

# The Trauma-Sensitive Classroom Inventory

## Overview

Trauma-sensitive classroom is a place where students can feel safe while growing academically and emotionally. In trauma-sensitive classrooms, teacher understand and embrace the research that acknowledges that students' social and emotional needs must be address before learning can take place. This inventory and the presumption of the importance of creating a trauma-sensitive classroom does not negate the primary role of the teacher to teach academics. Instead this inventory seeks to help the teacher create an environment in which all students are better prepared to learn.

This inventory is designed to help classroom teachers self-evaluate and partner with their colleagues to better serve all children, especially those who have experienced or are experiencing trauma. This inventory is divided into two sections:

**Part 1: Self-Inventory.** In this section the teacher evaluates their own strengths and areas for improvement in creating a trauma-sensitive classroom. Before starting this inventory, it is important to acknowledge that the willingness to take an honest look at one's teaching practices, is a significant step toward making the classroom a safer place for students to learn. The purpose of this inventory is to encourage the teacher to celebrate what they are doing well and to look for ways to do better. In the words of Maya Angelo,

*Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.*

**Part 2: Peer Observation.** This section is to be given to a trusted peer. The word trusted is emphasized because this is not designed to be a critical evaluation of a colleague's teaching practices, but rather a tool for discussion of strategies that are working and suggestions for improvement. Ideally, this observation would be done by colleagues who are doing the self-inventories and peer observations together and encouraging and supporting each other to become more effective teachers.

## Scoring

When using the rubric, consider each item on a scale from 4 (strong evidence) to 1 (weak evidence). It should be noted that the first column is not all-inclusive but is provided to serve as guidance.

## Part 1: Self-Inventory: Evaluating My Trauma-Sensitive Classroom

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms Feel Safe					
Consistent and predictable routines and procedures contribute to a sense of safety.					
Description	4	3	2	1	Notes
<b>Classroom Is Neat and Organized</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical space is set up in a way that fosters community (i.e. whole-group meeting spot, desks arranged for group work).</li> <li>- Physical space is free from clutter.</li> <li>- Physical space is organized to allow for easy of flow for student movement and instructional activities.</li> <li>- Bulletin boards are inviting and inspirational.</li> </ul>					
<b>Routines Are Visible</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schedules are posted</li> <li>- Students are greeted each morning, each class period, following recess or other breaks from the classroom.</li> <li>- Class meetings are a regular part of the classroom routine.</li> <li>- Students are provided with appropriate breaks.</li> <li>- Students know and follow established routines and procedures.</li> <li>- Students help to design and lead routines when appropriate.</li> </ul>					
<b>Space Is Provide for Self-Regulation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elementary classrooms have a designated space for students to self-regulate such as a Calm Corner.</li> <li>- Middle School or High Schools have designated space (s) on campus where students have access to self-regulate.</li> </ul>					
<b>Expectations Are Clear and Consistent</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Behavior expectations are posted.</li> <li>- Students have input on behavior expectations.</li> <li>- Teacher uses verbal and non-verbal cues to communicate and promote expected behaviors.</li> <li>- Strategies for meeting expectations are visible. For example, problem-solving and self-management strategies are posted.</li> </ul>					
<b>Restorative Practices Are Used</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feedback on student behavior is discrete, specific, and restorative.</li> <li>- Teacher promotes self-regulation of students by cueing students verbally and non-verbally to expected behaviors and focusing on teaching and reinforcing desired behaviors.</li> <li>- Students actively use problem-solving tools to resolve conflicts.</li> </ul>					

Description	4	3	2	1	Notes
<b>Cultural Responsiveness Is Visible</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom materials are diverse and inclusive.</li> <li>- Teacher uses strategies to learn about students' cultures, backgrounds, talents, and interests.</li> <li>- Teacher affirm students' diverse identities, cultures, and life experiences throughout their interactions, materials, curriculum, and instruction.</li> <li>- Opportunities are available for students to share about their lives and backgrounds.</li> </ul>					
<b>Additional Resources Are Utilized as Needed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher reaches out to parents, school administrators, and community resources to help meet the needs of the students.</li> <li>- Teacher seeks support and advice from colleagues and staff.</li> <li>- Teacher actively engages in professional development opportunities to better meet the needs of their students.</li> </ul>					

## Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms Function as a Community of Learners

Students and teachers perceive themselves as important members whose feelings, thoughts, and behaviors contribute to the overall well-being of each member of the class.

Description	4	3	2	1	Notes
<b>Caring Teacher-Student Relationships Are Visible</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher uses students' names when talking with students.</li> <li>- Students share their perspectives and needs.</li> <li>- Teacher uses strategies to engage and learn about all students.</li> <li>- Teacher effectively uses strategies to build a trusting relationship with each student.</li> <li>- Teacher appears responsive to students' needs.</li> </ul>					
<b>Caring Student-Student Relationships Are Visible</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher uses strategies to help students get to know each other.</li> <li>- Teacher uses strategies to build respect among the students.</li> <li>- Students have opportunities to connect with each other (cooperative learning strategies, group projects, class meetings, discussions).</li> <li>- Students take an active role in supporting their peers, and there is a strong sense of inclusivity.</li> </ul>					
<b>Classroom Discussions Are an Integral Part of Instruction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher provide frequent discussion opportunities.</li> <li>- Teacher uses cooperative structures (e.g., turn to your partner) to ensure all students have an opportunity to share their thinking.</li> <li>- Students practice active listening during discussions.</li> <li>- Students speak at least as much as the teacher.</li> <li>- Students contribute to/lead classroom discussions.</li> </ul>					
Description	4	3	2	1	Notes
<b>Student Voice and Engagement Is Promoted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students have voice and/or choice about learning activities.</li> <li>- Students have the opportunity to share their opinions and devise strategies for classroom improvement.</li> <li>- Teacher elevates a broad range of student perspectives and experiences by engaging students as leaders, problem-solvers, and decision-makers.</li> </ul>					

### Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms Integrate SEL Throughout the Procedures and Curriculum

SEL content and objectives are integrated into rigorous instruction through interactive and collaborative pedagogies. This enables ongoing practice of SEL skills and strengthens teaching and learning of academic content.

Description	4	3	2	1	Notes
<b>SEL Instruction Is Visible</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Teacher presents explicit teaching of SEL lessons.</li><li>- Classroom environment shows evidence of SEL strategies (posters, student work, organization of furniture, class books, etc.).</li><li>- Teacher promotes a growth mindset, focusing on the process of learning.</li><li>- Teacher communicates high expectations for all students and allows for productive struggle.</li></ul>					
<b>Students Exhibit Continued Development of SEL Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Students demonstrate a continued sense of self-awareness.</li><li>- Students demonstrate a high level of self-efficacy and ownership over learning, as appropriate to their developmental level.</li><li>- Students demonstrate a high level of social skills in their interactions with adults and other students.</li><li>- Students demonstrate empathy and compassion for others.</li><li>- Students demonstrate the ability to self-regulate and show resilience when they are feeling stressed.</li></ul>					
<b>Teacher Sets a Priority for Self-Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Teacher maintains a healthy work-life balance.</li><li>- Teacher talks about self-care strategies used on a regular basis.</li></ul>					

## Part 2: Peer Observation: Evaluating My Colleague's Trauma-Sensitive Classroom

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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