Oregon State University

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE:
Considerations for Remote Delivery of Parenting Education Programming

SUMMER, 2020

PREPARATION.   RELATIONSHIP.   PREDICTABILITY.   FLEXIBILITY.   WELL-BEING.

These are the foundations for trauma-informed care in online delivery of parenting education programming.

1. BEFORE STARTING AN ONLINE PARENTING EDUCATION CLASS:

Provide technology support for facilitators and families.

<u>For facilitators</u>:

Apply the same trauma-informed care strategies you would use with families when working with and supporting facilitators. Make sure that facilitators know who to connect with for help and support as they shift to teaching parenting education in online settings. Ask about and address their worries and anxieties.

- Ensure facilitator comfort with technology/format for online delivery success.
- Provide tutorials, resources, and model best practices for facilitators that support a successful experience online (e.g., written materials and video tutorials).

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OREGON PARENTING EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

Allow space for people to share what's happening with them in that moment. Be available, ready.

- Corinne Potts, South Coast Regional Early Learning Hub -

For facilitators (continued):

- Set up "office hours" that allow facilitators to connect and practice using online platforms with support from one another.

- Consider pairing facilitators new to remote delivery with facilitators who have experience with remote delivery for mentorship.

For families:

Use trauma-informed care strategies to help ensure that families feel as welcome and safe in an online class as they would in an in-person class.

- Before your class, connect with participants to introduce yourself, answer questions, and get to know them, including their interests and needs. What would they like you to know about their family in advance of the class?

- Send resources to families that can help them see an example of how to log on as well as what to expect when participating (e.g., walkthrough video that shows how to log on; a short video clip introduction to the facilitator welcoming participants to the class in advance and explaining what the program is about).

- Use platforms that families are already using and familiar with when possible (e.g., WhatsApp, Zoom, Facebook groups). Offer opportunities for families to log on to the platform in advance of your class to get comfortable with the technology.

- Give parents options as to how and when to participate. When possible, schedule classes or opportunities that meet families' schedules (e.g., offer classes at multiple times of day or different days of the week).

- Experiment with live versus recorded classes to gauge family participation preferences. Some families may prefer to watch a pre-recorded video with content flexibly on their own time and then come together virtually to discuss what they learned with one another. Others might prefer to learn new content together with others at the same time.

- Share links (e.g., Zoom links), and send reminders one week before class and then again one day before class.

- Consider using the Zoom simultaneous interpretation feature (when you are able to engage or hire an interpreter) to allow multi-lingual families to choose the language of facilitation that is most comfortable for them.

2. DURING AN ONLINE PARENTING EDUCATION CLASS:

Create a welcoming environment and model self-care.

- Welcome parents as they arrive into your online class. Greet them by name and learn the correct pronunciation for everyone's name. Invite participants to share pronouns if comfortable doing so.

- Show a welcoming image on your shared screen (e.g., family-child interaction, family meal or other images representing self-care).

- At the beginning of each class, remind families of your class "norms."

For example, facilitators can empower participants to tend to their needs by letting them know:

If you need to get-up, stretch, get something to eat or drink, take care of an immediate need of a pet, child or partner please do – we will welcome you back knowing you will be able to be fully present during classes!

- Let families know that they can participate in the way they feel most comfortable (e.g., video can be turned on or left off, they can raise a hand or unmute themselves to comment or ask a question, they will never be forced to share).

- Take time to ground and orient participants before launching into content. Model a stress relief strategy or one that encourages participants to be present (e.g., 60 seconds of stretching and yawning, focusing their thoughts on their child, setting an intention for their time in class that day).

- Take time to build connection and presence with each other and foster relationships between families (e.g., offering opportunities for peer introductions within small discussion groups, using a prompt in the chat box such as "*What is one way your child has surprised you in a positive way?*", taking three deep breaths together as a group counting in 1, 2, 3, and out 1, 2, 3).

- Co-create and use Group Agreements in your online groups, establishing and encouraging positive, compassionate, and respectful comments.

Use creative prompts or icebreakers to help families get to know one another.
For example:
- ✓ What is one hope you have for your child's future?
- ✓ What is one thing you have done as a parent that you thought you would never do, but are glad you do now?

- Model self-care practices yourself throughout each class (e.g., taking breaks, sipping water, recognizing topics that activate stress and modeling taking deep breaths or other grounding strategies).

Offer an online experience that feels safe and predictable.

- Create a routine that provides consistent and reliable aspects of each virtual meeting.

- Share an agenda with families in advance of each meeting (e.g., chat introductions, acknowledgements, icebreaker activity, breaks, short relevant video clips, group discussion).

- Provide opportunities for participants to share, but never force sharing. Allow participants to feel empowered to make that choice.

- Take intentional time to become familiar with the parents in your group and facilitate peer to peer connections.

- Use slides, images, and videos to guide participants through content – there is comfort in knowing what comes next and having visuals.

It's important to look at participation in online groups from the family lens. An (online) group setting can be uncomfortable, it can feel like inviting people into your home.

- Corinne Potts, South Coast Regional Early Learning Hub -

- Make sure examples shared (images, scenarios, resources) include many different types of families from diverse backgrounds so that families see themselves reflected in the class.

- Let families know in advance when potentially challenging topics will be discussed (e.g., trauma, abuse, suicide) so that they can prepare themselves and participate in a way that feels most comfortable.

- Families who have experienced trauma may prefer to watch recordings of class on their own time, rather than along with the group.

- Families with young children may prefer to engage with challenging topics after their children have gone to bed.

