

NUTRITION IN THE CLASSROOM

TRAUMA INFORMED LANGUAGE

WHEN TALKING TO STUDENTS ABOUT NUTRITION OR FOOD, IT IS IMPORTANT TO USE TRAUMA INFORMED LANGUAGE TO CONNECT WITH THEIR EXPERIENCES TO ENSURE THE INFORMATION ACTUALLY HELPS!
HAVE QUESTIONS? CONTACT VICTORIA ELLIS FOR MORE INFO

Tips to Remember:

1. Be Mindful:

Focussing on extremes can make a student closed off and stop listening. If they think it takes too much change to make better decisions about food, they are less likely to listen and be attentive to change. Instead start with easy and small changes. Focus on substitutions in the diet, stick with basics like the importance of a diverse diet.

2. Encourage Choices over Change:

There's many barriers to change and everyone has different food stories. Instead of insisting to change a diet, stress the importance of making informed decisions. This could look like choosing white milk instead of chocolate at lunch or taking an apple for a snack instead of fruit snacks, when able.

3. Culturally appropriate foods can be a better option:

Cultural foods can often be thought of as unhealthy. It is important not to shame kids for eating food they are familiar and comfortable with over traditionally western, "healthier" foods. Eating their culturally traditional foods is very beneficial for students.



Building Trauma-Informed Food and Nutrition Programs

Autonomy & Competency
Cooking skills and food literacy

Self Regulation
Mindful and self-aware eating

Nourishing Others
Cooking for and feeding family and community

Justice & Equity
Recognizing the impact of social and economic systems

Identity & Self Expression
Sharing food memories, telling stories, and honoring heritage

Positive Experiences
Enjoyment, gratitude, and sensory experiences with food

Supportive Relationships
Foster relationships by cooking and eating together

Physical & Mental Health
Good nutrition for a healthy body and mind

Safety & Security

Trauma informed engagement, reliable, desirable, and dignified food resources

WHAT IS TRAUMA INFORMED LANGUAGE?

School age kids often battle social pressures in many ways. These pressures can often lead to trauma experiences or unhealthy coping. Our job as adults and leaders is to mitigate those unhealthy habits by teaching. When teaching about food or nutrition especially, it is important not to shame students for their habits or home life happenings. Using trauma informed approach means considering students background, or homelife, food stories and more. Many kids do not have the opportunity to choose what they eat, so shaming them for what they eat can create more problems than just unhealthy eating.