

October 14, 2026

Implementing Trauma Informed Practices On College Campuses

Brooke E. DeSipio, Ph.D.

Brooke E. DeSipio, Ph.D.

she/her/hers

Survivor Support & Intimacy Education

Lehigh University

Bethlehem, PA

bed4@lehigh.edu





© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference



What is Trauma?

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

An emotional response to a terrible event

Types of Trauma:

- Acute
- Compound/Chronic
- Historical/Generational
- Vicarious
- Secondary
- Intentional Human
- Unintentional Human
- Acts of Nature
- Insidious
- Physical
- Psychological

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Examples of Trauma

- Experiencing or observing physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- Childhood neglect
- Having a family member with a mental health or substance use disorder
- Experiencing or witnessing violence
- Sudden, unexplained separation from a loved one
- Serious injury or illness
- Natural disaster (i.e., flood, hurricane, tornado, fire, earthquake)
- War or political violence (i.e., civil war, terrorism, refugee)
- Community violence (i.e., shooting, mugging, burglary, assault, bullying)

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire for Adults

1. Did you feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, or had no one to protect or take care of you?
2. Did you lose a parent through divorce, abandonment, death, or other reason?
3. Did you live with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or attempted suicide?
4. Did you live with anyone who had a problem with drinking or using drugs, including prescription drugs?
5. Did your parents or adults in your home ever hit, punch, beat, or threaten to harm each other?
6. Did you live with anyone who went to jail or prison?
7. Did a parent or adult in your home ever swear at you, insult you, or put you down?
8. Did a parent or adult in your home ever hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt you in any way?
9. Did you feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were special?
10. Did you experience unwanted sexual contact (such as fondling or oral/anal/vaginal intercourse/penetration)?

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

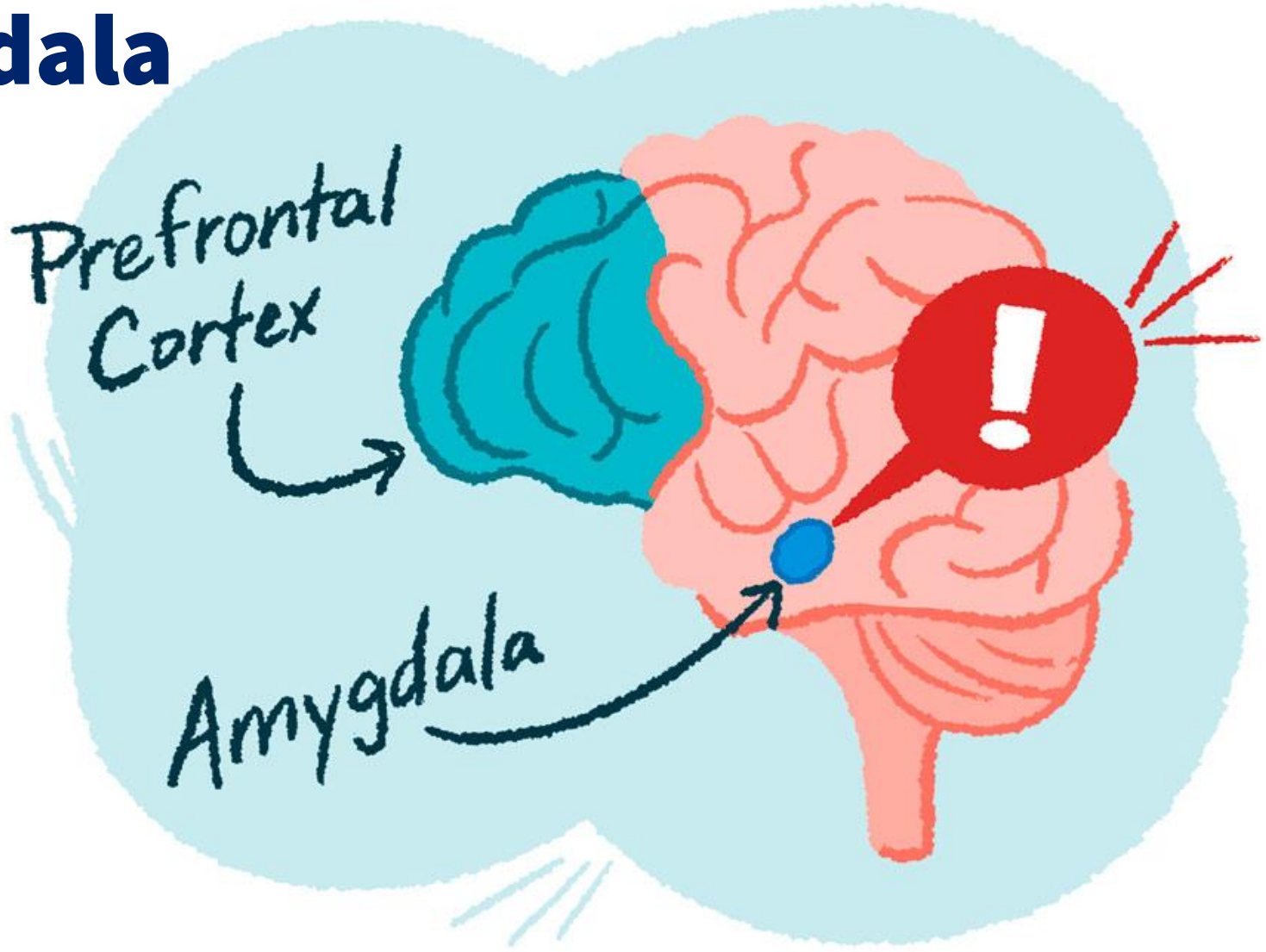
Secondary Trauma: Hearing firsthand about someone's trauma



