking in this focused area will not only create a trauma-informed teaching environment but it will help support students who have print disabilities.

Safety - *Students and teachers need to feel physically and psychologically safe.* By creating an educational environment that allows for multiple tools and a variety of approaches students will learn to use the tools that they need without feeling isolated by being different. Check out **What's Your Role:** https://aem.cast.org/get-started/by-role to learn about accessible materials and technologies.

Transparency/Trustworthiness - *Decisions are made with the goal of building and maintaining trust.* Rather than just providing support and accommodations that are needed for the student, explaining, modeling, and showing how and why tools/materials are needed can help students understand and then trust why they are being asked to utilize the supports without making them feel like a failure. Check out **Designing for Accessibility**: https://aem.cast.org/create/designing-accessibility-pour

Peer Support - *Individuals with shared experiences are viewed as integral to service delivery*. Peer modeling or using supports/alternative access methods can help students build confidence and feel safe when using assistive technology or adapted materials to meet their needs. Check out **Personalizing the Reading experience:** https://aem.cast.org/use/personalizing-reading

Collaboration - *Power differences are leveled to support shared decision-making.* While not all students can make informed decisions about what supports are needed, by including them in the process and discussion of what tools are needed and giving them a voice, you are helping to encourage them to be self-advocates in the future.

Empowerment - S*tudent and staff strengths are recognized, built on, and validated*. By using the previous principles of safety, transparency, peer support, and collaboration, students will understand they have a voice, understand their needs, and understand what tools they need to help provide them with access, therefore, giving them lifelong access to print and success. Check out **Advocating for My Accessible Educational Materials**: https://oercommons.org/courseware/lesson/114026/overview

Humanity/Responsiveness - *Biases, stereotypes, and historical trauma are recognized and addressed*. Oftentimes, students with print disabilities have been seen as students who just do not want to try or put in the effort, this can lead to feelings of frustration by both parties and not allow supports that are needed to be met. Recognizing this is a problem and trying to keep an open mind can help students get

access. Check out **It's Not Cheating! Myth Busting**: https://aem.cast.org/get-started/resources/accessible-learning-experience/s02-ep01-its-not-cheating-myth-busting-suding

Resources: *Adapted list headings from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's "Guiding Principles of Trauma-Informed Care."*