



101183228

## Training structure and tools

<b>Deliverable</b>	D2.3 – Training Module on PTSD Awareness and Response in VET
<b>Provided by</b>	UNINA – University of Naples Federico II
<b>Training format</b>	1 PPT module + 5 tools (glossary, self-reflection, checklist, techniques, self-assessment)
<b>Training Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness of PTSD and its impact on students in VET settings</li> <li>• Provide practical tools for teachers and staff to recognize signs of psychological distress</li> <li>• Use real-life scenarios to reflect on how to react appropriately</li> <li>• Promote an inclusive and trauma-informed educational approach</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know the main symptoms of PTSD</li> <li>• Understand the impact of trauma on learning, motivation, and behavior</li> <li>• Be aware of available resources to support students</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify observable signs of psychological distress in school contexts</li> <li>• Use basic tools to manage critical situations</li> <li>• Activate referral pathways to specialized services when needed</li> </ul> <p><b>Attitudes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show sensitivity and respect toward people with traumatic experiences</li> <li>• Adopt a non-judgmental communication style</li> <li>• Be open to collaboration with colleagues and mental health professionals</li> </ul>



## Presentation Index

### Unit 1

- 1.1 PTSD Quick Overview
- 1.2 Trauma affects learning
- 1.3 Exercise - Case Scenario: behind the behavior

### Unit 2

- 2.1 Warning Signs in the Classroom
- 2.2 Creating Non-Triggering Spaces
- 2.3 Exercise - Case Scenario: The Student Who Walks Out

### Unit 3

- 3.1 Immediate Response Strategies
- 3.2 Building a Trauma-Informed Culture
- 3.3 Exercise - Action Planning: My Next Step





101183228

<b>Tool 1: Glossary</b>	
<b>PTSD</b>	A mental health condition triggered by exposure to traumatic events
<b>TRAUMA</b>	The experience of emotional distress resulting from an event that overwhelms the person's capacity to emotionally process it
<b>TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH</b>	An educational approach that integrates awareness of trauma effects into all practices
<b>TRIGGER</b>	A stimulus that recalls traumatic memories and provokes a strong emotional reaction
<b>GROUNDING</b>	A strategy that helps people "anchor" themselves in the present moment during distress



101183228

## Tool 2: Self-reflective Questions

1. Think about a moment when you felt overwhelmed or unsafe.

What emotion were you feeling?

How did your body feel (i.e. tense, sore...)?

How did you perceived others (i.e., indifferent, scary, scared...)?

How did you want others to react?

How does that inform how you respond to students?

2. Think about your current classes.

Do you usually pay attention to your communication style and the potentially triggering words or ways you use?

Can you control lights, noises, seating dispositions, and other potentially triggering situations?

Do you notice how are your students feeling (i.e., if they are suddenly shut-down or agitated...)?

3. What current practices in your classroom might unintentionally increase anxiety for traumatized learners? Write down one adaptation you could try.

4. Think about how you feel when you are in the classroom.

Do you ever feel frustration, emptiness, discouragement, inadequacy...?

Are you able to recognize your own feelings of stress and take breaks accordingly?

What pleasant activity could you engage in, to feel more present and relaxed?



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## Tool 3: Checklist

### Recognizing distress signs

- Observe stress signals (irritability, concentration problems, frequent absences)
- Notice sudden withdrawal or hyperactivity
- Document observations and share with referral staff if needed

### Non-triggering spaces

- Avoid bright lights, complete darkness, and sudden noises
- Arrange seating facing towards the door
- Avoid physical contact and sudden body movements

### Careful communication

- Use clear, calm, and non-judgmental language
- Avoid intrusive questions or forcing disclosure
- Avoid mentioning potentially triggering words or topics (i.e., strong visual content, detailed discussions of war or violence...); alternatively, preface the discussion with a trigger warning

### Offering relief

- Offer short breaks without questioning its need
- Teach and practice grounding activities
- Refer to competent services and/or professionals when necessary

### Caring for professionals

- Share your feelings about work and trauma with colleagues or friends
- Engage in regular self-care activities and/or in grounding techniques
- Set boundaries between work and personal time



## Tool 4: Grounding Techniques

### The 5–4–3–2–1 Sensory Grounding

A simple way to reconnect with the present moment through the senses. Use when a student (or you) feels anxious, dissociated, or overwhelmed.

How to do it:

- Look around and name 5 things you can see
- Touch and notice 4 things you can feel (chair, pen, clothes...)
- Listen for 3 sounds in the room
- Notice 2 things you can smell
- Focus on 1 thing you can taste or the feeling in your mouth

### Box Breathing

A short breathing routine that reduces anxiety and helps restore focus. It works well before lessons, after a triggering event, or during stress.

How to do it:

- Imagine a square where every side is exactly the same length. Then, imagine your breath tracing the perimeter of that square, with each side representing a phase of equal duration: inhale, hold, exhale, hold.
  - Inhale through the nose for 4 seconds
  - Hold the breath for 4 seconds
  - Exhale slowly through the mouth for 4 seconds
  - Pause (hold empty) for 4 seconds
- Repeat the “square” 4 times



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### Tool 5: Self-Assessment Tool (Questions)

<b>During a student flashback, what should you do?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Ask them to share the details of their trauma</li><li>b) Encourage a grounding activity</li><li>c) Send them home immediately</li><li>d) Pretend nothing is happening</li></ul>
<b>What is the first appropriate step if you suspect a student shows signs of PTSD?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Ask for details about the traumatic event</li><li>b) Ignore the signals to avoid discomfort</li><li>c) Use a checklist and activate referral pathways</li><li>d) Share the concern immediately with the class</li></ul>
<b>Which is an example of a trauma-informed classroom adaptation?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Asking all students to present a project in front of the class</li><li>b) Allowing short breaks if distress arises, no questions asked</li><li>c) Ignoring student reactions, to avoid making them feel different</li><li>d) Mentioning potentially triggering scenarios, to desensitize them</li></ul>
<b>What is grounding?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) A strategy to stay in the present moment during distress</li><li>b) A strategy to identify the core cause of a panic attack</li><li>c) A method of replaying a traumatic memory in a safe environment</li><li>d) The act of establishing connection with a teacher</li></ul>
<b>What makes spaces potentially less triggering?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Very bright lights</li><li>b) Loud and sudden noises</li><li>c) All seats facing towards the door</li><li>d) Complete darkness</li></ul>

Question 1 (b); Question 2 (c); Question 3 (b); Question 4 (a); Question 5 (c)