Holding an Umbrella Over Someone Else

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Changed Prefrontal Cortex and Amygdala



© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Impacts of Trauma



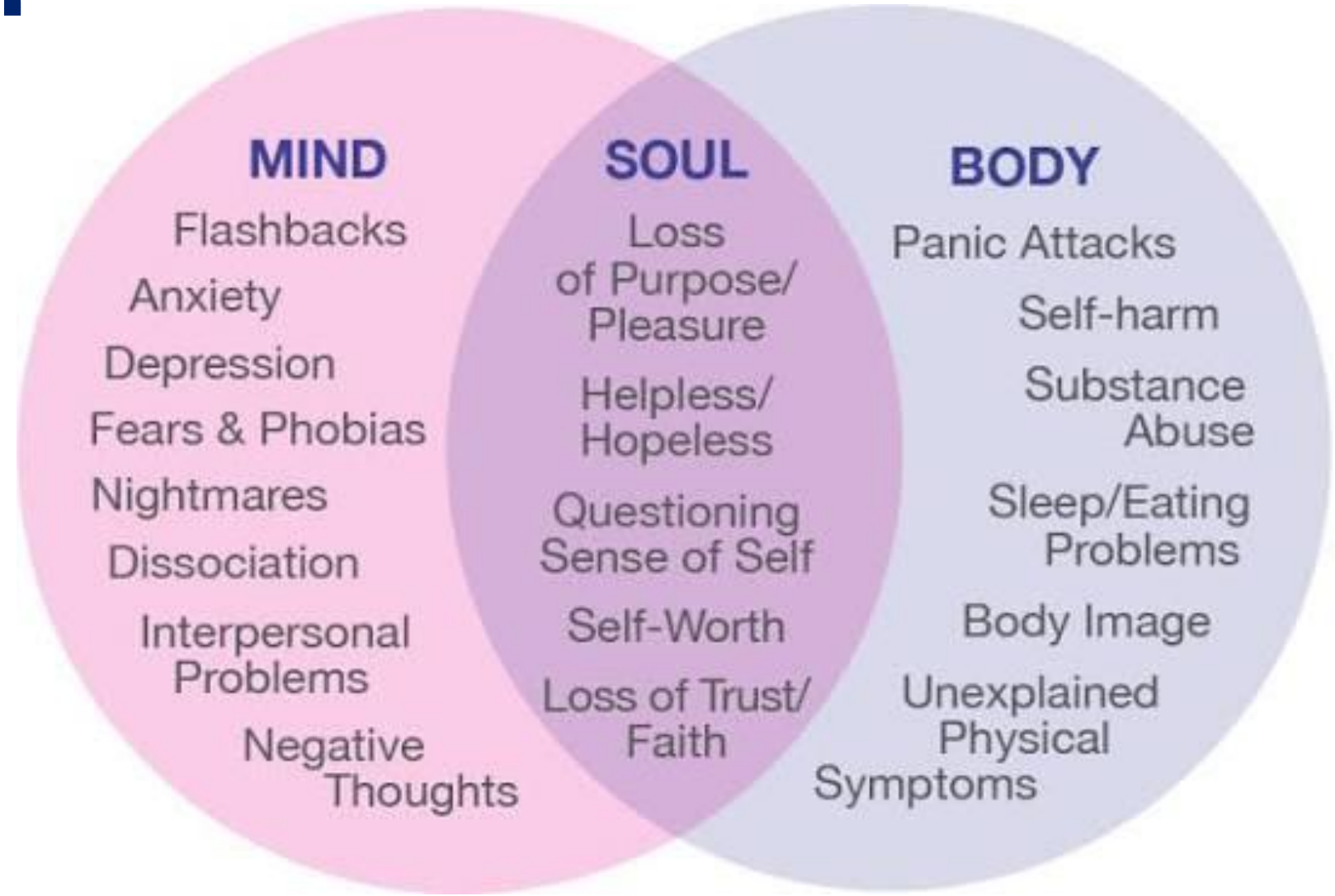
© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Visible v. Hidden Impacts of Trauma



