A Moment of Action: Opening an Inclusive, Engaged, and Trauma-Informed Classroom

Kelly Smith, DSW, M.Ed., M.S. & Hans Bernier, MPA, LCSW
An alternative to a Moment of Silence, a Moment of Action engages student participation and activism as an opening exercise. The practice creates a platform to acknowledge some of the myriad ways we can collaborate in the social work community and share our voice on timely and relevant issues using a trauma-informed lens.

Students may also share a Moment of Action by communicating with the instructor and associate before the class session.

**Trauma-informed principles exemplified:** collaboration, resilience, peer support, mutuality, empowerment.
Community Agreement Starters

- Classroom civility – treat all members with professionalism and respect. Be careful with tone and respect pronouns (including in the chat)
- Monitor your airtime & listen actively “flow in/flow out”
- Speak from your own experience using “I” statements
- NAME microaggressions (Notice/Acknowledge/Make Space/Engage the Group)
- DSM-V usage
- Confidentiality of stories shared here – share ideas while protecting identity
- Everyone being mindful of our various backgrounds/situations; being open to different perspectives, approaching other perspectives with curiosity
- Always speak from the I; take accountability
- Allowing each other grace, assume initial best intentions
- Creating a positive online environment: starting and ending on time, muting mics, step-away utilizing the icon, etc.
- Actively recognize if questions will be triggering
- Being kind to yourself and practicing self-care
Opening Activity: Moment of Action

Source: www.ihollaback.org/bystanderintervention/
Help Central Park

Be Anti-Racist

Voter Registration

If you've moved, changed your name, or want to update your political party affiliation, you need to update your voter registration.

Change Your Voter Registration
If you've moved, changed your name, or want to update your political party affiliation, you need to update your voter registration.

Confirm You're Registered to Vote
Check your voter registration status to confirm that you're able to vote in the next election.

How to Get a Voter Registration Card
Learn how to get a voter registration card and what you can do if you need a replacement.

How to Register to Vote
Learn how to register to vote and find the deadlines for voter registration in your state.
Moment of Action: A Letter to your Future Self

a. Congratulate yourself on all you’ve accomplished
b. Remind yourself of why you began your MSW journey
c. Note any key realizations made about your positionality
d. Name a goal or two you hope to be moving toward
e. A piece of advice for your future-self
f. Anything else you’d like to add

Schedule send email for May 16th 2021
### Weekly Moment of Action Examples

**Week 1: VOTE!**
- Registration Application
- Impact for Justice Involved

**Week 2**
- Black Mental Health
- Equity in Maternity Care

**Week 3**
- #JusticeForBre
- #SayHerName

**Week 4**
- Wrongful Conviction
- Documentary - Radical Monarchs

**Week 5**
- Capitalizing Black in writing

**Week 6**
- Thank Kamala Harris for persevering despite racism and misogyny
  @KamalaHarris

**Week 7**
- Excavation of Seneca Village

**Week 8: VOTE!**
- Post office election petition
- Voter Suppression Documentary

**Week 9**
- Building Awareness of New Title IX Regulations and Columbia's Commitment

**Week 10**
- Draft a letter to your future self - scheduled for arrival during graduation week
Why Trauma Informed Instruction

The Moment of Action provides the instructor with opportunities to:

- builds community
- increase student resilience
- meet specific student needs
- offer a sense of predictability
- acknowledge and recognize individual strengths and experiences
- center collaboration and mutuality
- disrupts presumption that knowledge lies only with the educational practitioner
Trauma Defined in Our Context

Traditional Understanding and Definition:
Stressful experience/s in which a person’s ability to cope is overwhelmed:
- witnessing violence
- physical threat and/or harm
- emotional maltreatment and bullying
- abandonment
- devastating loss
- disrupted attachments
- chronic threats to survival (poverty, community violence, inconsistent caretaking)
- See ACE’s Study
Trauma Defined in Our Context

Expanded Understanding and Definition:
Other adverse life events can also have a trauma-like impact:
- Academic failure
- Housing Instability
- Illness
- Under/Unemployment
- Family Conflict
- Community Violence
- Societal Instability
How to Create a Trauma Informed Classroom

- Provide unconditional positive regard in a safe environment
- Always empower never disempower
- Provide opportunities for students who have built some resiliency to help themselves by helping others
- Maintain high expectations reasonable limits and consistent routines
- Increased connections with any pro-social person
- Focusing on the effective and affective.
- Provide explicit instruction that speaks to the range of student experience (i.e Moment of Action!!)
Prior Knowledge

Please complete this quick Google Form
Preparing for a Moment of Action

Examples:
Share a Trauma Informed Practice you have implemented or participated in.

Circles, Restorative Practices, PBIS, Contracts, Behavior Plans
Creating a Moment of Action

Breakout Groups

Step 1: Select Roles
- Facilitator - ensures everyone’s inclusion
- Scribe - takes notes
- Reporter - shares out with the larger group

Step 2: Identify your advocacy goal

Step 3: Conceptualize your Moment of Action (connect with organization/campaign/activity/etc…)

Step 4: Share! (please remember which page you use)
Open Discussion

Any questions or comments?

Thank You!!
Contact and References


Kelly Smith
ks3829@columbia.edu
LinkedIn: kellysmithISWEJ

Hans Bernier
hb2653@columbia.edu
LinkedIn: bernierlcsaw