



## **Trauma Informed Practice Online Course Curriculum**

### **COURSE I. TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE FOR TEACHING ARTISTS**

#### **INTRODUCTION AND COURSE FRAMING**

This course will ask attendees to explore big picture concepts in the fields of neurobiology, behavioral health, education, and the arts, in order to make connections to their work as humans, artists, and facilitators. To do this, the course is divided into five main sections, each with an overarching theme.

Foundational knowledge is provided through the use of a handbook and course videos, as well as a slate of supplementary reading and videos by experts in the field. In between the course modules listed below, attendees will move through a blend of freewrites, assignments, sample activities, discussion board prompts, and shared practices from arts educators who have activated trauma-informed practice in their spaces.

#### **SECTION 1: TRAUMA, THE BRAIN, AND SAFETY**

##### **Defining Trauma**

The study of trauma is relatively new, and researchers across all the sciences are uncovering new information about trauma every day. For this reason, defining trauma is not a simple task. This module explores two of many ways to define trauma, as well as some of the types of trauma an individual may encounter over the course of their life.

##### **Trauma and the Survival Response**

Stress, crisis, and trauma each have a direct impact on how our brain functions, how it allocates resources to the rest of our body, and how we react and respond to what is going on around us. This module examines the relationship between safety, stressors, and our brains and bodies.

##### **Safety**

All of our brains are wired to protect our well-being, but how we each define safety is different. This module reviews why safety is highly individualized, and why we cannot guarantee safe spaces for our participants.

##### **Considering Brain States**

One thing educators can consider when planning lessons and interacting with participants is how both their sense of safety and facing novelty can affect their brain state. This module introduces the brain states and connects them to how trying new things affects our brain and body.

### **Novelty and the Brain**

When considering the brain states of our participants, it's important to account for the concept of novelty. This module examines how the brain receives and responds to anything it determines as new in our lives.

### **Connecting Novelty, Rituals, and Roadmaps**

This module connects theory to practice by outlining multiple ways educators can account for safety, brain states, and novelty in their learning spaces. Included is an examination of how educators can provide predictability and consistency through rituals and road maps.

### **Put into Practice: Discussion 1**

To further examine the ways educators can bring the theories in Section 1 into their workshop spaces, the Bartol course facilitators discuss how they incorporate the concepts of invitation and welcoming into their own learning spaces.

## **SECTION 2: TRAUMA, TRUST, AND BELIEFS**

### **How Beliefs are Formed**

Part of trauma-informed practice is recognizing the intersection between our brains, bodies, and beliefs. This module begins this exploration by outlining how our brain forms and strengthens beliefs to ensure our safety.

### **Beliefs and Culture**

Culture is integral to helping us make connections between old concepts and new in order to learn, and the brain and body use culture as a compass to measure our safety. This module explores one method of defining culture, and how culture shapes and impacts belief systems, making each of us unique.

### **Our Beliefs and Building Community Culture**

Culture is part of an educator's authentic teaching style, enriching how they teach and relate to participants. It also shapes how educators interpret the actions of participants, who often come from a culture different than their own. This next module examines how culture may shape an educator's belief systems when it comes to learning.

### **Beliefs and Our Basic Needs**

The brain is always watching to see if basic needs are fulfilled. This module introduces two systems of exploring our basic needs, and how these basic needs intersect with relationships, art, and learning.

### **Building Trust and Viewing Trust on a Scale**

These modules pair together to examine how trust operates in relation to belief systems. In the first module, Harvard professor Frances Frei outlines three key areas for us to consider when we're communicating with others. In the second, two trust frameworks explore how the structure of workshops and curricula intersect with trust.

### **Put into Practice Discussion 2**

To further examine the ways educators can bring the theories in Section 2 into their workshop spaces, the Bartol course facilitators discuss how they account for the concepts of basic needs and trust in their learning spaces.

## **SECTION 3: TRAUMA AND BEHAVIOR**

### **The Survival Response, Brain, and Body**

To begin the exploration of how trauma, crisis, and stress can impact behavior, this module outlines how the continued activation of our survival response can change how our brains and bodies function in order to keep us safe.

### **Social Interaction and the Survival Response**

This module examines how relationships can affect our brain and body on a physiological level using Zaretta Hammond's *Social Interaction Elements That Activate Threats in the Brain* as a framework.

### **Co-Regulation and Self-Regulation**

Bodies need opportunities to process and move through experiences and sensations just like brains. This module introduces the concepts of self-regulation and co-regulation, and the potential positive impact these soothing activities can have on the body.