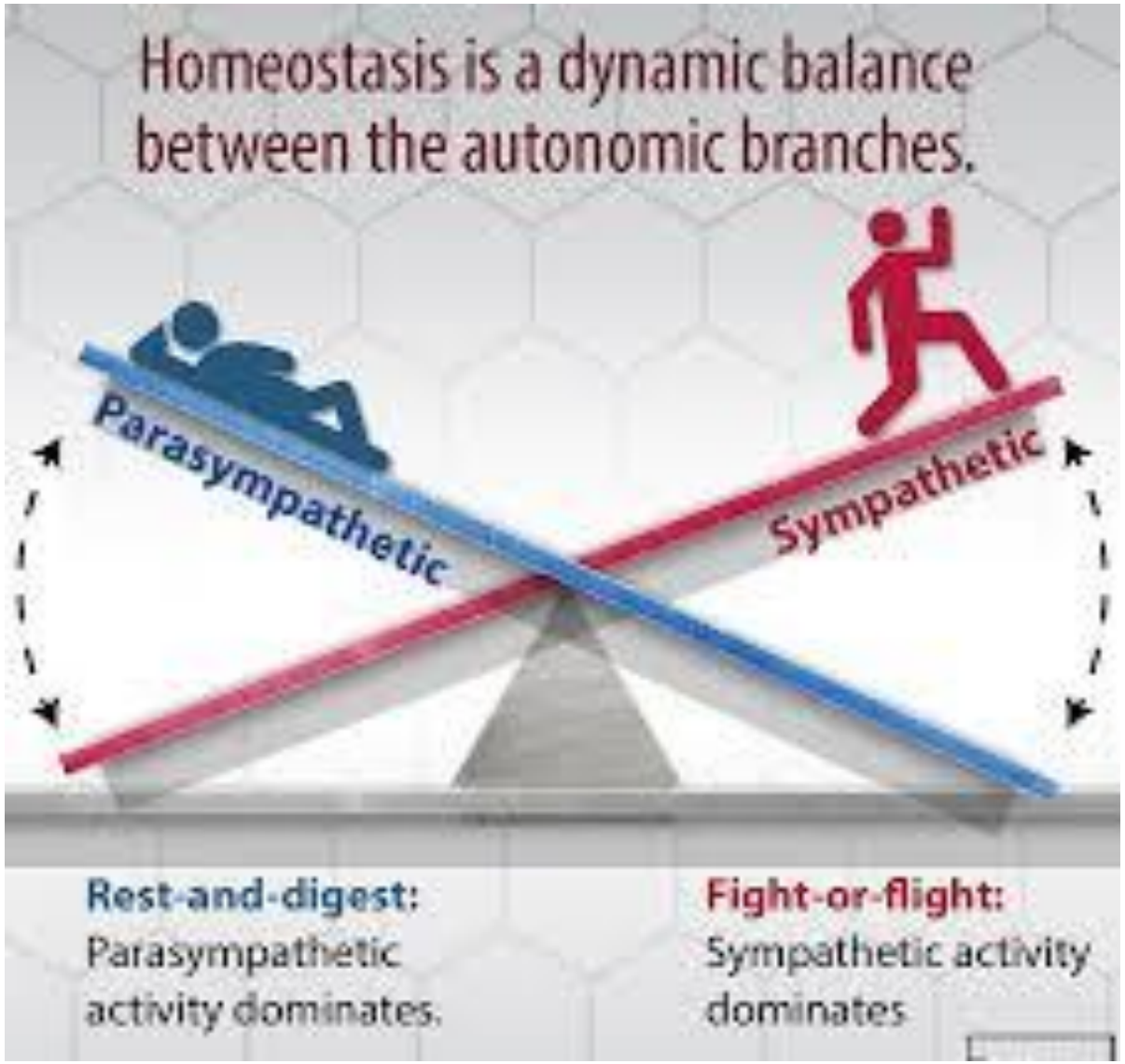
© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Symptoms of Trauma



© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Parasympathetic v. Sympathetic Nervous System



© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Individual and Systems-level Needs

- Trauma is subjective: what is traumatic to one person may not be to another.
- Trauma is multidimensional and intersectional
- Trauma can impact individuals, groups, and institutions

Trauma-Informed approaches must be attentive to individual and systems-level needs.

