<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain of Awareness</th>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Practice(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Some students will be at heightened risk for retraumatization or traumatization as a result of: • Trauma histories • Mental illness • Current emotional challenges and/or difficult life transitions</td>
<td>• Become familiar with the implications of trauma for learning, as well as the signs and symptoms of trauma, retraumatization, and secondary traumatization</td>
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<td>Some course content may have the potential to retraumatize (or even traumatize) students</td>
<td>• Preview material for appropriateness • Eliminate material the sole purpose of which is to shock/disturb • For difficult material that is retained, develop warnings so that students know what to expect and its extent</td>
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<td>Students will handle difficult material better if there is an effort to warn (inoculate) them ahead of time</td>
<td>• Provide verbal warnings prior to viewing or discussing material during class • Provide online warnings for electronic resources</td>
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<td>Conducting regular check-ins with students during the class will help you determine how students are doing emotionally and whether adjustments are needed</td>
<td>• Conduct regular verbal check-ins during class • Use brief written check-ins (such as check-in cards) at the beginning and end of each class and invite (but not require) students to share emotional responses to course content and process • Follow up in person, by email, or by phone with students who express concerns • Use student feedback to inform/revise your present and future class material</td>
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<td>Discussing difficult material that has been presented will allow students to process, reorient, and regain emotional distance</td>
<td>• Ask students what they found to be the most difficult, and start the discussion there • Use check-ins in conjunction with discussion</td>
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<td>Allowing students to not participate demonstrates respect for limits and teaches students to take responsibility for their own well-being</td>
<td>• Remind students that it is okay to tune out or leave the room briefly to attend to emotional needs when necessary</td>
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<td>Acknowledge, normalize, and discuss the difficult feelings that can arise when learning about trauma and its victims</td>
<td>• Acknowledge that feelings of overwhelm and helplessness may arise, and that these feelings may be triggering for some students • Note how experiencing these feelings can help us understand some of the victim’s experience • Acknowledge and normalize other difficult feelings associated with learning about (and experiencing) trauma, such as despair, hopelessness, anger, disapproval, shame, guilt, vengefulness, disgust, desire to rescue</td>
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<td>Assume that students are the experts of their own lives and learning, and that their feedback about what helps them feel safe is valuable</td>
<td>• Solicit student feedback and integrate their suggestions for improving the emotional safety and comfort of the classroom (check-in cards are helpful with this also) • Solicit both formative and summative feedback so you can improve instruction for both current and future classes</td>
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### Assignment Requirements & Policies

Assignments should be reviewed for their potential to trigger at-risk students

- If you use assignments that require personal disclosure, critically examine your rationale and objectives
- Seriously consider eliminating any assignment that requires students to disclose personal traumatic experiences
- If you decide to retain assignments that require personal disclosure, allow students to do alternate assignments
- Become familiar with the potential risks associated with classroom disclosure (Carello & Butler, 2014)

Implement policies and practices that help students avoid shame and feel safe while preparing assignments

- Implement a late day policy which gives all students extra days over the course of the semester to turn in work without having to provide an excuse and without penalty
- Require drafts of papers in order to provide ungraded feedback and to catch problems before they result in failure of an assignment

### Instructor and Student Behavior & Interaction

Be conscious that some instructor behavior (even if inadvertent) may be activating for students

- Avoid engaging in minimizing or being dismissive of student concerns, scolding, threats, ridicule, or shows of power, impatience, or even disappointment
- Use neutral language and a strengths-based approach in all communication, including feedback and grading

Be mindful of the concepts of transference and countertransference and how they can underpin reactions and overreactions

- If possible, teach these concepts to students as well
- Refer to this learning to explicate your or your students’ reactions

Be prepared to provide appropriate referrals

- Have on hand specific information for referrals to the counseling center, disability services, student support services, crisis services

Be conscious that some student behavior may be activating for other students

- Aggressive, angry, combative, and disrespectful student behavior may be activating for other students and may require immediate intervention and processing with the class
- Model appropriate conflict resolution behavior in the classroom

### Classroom Characteristics

Be aware that some physical features of the classroom or of classroom behavior may be triggering, such as:

- Instructors who walk through classrooms may inadvertently loom behind students, which may disturb those with an assault history
- Veteran students may want their back to the wall or other special conditions or considerations
- Abrupt changes in the physical characteristics of the classroom (such as in lighting and sound) may be startling

- Solicit student feedback and integrate students’ suggestions for improving the physical safety and comfort of the classroom (check-in cards are helpful with this as well)

### Self-Care

Teach, model, and practice self-care

- Include a self-care statement on course syllabi that states the importance of and our expectations for student self-care as well as provides links to resources such as the UBSSW website: [http://www.socialwork.buffalo.edu/students/self-care/](http://www.socialwork.buffalo.edu/students/self-care/)
- Discuss barriers to self-care and have students brainstorm responses

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| Incorporate self-care into the curriculum, if possible | • Ask students to develop a (private) self-care plan as a course activity or graded assignment |

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