

# Let's Talk About *Trauma*



PURDUE UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST  
COUNSELING CENTER

## DEFINING TRAUMA

- According to the American Psychological Association (APA), trauma refers to “an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape, or natural disaster.” (1)
- Individuals can experience the same events very differently - what is traumatic for one person may not be for another.
- Traumatic experiences may take place over long periods of time, such as in abusive interpersonal relationships. (2)
- The effects of trauma can be a result of multiple traumatic events throughout a lifetime.

## DO'S

- Validate the student's experience. Let them know that you appreciate what they have shared.
- Listen. Let the student feel like it is OK to talk and that you don't judge them for their lived experiences.
- Encourage the student to seek support. If their trauma continues to cause them distress, they may benefit from professional help, such as the PNW Counseling Center (for counseling), and possible medical provider (for medication).

## DISPELLING MYTHS

- Talking about trauma is bad or harmful.
  - FACT: Stigmatizing trauma may worsen its impact and talking about trauma can be empowering.
- Everyone who has trauma has PTSD.
  - FACT: While trauma is very common, PTSD is not.
- Trauma only affects the weak.
  - FACT: Trauma can affect anyone and it is important that everyone has support.
- Trauma is permanent.
  - FACT: Even severe trauma can be overcome and there is ongoing progress in treating trauma.

## DONT'S

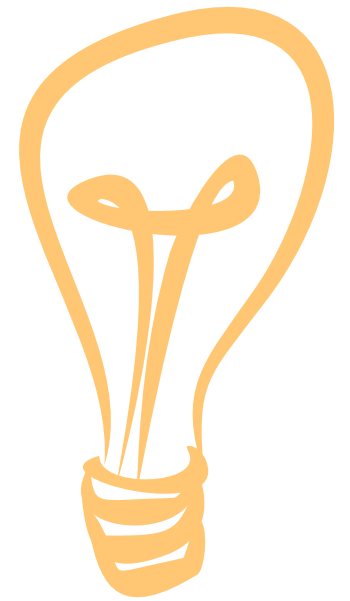
- Don't blame, shame, minimize, or otherwise invalidate the student's experience.
- Don't share your own traumatic experiences or try to get the student to 'look on the bright side'
- Don't try to fix the student's problem or situation or tell them what they could have done differently.



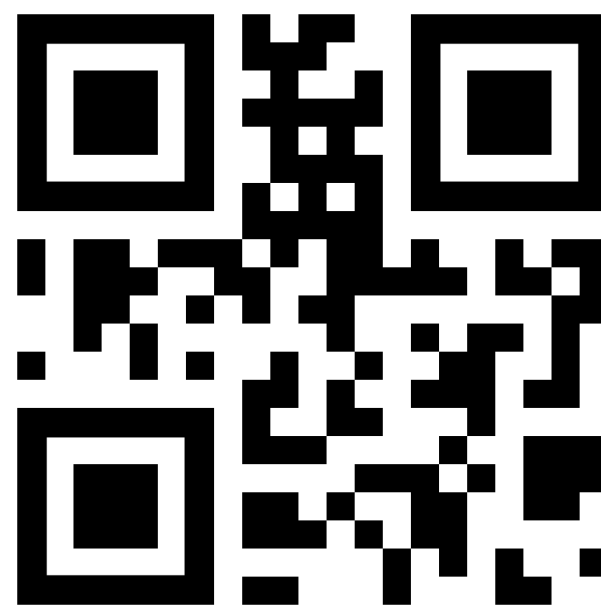
**TURN OVER FOR RESOURCES**

# RESOURCES

- PNW Counseling Center
  - Riley Center, Room 104 (Hammond) & TECH 101 (Westville)
  - (219) 989 - 2366
- Veteran Services at PNW
  - SULB 335 (Hammond) & DSAC 1002 (Westville)
  - (219) 989 - 2727
- Anonymous PTSD Screening, scan QR code below:



- Mobile Apps for Dealing with PTSD
  - <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/index.asp>
- National Suicide Lifeline Number (**988**):



- Information on trauma and different treatment option
  - <https://psychcentral.com/program/trauma>
- Understanding PTSD
  - <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/post-traumatic-stress-disorder>

## Citations

1“Trauma” <https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma>

2“Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder” <https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en#/http%3a%2f%2fid.who.int%2fid%2fentity%2f585833559>