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference



Trauma-Informed Practices and Frameworks

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Trauma Informed Pedagogy
Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

- An approach to teaching or working with individuals that acknowledges the potential impact of trauma on their lives, emphasizing creating a safe and supportive environment while understanding how past traumatic experiences might affect learning or behavior

- **Trauma Stewardship:** encourages practitioners to actively care for their own well-being while supporting others who may be dealing with trauma, preventing secondary trauma from the work they do.

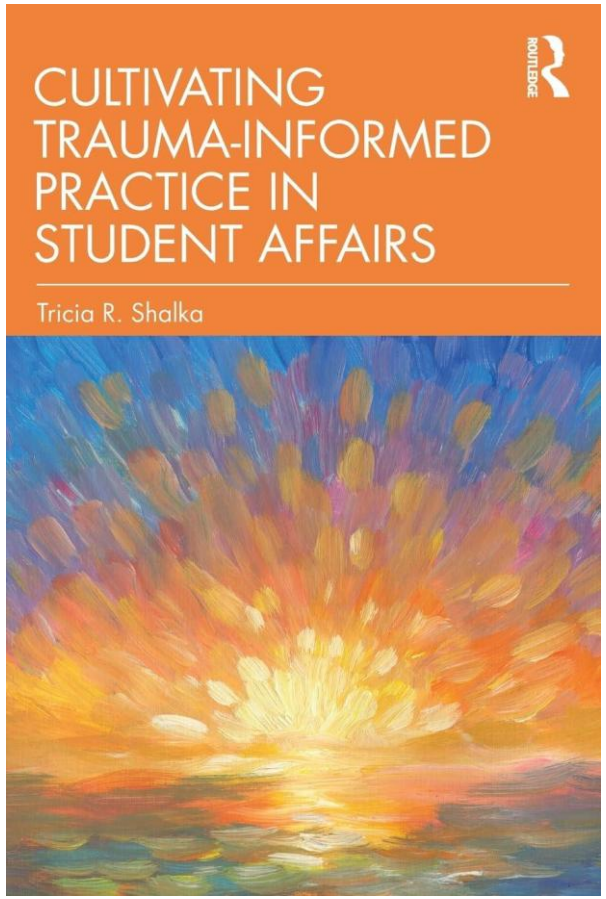
© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

