**Week 1 Reflection**

Terri Wilkinson

University of Northern British Columbia

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Melanie Baerg

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I really enjoyed watching, reading, and learning about having a trauma informed practice. Linda O’Neill provided several affirming moments, challenged my thinking, and highlighted some great strategies that I could see myself using in the future. To be honest I enjoyed it so much that dare I say I started thinking that this might be what I get my Masters in! One affirming moment for me was her emphases on building relationships, fostering a sense of safety, and prioritizing classroom community, “if kids don't feel safe, they won’t learn” (POPFASD, 2019). I’ve seen this in my work with Suwilaawks and recognize how essential it is to create a safe space for students to thrive. We started our learning in this program talking about building relationships and having a classroom community, hearing this from a trauma informed perspective, I now understand more that this is and should be the emphases in all practices.

One idea that challenged my thinking was the suggestion to change the language from “trauma” to “adverse childhood experiences”, as the word “trauma” can lead to assumptions and labeling. This shift in language feels empowering and reduces stigma for students. I also think that it helps us to remember that everyone experiences life and situations differently. Which goes into my next point that shifted my perspective with her explanation about siblings in the same environment can develop completely different coping mechanisms - one might become a perfectionist, while the other turns to substance use. This really hit home for me because, I was the one who used substances and my older sister is the one who is the achiever and perfectionist and this point answered some question I’ve had in my life, “why was I the only one that use substances out of my sisters?”. Very eye opening!

In terms of strategies, I can see myself using her advice to focus on relationships, teaching emotional regulation explicitly, and recognize certain behaviors as stress responses. I will use strategies like consistent routines, incorporating calming techniques like mindfulness or breathing exercises, and providing students with clear, visual schedules to reduce uncertainty. Since I have been in many classrooms the last 4 years I have seen a lot of different strategies used. I look forward to finding what works for me. Lastly I appreciate the reminder to celebrate small successes and acknowledge effort rather than focusing just on outcomes. I think this will be a powerful way to help students rebuild confidence and resilience, which in turn will create a trauma informed classroom but also foster a compassionate and supportive environment for all of us in the classroom community.

Learning about the trauma informed practice has reminded of a quote from Dr. Gabor Mate, “the opposite of addition, is connection” (Mate, 2008). This resonates with me because, I think the principles of trauma informed practice and Dr Mate practice align, as both underscore the importance of building meaningful relationships to support healing and growth. I think both perspectives emphasize the power of relationships in helping individuals regulate their emotions and behaviors. So I am now left wondering how I can find more information and continue my learning, because this practice really speaks to me.

**References**

Mate, G. (2008). *In the realm of hungry ghosts*: Close encounters with addiction. Knopf Canada.

[POPFASD]. (2019, July 3). *Trauma-Informed Practice* [Video]. YOUTUBE. https://youtu.be/-3koeRPpzBU?si=TuCwD6\_amNFPodCr