- Regularly solicit parents' feedback and gear content, pacing, and resources to areas that are most meaningful for parents. Use polls to pose questions, including: "What is one thing you want to learn during these sessions?" or "What are you struggling with right now? What questions do you have?" Address the needs that arise in subsequent classes as well as with follow-up resources.

- Allow everyone to be involved in a different way as needed. Create opportunities for silent participation and non-verbal processing (e.g., via polls, word cloud). Let families know that all forms of participation are welcome.

- Keep track of and follow up on situations, interests, and stories shared by families from past sessions.

- Recognize that building a relationship with families in online settings will feel different and may take more time than building a relationship in person. For some families, relationship-building might come quickly. Others might benefit from additional one-on-one outreach.

Deliver content that is engaging and individualized to the group

- Use multiple ways to connect and interact with families (e.g., breakout room discussions, visual aids [slides], informal conversation, written/reflective activities, large and small group sharing).

- Use breakout functions (e.g., Zoom) to break up the meeting and create space for spontaneous dialogue and large group sharing.

Taking care of the people who are serving parents is really important. We try to remove as many of the unknowns as possible.

— Claire Hambly, LaneKids, United Way of Lane County —

- Allow participants to inform and prioritize content topics in the moment; make room for the unexpected.
- Plan less for sessions; less is more.
- Adjust supports/resources for parents who have more than one child, and/or a more complex family dynamic
- Consider the challenges families might have engaging in and staying engaged in a class while also caring for their children. Embed parent-child interaction activities into programs for families with young children.
- Provide an opportunity for each family to set personalized goals for the week and follow-up.
- Above all else, be flexible!

3. ONCE A CLASS BEGINS, PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT FOR PARENTING EDUCATORS:

Set up a regular time for facilitators to connect with you or with one another

- Problem-solve challenges that arise and to share and test new ideas related to technology as well as meaningful class content.
- Follow up on remote class meetings by virtually meeting to share a meal and conversation together just like you would have in-person, providing space for informal sharing.
- Help facilitators identify and maintain their personal boundaries, taking calls and returning emails or texts only during predetermined times.

4. CONSIDERATIONS FOR EFFECTIVELY ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES REMOTELY:

Listen to the individual and unique wants and needs of families:

- How are families able to connect?
- How do families want to connect?
- What topics are most meaningful for families?
- Consider: How can you effectively engage and reach families who do not have remote technology access?
- Some parents may benefit more from one-on-one coaching experiences than an online group format. Others may prefer to receive resources or materials they can use at home with their child(ren) outside of a group setting.
- Families may feel exhausted from spending too much time on screens during the day for school/work or may not have access to cellular service or internet in their home
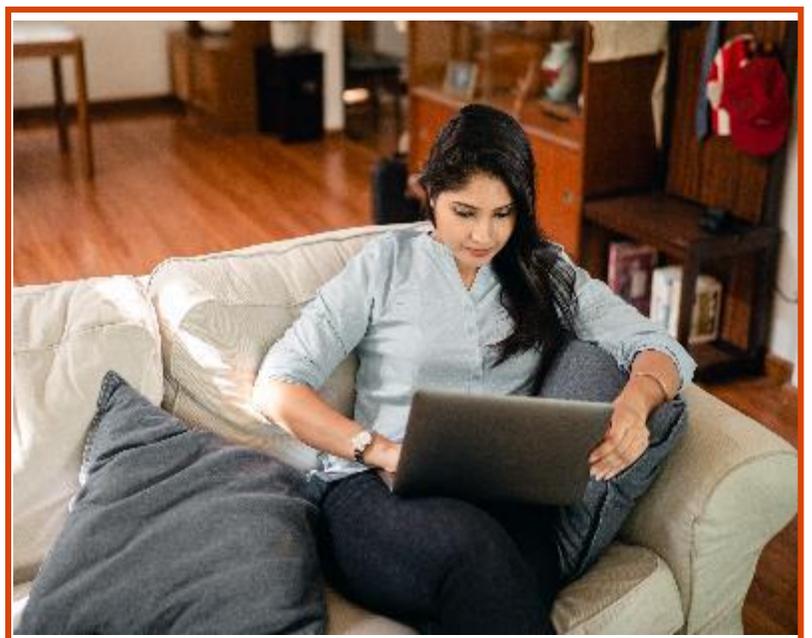
5. STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE FAMILIES WHO DO NOT HAVE INTERNET ACCESS:

- Invite families without internet access to call in to your online parenting classes and events.

- Design online classes and events to be accessible to participants who call in as well as those who join class online (e.g., do not make participation dependent on visual prompts, provide hardcopy materials to participants through the mail).

- Text families activity ideas, parenting hacks, child development information, behavior guidance tips, information on accessible resources, or even just inspiring messages to connect and to bridge the isolation parents might be experiencing.

- Offer parenting support warm line (or refer to one).

- Send out parenting strategies or family activities via mail or provide family activity packets during/at school Grab-and-Go meal zones or in partnership with a local food bank.

- Contact local childcare providers for permission to send parenting packets to families along with flyers to offer their families advertising parenting series', resources or events your Hub is offering.

*We want our parents to feel safe,
to feel like they have a support system.*

- Veronica Mendoza Ochoa, Marion and Polk Early Learning Hub -

Learn More:

A Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching through Coronavirus
Teaching Tolerance
https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-teaching-through-coronavirus

Four Core Priorities for Trauma-Informed Distance Learning
KQED/MindShift
https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/55679/four-core-priorities-for-trauma-informed-distance-learning

Trauma-Informed Care Resources: Community Incidence Response
Trauma-Informed Oregon
https://traumainformedoregon.org/community-incident-response/

Compiled by Adrienne Henry, Oregon State University
Contributors include Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative Hub & Early Learning Hub leaders, coordinators, & partners.