The Five Directions



© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

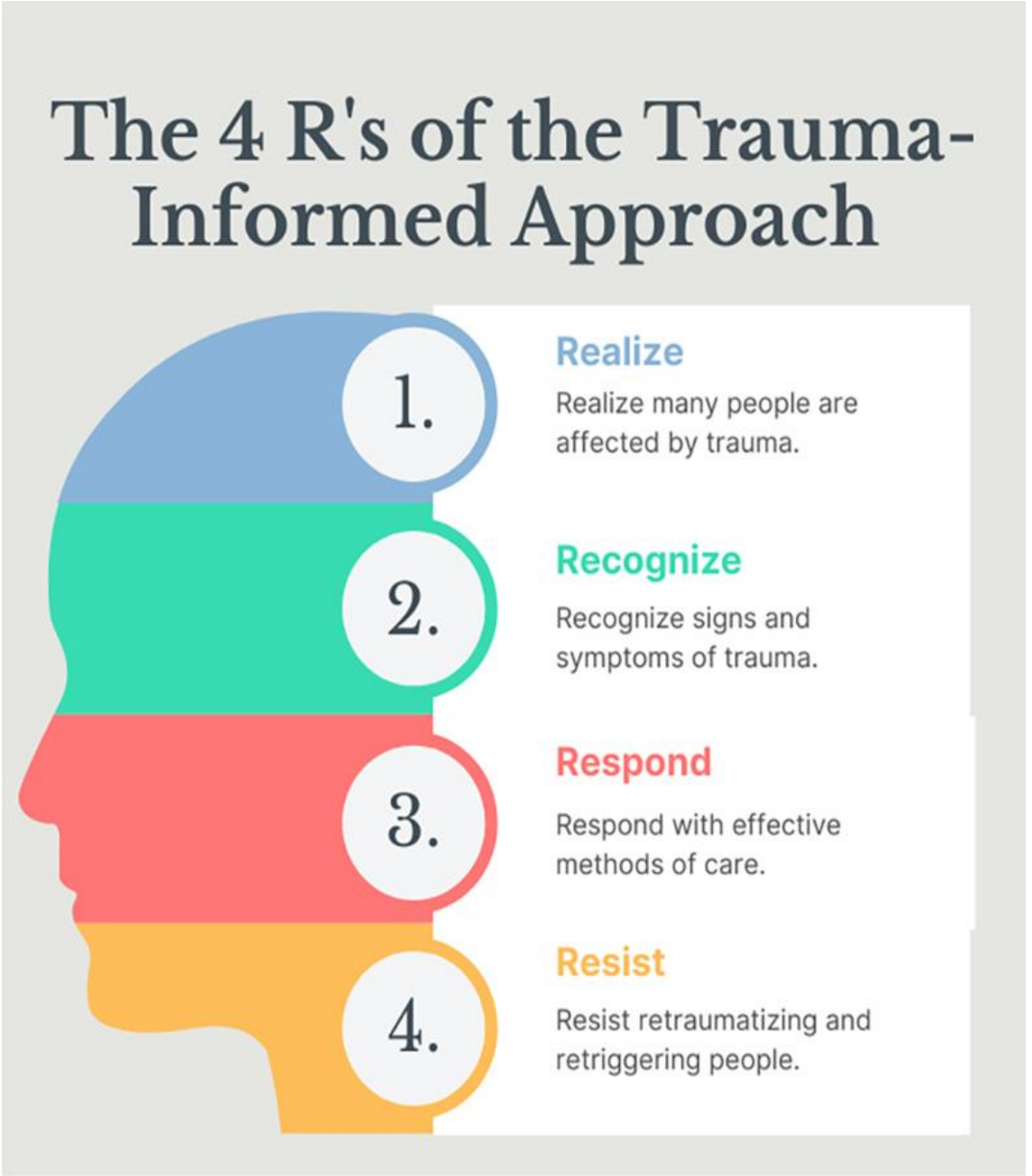
Trauma-Informed Practices in Student Affairs



- Trauma has been correlated with negative impacts of students' academic achievement and sense of belonging
- Primary role of practitioners is to minimize the negative impact of trauma
- Trauma-Informed practices should be:
  1. Holistic
  2. Power-conscious and anti-oppression
  3. Focused on relationships
  4. Committed to knowledge -building
  5. Harm reducing
  6. Committed to wellness-centered decision-making process

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

“Four R’s” Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)



© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Values/Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice



© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference



Examples

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Trauma-Informed Educational Spaces

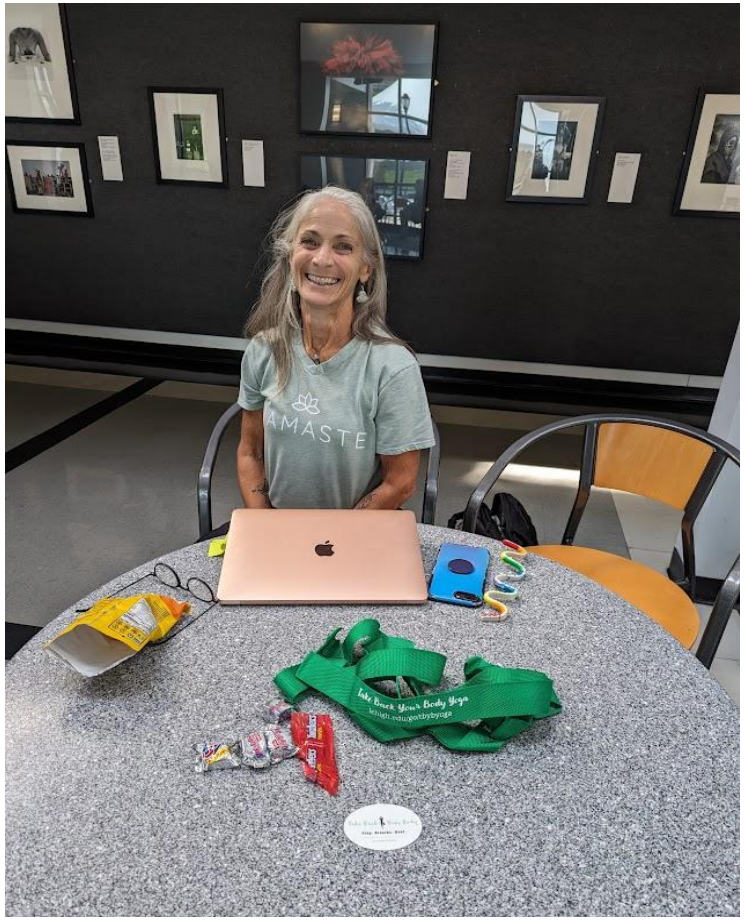
- Physical Space
- Comfort Items
- Timing
- Group agreements
- Agenda
- Options
- Opt-Out
- Sequencing
- Breaks
- Supplies
- Modeling
- Check Out
- Resources
- Community Options
- Policies
- Confidentiality
- Other?

