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## Teacher-Child Relationships Through a Trauma-Informed Care Lens

### INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with “Cultivating Connections After Trauma: Relationship Equity in Your Classroom,” a webinar featuring Dr. Amanda Williford provided by Teachstone® as part of their Trauma-Informed Care Webinar Series. The questions and activities in this handout can be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), individual coaching, or self-reflection.

### Goals

- ◆ Understand the differences between relationship equity and equality.
- ◆ Explore research-based strategies for creating positive relationships with children.
- ◆ Discuss *Banking Time* as a way to build unconditional positive regard during one-on-one sessions.

### Activity

- ◆ Before the webinar, use the prompting questions to reflect on your current practices and beliefs about building positive relationships.
- ◆ Listen to the webinar. This webinar is a conversation with Dr. Amanda Williford, a Research Associate Professor at the University of Virginia and an expert in social-emotional learning, specifically in researching and evaluating classroom-based interventions for children with disruptive behaviors and deficits in behavioral and emotional self-regulation skills.
- ◆ After listening to the webinar, use the questions below to guide your reflection on relationship equity and its role in how teachers interact and relate with children.

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**“Not every kid in the classroom has an equally strong relationship with us, and more importantly, the kids who might benefit the most from that strong relationship might be the exact same kids who don't have that strength of connection.”**

**Dr. Amanda Williford**

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## QUESTIONS

### Prompting questions

Complete before listening to the webinar

- ◆ Write down the names of three children in your classroom that you have a strong, positive relationship with.
  1. Why do you think it is easy for you to connect with these children?
- ◆ Write down the name of any child in your classroom that you are feeling less connected with.
  2. Why do you think this is the case? What strategies, if any, have you tried in the past to connect with this child?

### Reflection questions

Complete after listening to the webinar

- ◆ Dr. Williford describes how sensitive and responsive relationships form the foundation of being a trauma-informed teacher and how relationships serve as a co-regulation tool. Why do you think establishing a sensitive, responsive relationship is important when focusing on using trauma-informed practices in the classroom?
- ◆ Thinking about your classroom this year (whether virtual, hybrid, or physically distant), how do you think that building relationships will look different?
  1. Identify one specific strategy that you have used in the past to help you connect with each child in your classroom.
  2. How could you adapt such a strategy to use in your new classroom context (virtual, hybrid or physically distant)?
- ◆ Dr. Williford discusses ways to evaluate your current relationships with children in your classroom and to differentiate supports for relationships with students that may not be as strong. One of these strategies is *Banking Time*. As you think about your current practice, consider:
  1. How does *Banking Time* differ from previous interactions you may have had?
  2. What benefits might you see from incorporating *Banking Time*?
  3. How may you need to modify or plan for *Banking Time* based on the strengths and needs of individual children? For example, how might you best support a child with a disability in your classroom during a *Banking Time* session?

\*See [here](#) for videos, tips, and planning guides for implementing *Banking Time*.
- ◆ This webinar described various strategies that can be used to build positive relationships in your classroom equitably.
  1. What is one new strategy you would like to incorporate?
  2. How do you plan on incorporating this new relationship building strategy? What supports and resources do you have to assist you with this goal? What supports and resources might you need to assist you with this goal?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about teacher-child relationships through a trauma-informed care lens:

- ◆ **Source:** Child Mind Institute
  - ◆ **Article:** “How Trauma Affects Kids in School”
  - ◆ **Link:** <https://childmind.org/article/how-trauma-affects-kids-school/>
  - ◆ **Description:** This article will lead you to explore how childhood trauma can cause learning and behavior issues and its effect on the formation of the teacher-child relationship. You will discover how to recognize symptoms of trauma and review strategies to best support children for success in your classroom and in your relationship with one another.
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- ◆ **Source:** Kennedy Krieger Institute
  - ◆ **Blog:** “Trauma-Informed Practices: Considerations for the IEP Meeting”
  - ◆ **Link:** <https://www.kennedykrieger.org/stories/linking-research-classrooms-blog/trauma-informed-practices-considerations-iep-meeting>
  - ◆ **Description:** This blog will engage you in how to be aware of children and families in your classroom who have experienced trauma and how this may impact your relationship with the child. You will understand how a trauma-sensitive approach to IEP meetings will require you to practice intentionality in building a partnership with the family and create a supporting environment during the IEP process.