

TIPS FOR TEACHERS, STAFF, AND MENTORS



1. Be sure that YOU are calm and ready to talk before expecting students to do so. Take deep breaths. Use your support system. If you are in crisis, you cannot be effective.
2. Learn the symptoms of trauma and let students know that what they are feeling and experiencing is NORMAL and will be less frequent and painful over time. Let them know that everyone reacts differently, on their own schedule, and all feelings are acceptable. Let them know that asking for help or seeing a counselor is okay.
3. Encourage discussion of events. This allows students to express some of the emotions. Discussion also dispels rumors and misinformation.
4. Encourage support systems. Groups become vital to re-establish a sense of safety and belonging.
5. Do not expect students to "tough it out" or "move on". Grieving and trauma recovery are processes that can't be rushed.
6. Remember that one of the hallmarks of trauma is difficulty concentrating and processing information. Do not expect students to perform well in the weeks immediately following the traumatic event.
7. Encourage alternative ways of expressing feelings. Suggest journals, drawing, painting, music, dance, etc. Many students cannot express themselves verbally.
8. If a student exhibits symptoms that are overwhelming or disruptive, suggest outside counseling by referring the parent(s) to victim compensation.