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Creating a Trauma-Informed Campus Community

Trauma-Informed Trainings:

- Survivor Support Advocates
- Break the Silence Peer Educators
- Student Affairs
- Gryphons (RAs)
- New Students
- LVAIC Conduct Offices



© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Trauma Informed Yoga

A research-proven way to help survivors of sexual trauma and those experiencing vicarious/secondary trauma heal from their trauma symptoms. It combines focused breathing and mindfulness skills with healing poses.

- Empowering individual choices and personal exploration
- Invitatory language
- No physical assists
- Safe, supportive, non-judgmental environment
- Connection with natural breath
- Sensitively curated sequences
- Duality of experiences
- Recreating feelings of safety within the body
- Creating pathways for dealing with triggers



© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference



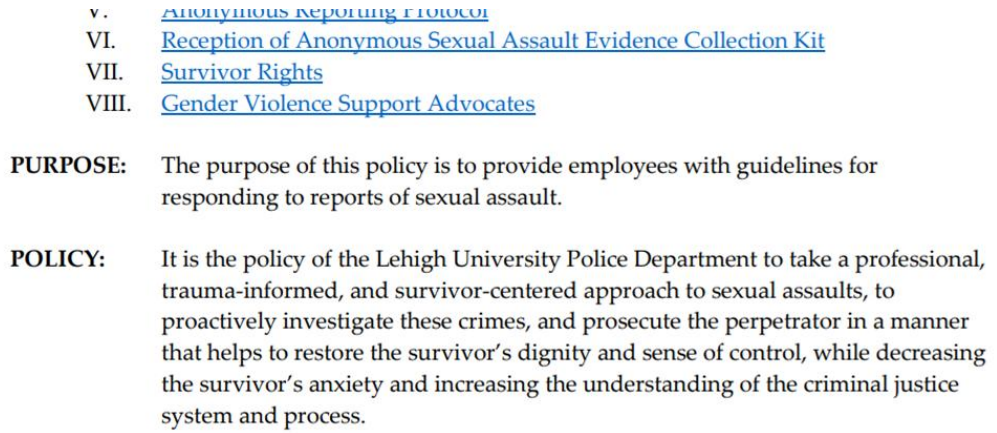
Take Back Your Body Yoga Class

"TBYB Yoga at Lehigh has been a really positive experience for me. I participated regularly when I was an underclassman, and the sessions were able to create quiet moments of reflection for me. Dedicating an hour to slow, deliberate body movement and mindfulness brought up emotions I didn't necessarily realize were inside of me. Having a more full awareness and control of my body allowed me to feel more comfortable in my own skin and empowered to further work through my complicated relationship with sex. The sessions were not triggering or designed to directly tackle sexual trauma, but somehow they still felt like they were contributing to a healing process for me. I think many people would benefit from this type of yoga practice, regardless of past experiences."

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Lehigh University Police Directive

- Studied police-caused harm and held community listening sessions
- Worked with SSIE Director and Advocates
- Made systemic changes to do no harm and avoid re-traumatization
- Changed policy to a survivor-centered approach
- Highlights:
  - Dispatcher or Call-Taker Response
  - Transportation options - unmarked car, Advocate option
  - Interview options: Advocates and therapy dogs
  - Delayed reporting



