

# Trauma-Informed Pedagogies

“Carello and Thompson have created a much-needed reference describing trauma-informed care for everyone working in higher education. I teach graduate students as well as undergraduates and never stop being shocked at the extent to which these young people have already experienced their own trauma and adversity or have witnessed firsthand the traumatic experiences of loved ones. Anyone who serves as faculty, administrators, or staff in academic settings must understand what this means for the ways in which they teach and interact with their students.”

—Sandra L. Bloom, *Associate Professor, Health Management and Policy, Drexel University, USA*

“This book is nothing short of a miracle for higher education professionals who are eager to answer the call for trauma-informed change in a tumultuous world. It provides thoughtful, evidence-based approaches to light the path ahead, addressing the seismic shift in college student demographics, the knowledge gained from two decades of scientific studies into adversity and brain development, and the urgent need for inclusion and equity in higher education. Each chapter includes innumerable insights into the challenges higher education faces today. As a whole, this book is simply indispensable.”

—Karen Oehme, *Director, Student Resilience Project, Florida State University, USA, and Chairperson, Academic Resilience Consortium (ARC)*

“This is the book that every teacher needs right now. Thompson and Carello have crafted a masterful guide to the changing landscape of student stress and anxiety that is written by leading practitioners in trauma-aware pedagogies. Full of compelling stories and engaging reflections, this guide is an essential roadmap for the future of teaching.”

—Leah K. Matthews, *Executive Director, Distance Education Accrediting Commission, USA*

“This book is a must read for educators as we embrace the ‘new normal’ in education. As Carello and Thomson point out, the classroom shouldn’t be only about the information that we provide to students, but about providing a safe space for students to grow and to transform. Without this safe space, students may treat their experiences as burdens that hold them back rather than as opportunities for growth.”

—Dr. Phyllis Okrepkie, *President, International Accreditation Council for Business Education, USA*

Phyllis Thompson · Janice Carello  
Editors

# Trauma-Informed Pedagogies

A Guide for Responding to Crisis and Inequality in  
Higher Education

palgrave  
macmillan

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*For Momma, Daddy, Barbara, Robin, and David*

*—Phyllis Thompson*

*For Eric, Tuesday, Milo, Winter, and Bird, and in memory of Janet and Brad*

*—Janice Carello*

## FOREWORD

I try to take my vacation every year during the second week in August, the week of my birthday. It is my designated time to take a break and reconnect with nature and my family. I strive to make it the one week a year where I unplug. This year was significant because it was the first birthday without my mom. My mom passed away on June 16, 2021, quite unexpectedly. I pushed through the months of June and July, busier than planned with speaking engagements, facilitation sessions, and trainings. I coped with her loss through avoidance and by immersing myself in my work; holding space for others felt healing, while I also recognized that it was a way for me to dissociate. But when August 8th came and we were scheduled to leave the familiar surroundings of our home and venture out to big skies, wide plains, and the ocean, I had to prepare for the grief work that was inevitably coming and for the healing that the ocean brings every time I touch the sand. My mom's passing reminded me that trauma and the grief that accompanies it hit us in unpredictable waves. The sounds, smells, sights, and felt spiritual energies surprise us with their appearance. This time around I let it. I did not reach for a tissue when the waves of grief hit me in the middle of the drive, or when my tears matched the heavy rain that fell the morning of my birthday August 9th, and I did not stop calling her name as I sat under the stars and felt her presence in the night sky. My children saw and felt my loss and that, too, was ok. I accepted their hugs and held onto them tighter and longer than usual.

August 9th was also the day I received an email from the co-editors of this book asking me to write this foreword. The email was a beautiful invitation to share space with so many incredible authors and educators who also are working to disrupt the traditional space of trauma work, all of us using ourselves, our platforms, and our research to highlight the need for equity-centered trauma-informed approaches. In addition to the invitation, the email was flooded with words sharing the impact that my work on incorporating diversity and inclusion into trauma-informed practice and leadership and my

recent book *Incorporating Diversity and Inclusion in Trauma-Informed Social Work* has had on others in and outside of the trauma field and across disciplines. I interpreted this invitation as a gift, a gift that validated my higher order purpose to positively disrupt and build a practice that is centered on belonging, a practice that moves the focus from individual deficit to the impact systems of oppression have on the individual, a practice that shares stories and collective experiences of intergenerational trauma and how that trauma has laid heavy on generations, often times impacting mental health.

My mom lived a life of intergenerational trauma and was also a healer. I learned, in the weeks after her passing, of all the work she had done with communities of color, specifically youth. I also learned more about the impact she had on young women educators in the K-12 space. And so, in addition to the intergenerational traumas of my family, I also carry on the legacy of what it means to be a healer. I have thought deeply about what I have inherited and what I chose to hold on to and what I must let go of in order to live in my essence and do the work that I am here to do. I did this through my own personal work and also through connection and community. I talk about the importance of the practice principle of use of self in trauma-informed work, that is, sharing personal experiences from the place of intention and with the mindfulness of building a community of healers who are courageous enough to disrupt systems and spaces of oppression and exclusion in everyday practice.

This book is a gift to all of us who strive to create communities of belonging where trauma is normalized, named, and understood in the larger context of systems of oppression. I encourage you to write in the margins of this book, sit in quiet spaces of accountability, build a collective of healers, challenge yourself to be courageous, spend time in gratitude and continue to cultivate beauty.

August 2021

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**Laura Quiros, Ph.D., LMSW** (she/her) is an Associate Professor of Social Work at Adelphi University. Her research and scholarly interests focus on trauma-informed practice and leadership from a social justice lens. The common thread in her consulting, teaching, and scholarship is elevating complexity and furthering the mission of social justice, including diversity, equity, and inclusion. Using her lens as an educator, researcher, author, practitioner, trauma survivor, mother, and woman of color from a multiracial and multiethnic background, Laura identified a deficiency and an interconnectedness in the fields of trauma, diversity and inclusion and social work education and leadership. Her practice is one of liberation, love, and generosity.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the traditional lands on which we work and express our gratitude and appreciation for the past and present Indigenous caretakers of these lands. We would also like to thank the many educators who submitted chapter proposals that we did not have space to include. We look forward to seeing their ideas about trauma-informed teaching in print elsewhere. We would also like to recognize the resilience and struggles of all educators, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. You make a difference. Hopefully you will gather many takeaways from this collection. And hopefully one of the main takeaways will be that whatever your role in education—faculty, staff, student, administrator, community partner, policy maker—the work you do, the relationships you foster, the words you speak, your physical and virtual presence, these all make a difference.

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