### **Guest Artist Demonstration and Discussion: Rhythm and Regulation**

Vocussionist Bethlehem Roberson demonstrates providing a road map through rhythm and sound to help individuals navigate through emotions of sorrow, stress, joy and happiness. After the demonstration, she shares how she breaks down the activity through the lens of trauma-informed practice to support her participants.

### **Membership Circles and Low-Risk Participation**

This module introduces two tools educators can use to create an environment of support: Membership Circles and Low-Impact Participation Plans. These tools, which can be activated during curriculum planning or in the learning space, can help educators be affirming and responsive to the individual needs of every participant.

### **Trauma and the Nervous System and Responding to Changed Behavior**

Helping a participant navigate charged emotions and actions is one of the most complex tasks educators face. These two modules pair to explore stress, crisis, and trauma in relationship to external behavior. In the first module, the Trauma Foundation outlines how the autonomic nervous system plays a part in how we interact with the world. The second module provides a framework that educators can use when a participant is emotionally charged.

### **Put into Practice Discussion 3**

To further examine the ways educators can bring the theories in Section 3 into their learning spaces, the Bartol course facilitators discuss how they incorporate the idea of low-risk participation into their workshop culture, and how they provide opportunities for participants to engage in regulation.

## **SECTION 4: SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE RELATIONALLY, EMOTIONALLY, AND COMMUNALLY**

### **Defining Resilience and the Challenges Surrounding Resilience**

To begin the examination of how educators can support participants relationally, emotionally, and communally, these paired modules introduce and challenge the concept of resilience. For a snapshot of how resilience is currently defined in the behavioral health community, the first module features videos from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child. The second module seeks to broaden the understanding of resilience by exploring alternative definitions and how resilience can be misunderstood, misconstrued, and leveraged by systems.

### **Protective Factors and Skills that Fortify Us**

The learning process invites participants to be builders by using their experiences with educators to build and expand upon what they already know. This allows educators a unique opportunity to dialogue openly with participants about the skills present in arts spaces, and how they connect to life. This module introduces two life skills frameworks to explore connections between the frameworks and arts education.

### **Guest Artist Demonstration and Discussion: Visualizing and Articulating**

Musician Betsaleel (**Bets**) **Charmelus** invites attendees to make use of online visualizers as a catalyst to identify and navigate thoughts, feelings, and needs and then translate them into writing. After the demonstration, he shares how he breaks down the activity through the lens of trauma-informed practice to support his participants.

### **The Importance of Affirmation**

One of the most powerful things educators can offer participants as they engage with novelty, productive stress, or even heightened emotion is affirmation. This module will outline several different types of affirmation, its benefits, and how educators can plan for affirmation in both workshop structure and facilitation practice.

### **Put Into Practice Discussion 4**

To further examine the ways educators can bring the theories in Section 4 into their learning spaces, the Bartol course facilitators discuss how they connect art-making and life skills in their workshop spaces, and how they encourage peer-to-peer affirmation as part of their classroom culture.

## **SECTION 5: BOUNDARIES, REFLECTION, AND SELF-CARE**

### **The Importance of Processing**

When the brain doesn't have regular opportunities to process, it can have a direct effect on what a person remembers, learns, and how they see themselves and the world. This module explores the connections between the brain and different styles of reflection.

### **When Participants Share Personal Stories**

As a participant learns and creates, and their trust in their facilitator grows, sometimes they will share personal stories or use art-making as an opportunity to explore and process different aspects of their lives. This module introduces tools to help educators lead with listening and support their participants as they share personal stories.

### **Guest Artist Demonstration and Discussion: Processing and Reflection**

Writer Enoch Church introduces a method to help participants reflect and process their personhood with his *Life Garden* worksheet. Using pens, pencils, color pencils, and markers, participants will be invited to draw a plant in nine different pots as a way to explore how each quality was watered during their childhood. After the demonstration, he shares how he breaks down the activity through the lens of trauma-informed practice to support his participants.

### **Self-Care, Community Care, and Boundaries**

This module explores the potential impact of working as a service provider, and the importance of taking care of our own needs while holding space for participants. This video addresses that need through three avenues: self-care, community care, and boundaries.



### **Creating Trauma-Informed Practices**

This module introduces two brainstorming tools that educators can use to consider how to incorporate trauma-informed practice into learning spaces and facilitation style moving forward.

### **Put into Practice: Discussion 5**

To further examine the ways educators can bring the theories in Section 5 into their learning spaces, the Bartol course facilitators discuss how they incorporate reflection into the workshop culture, as well as techniques they use to support a participant who is making art inspired by a personal story.

### **COURSE CLOSING**

The final modules of the course outline additional resources for attendees who are interested in further learning, as well as a clear road map to remain involved with both the cohort and the Bartol learning community at large. Upon completion of assignments, each attendee receives a certificate for completing the training.