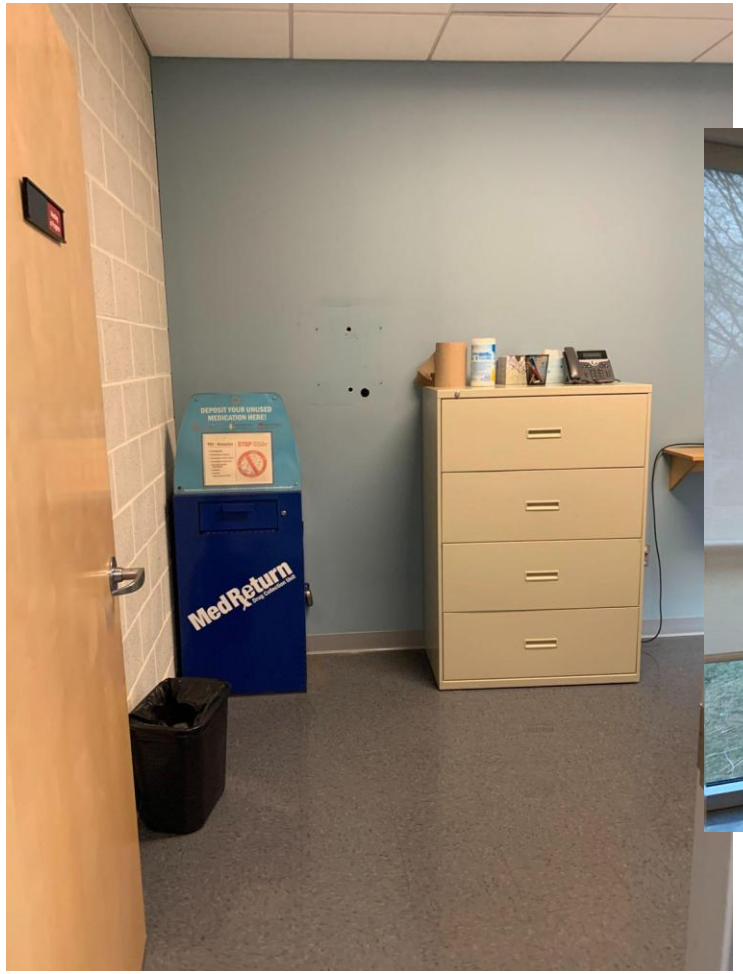
V. Anonymous Reporting Protocol
VI. Reception of Anonymous Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit
VII. Survivor Rights
VIII. Gender Violence Support Advocates

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to provide employees with guidelines for responding to reports of sexual assault.

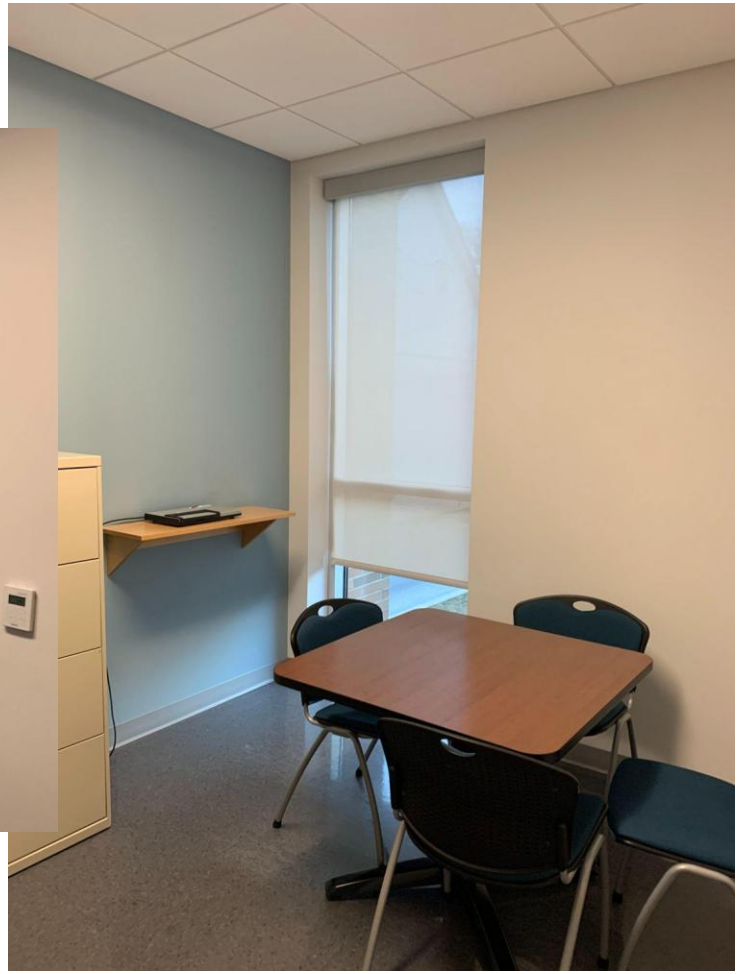
POLICY: It is the policy of the Lehigh University Police Department to take a professional, trauma-informed, and survivor-centered approach to sexual assaults, to proactively investigate these crimes, and prosecute the perpetrator in a manner that helps to restore the survivor's dignity and sense of control, while decreasing the survivor's anxiety and increasing the understanding of the criminal justice system and process.

