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Position Statement on Reaching Learners Who Have Experienced Trauma

[Adopted April 2020; Reviewed and Revised April 2023]

NAEA believes that visual arts, design and media arts can help reach learners who experience trauma. Engagement in art helps learners develop coping strategies, create a sense of control and empowerment, and build resilience. Visual art, design and media arts education enables learners to clarify and communicate perspectives, express personal narratives, and imagine new possibilities when guided by effective art educators.

NAEA acknowledges that art educators cultivate authentic connections and establish consistent expectations with learners in order to:

- create a safe, welcoming, and caring environment for expression.
- communicate feelings and experiences in a variety of productive ways, addressing social and emotional skills.
- develop stability.
- foster resilience.
- empower agency.
- promote playful experimentation, flexibility, choice, and purpose.
- encourage inner strength and a vision for each individual's future.

NAEA values the benefits of art educators being trained in trauma informed care. This includes supporting ongoing professional development for art educators to recognize, understand, and respond to diverse trauma (known or unknown) using best practices.

NAEA emphasizes the necessity of defined boundaries and obligations within learning environments that clearly explain the role of the art educator, as well as, procedures and resources to address the needs of learners requiring assistance from other services and professionals.

NAEA believes that the employer of an art educator has a responsibility to provide training that communicates the protocols, rules, and laws related to reporting events, crises, or conditions that may place a learner at risk.



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Defining Language

Trauma-Informed Practice is a strengths-based framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma. It emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone, and creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health/trauma-informed-practice-resources>

“Trauma-informed care is an approach to interacting with people who have histories of trauma that acknowledges the presence of trauma indicators and the role that trauma has played in their lives” Therapeutic Approaches in Art Education , Page 40, Lisa Kay:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. ACEs can include violence, abuse, and growing up in a family with mental health or substance use problems. Toxic stress from ACEs can change brain development and affect how the body responds to stress. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. However, ACEs can be prevented.

<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/aces/index.html>

Resources:

Art for Children Experiencing Psychological Trauma: A Guide for Art Educators and School Based Professionals, Donalyn Heise (Author), Beverley H. Johns (Author), Adrienne D. Hunter (Editor) Routledge, April 2018.

<https://www.routledge.com/Art-for-Children-%20Experiencing-Psychological-Trauma-A-Guide-for-Art-Educators/Hunter-Heise-Johns/p/book/9781138236950>

Harvard University, The Foundation for Art & Healing and the Unlonely Project,
<https://artandhealing.org>

Helping Teachers Manage the Weight of Trauma -Understanding and mitigating the effects of secondary traumatic stress for educators. Jessica Lander, September 2018.

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/18/09/helping-teachers-manage-weight-trauma>



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'I Didn't Know It Had a Name': Secondary Traumatic Stress and Educators, Tim Walker, National Education Association, 2019. <http://neatoday.org/2019/10/18/secondary-traumatic-stress/>

Order out of chaos: An arts-based approach to counteract violence. Kay, L. & Arnold, A. (2014) *Art Education*, 67(4), 31-36.

"*Paper Tigers*", James Refords movie about a school's approach in dealing with Trauma.
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4076258/>

Relationship, Responsibility, And Regulation: Trauma-Invested Practices for Fostering Resilient Learners, Kristin Van Marter Souers, Pete Hall

Therapeutic Approaches in Art Education , Lisa Kay:
<https://www.davisart.com/art-education-resources/therapeutic-approaches/>

Trauma-Informed Art Education: Caring for Learners and Each Other, Lisa Kay and Donalyn Heise; *Translations*, National Art Education Association

Trauma- Informed Care Resource Guide, Crisis Prevention Institute, 2017 Crisis Prevention Institute <https://www.crisisprevention.com/> Free book:
https://institute.crisisprevention.com/EDTraumaInformedCare.html?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=egp&utm_content={campaignname&qclid=CjwKCAiAxvGfBhB-EiwAMPakgrxSL0gKDAqhl6nc-wSK7DVI8SUwoVag6Q0wzUop6l9TURIOgG-ABBoC3tkQAvD_BwE

Trauma-Sensitive Schools: A Whole-School Approach. <https://traumasensitiveschools.org/>