

TEACHING AFTER TRAGEDY



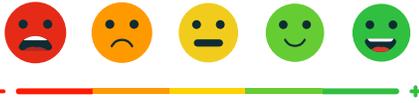
“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

— Aristotle

Whether it's a school shooting, a natural disaster, or community violence, the hard reality is that your students will be exposed to tragedy in the world. As you look to come alongside and support your students it's important to create a safe environment where they can navigate and process their feelings.

Implement daily check-ins

Daily check-ins help normalize emotions for students. Get in the habit of asking students to take a moment and identify a few feelings they have had that day. **Meditation body scans** can also help students identify where in their body they are feeling their emotions.



The classroom space

Creating a **safe space** in the classroom can be helpful if you are constantly finding yourself with students overwhelmed with big feelings. Getting out of the classroom and changing the environment is another strategy but not always possible when you have an entire classroom you are tending to. So, a safe space can be within your classroom and students can voluntarily move to the safe place. A safe place can be a comfortable corner, or chair, with soft pillows and blankets. Strategically place furniture so that this space is shielded from others yet still visible to the teacher. When deciding on manipulatives think of sensory items. The safe place should not be the same as a time out area. It is a choice of the child that can be made without repercussion or explanation.

Read to them!

Reading is a great way to help students identify and explore emotions they might be feeling.



Click [here](#) for books to read with your class!

Get your students moving more!



When traumatic events happen it's important to provide space for regular or increased movement throughout your student's day. Physical activity can burn off adrenaline, release mood-enhancing endorphins, and help with sleep at night. Activities that move both the arms and legs can help rouse a student's nervous system from that “stuck” feeling that often follows a traumatic experience. Outdoor time is also important for calming student bodies and vitamin D intake.

Empower your students to take action

In tragedy we can feel powerless. Sometimes working towards a way to help others can be cathartic. [Here](#) are some ideas for brainstorming with your students.

Safe space sensory items

- Calming sounds: A sound machine or portable CD player with headphones.
- Good Scents! Try a diffuser or potentially put a good-smelling bottle of hand lotion.
- Make it cozy! Different textured pillows, cuddly stuffed animals, and weighted blankets.
- A picture of the **feelings wheel**.
- Books: especially ones that have to do with emotions and feelings.
- Try having bottled water available for them to have while sitting there.
- Physical manipulatives-Rubik's cube, stress ball, motion bubbler, **breathing cards**.
- Timer-Setting a certain amount of time for a student to use the space is helpful.