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

LUPD Interview Room: Before







© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

LUPD Soft Interview Room: After



© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Project Beloved

Lehigh University

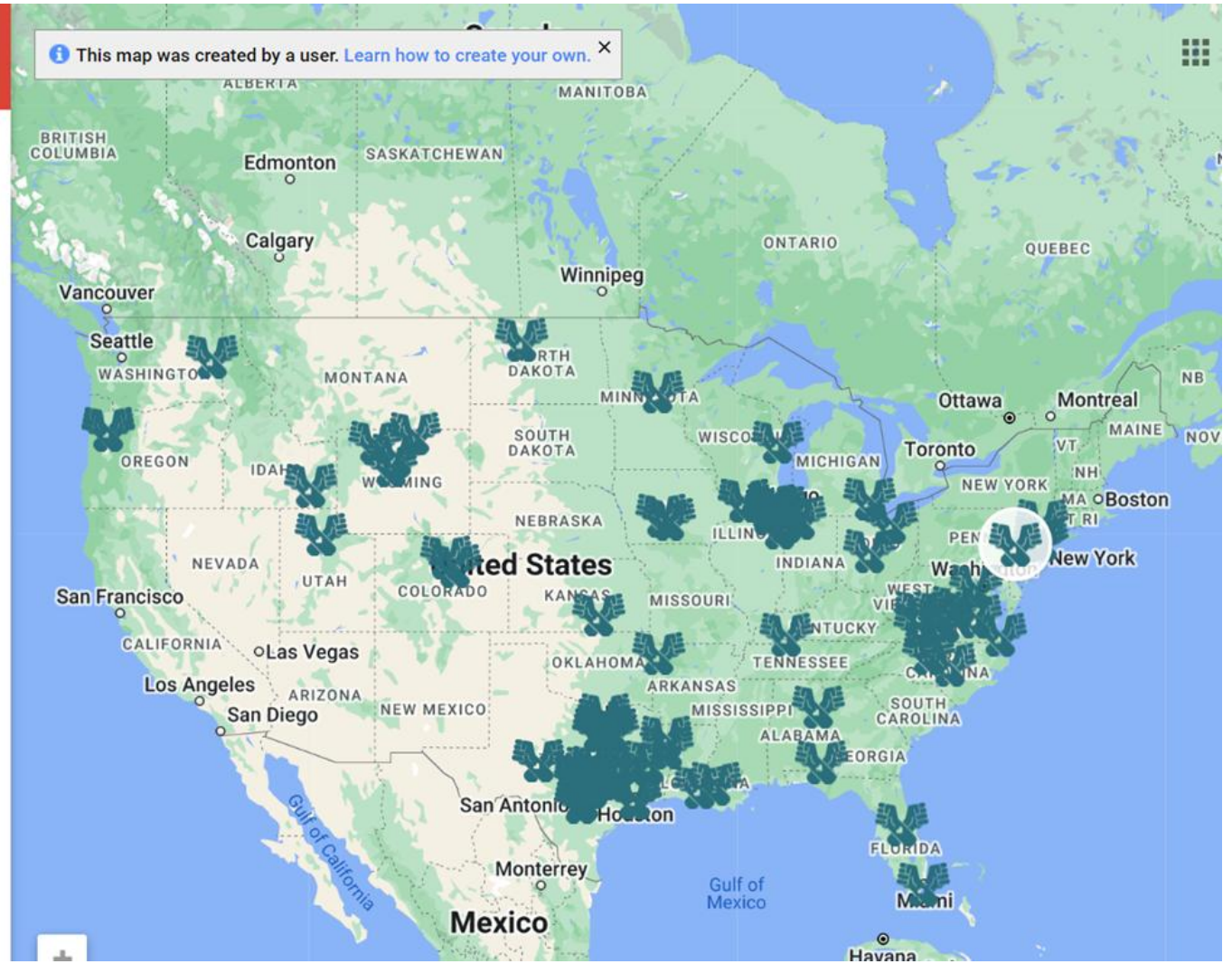
name

Lehigh University

description

August 2023





© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

LUPD Therapy Dog Program

- In 2022, the Lehigh University Police Department established a Therapy Dog Program with the purpose of providing comfort and support to the Lehigh University community. The Therapy Dog Program is designed to serve those who are in need of comfort and a sense of well-being, victims and witnesses of criminal incidents, and those who have endured emotional tragedies. The dogs are present at many Lehigh events.



LUPD Officers
with their Dogs

© 2026 ATIXA and NABITA Annual Conference

Questions?