

Normal

During my webinars, it was evident that many faculty members were themselves experiencing trauma and getting stuck in an orbit of anxiety that was causing them to feel heavy-hearted, drained, and hopeless. After all, faculty members care deeply about students, work with them closely, hear and witness their stories, and are therefore often aware of the adversities they are facing. It was only a matter of time before faculty would become impacted by the traumas their students were experiencing. **Secondary traumatic stress (STS)[3]** is a condition in which a person experiences emotional distress, exhaustion, and burnout and displays symptoms comparable to post-traumatic stress disorder without having had a direct traumatic experience (Ludick & Figley, 2017; Stamm, 1999; Walker, 2019). **The pandemic likely caused many faculty members to experience traumatic stress directly, in addition to the STS they picked up from their students.**

--Mays Imad, "Transcending Adversity: Trauma-Informed Educational Development," *To Improve the Academy* 39 (2021).

We have suffered trauma for our own losses, and also from helping students.

This is a crisis in all the spheres that create higher ed!

One would expect that institutions would say *we see this, we understand*. But instead, institutions say they are going back to normal. But the end of loss is never back to normal--it's always different.



It's understandable, we want students to know we are going back to in person. But to say "back to normal" is to ignore loss, and all the work that people have done. We need to carve out a new future for higher ed, a new destination.

UP: an allegory for grief	The movie <i>Up</i> is an allegory for grief and loss. It's about Carl's processing of the loss of his wife Ellie. Carl's house is a metaphor for loss and grief. At first, he's surrounded by his grief. Later, once it lands, he straps it to his back, and it always weighs him down. At the end, he has cut off the ties to the house, and he is no longer burdened.
Phase 1: early pandemic	Immersed in grief in Spring 2020 (emergency shift) and SUMmer 2020 (fall prep). We were immersed in the heaviness. This work was hard--we could be talking about something innocuous and responses were out of sync with the situation--emotions ran so high b/c we were trying to put a bandaid over a much bigger issue. So he started asking people <i>what do you miss most about the teaching you were doing a few months ago? What interactions with students were most meaningful? How can I help you recreate those things now?</i> That changes the conversation, rather than just starting with <i>what do you need?</i> We need to address the human beings in the room.
Phase 2: immediacy has faded	Spring 2021: people are in the zone, wanting to control what they can. Heads down, plowing forward. Suddenly, we're talking about cheating and remote proctoring. But that's a response--a desire to control what can be controlled. In a crisis, we want to control what we can. We're not acknowledging the grief, but it's tethered to us and weighing us down.
Phase 3: how to recreate future now	1. We need to acknowledge that it's hard 2. Acknowledge that we have changed, individually and institutionally. a. <i>But we have been changed by all this. And we will remain changed. Those changes we will carry forward with us, for better or worse. Maybe that's the comfort I'm trying to find, the comfort with how I have, how we have, been changed. I am in a lot of ways unfamiliar to myself...</i>
Acknowledge change	Lee Skallerup Bessett, "Spring," Blog post 3/19/21
Create hope	3. Forge hope together, brick by brick. As Gannon reminds us, <i>hope is an action verb</i>. What steps can we take to use hope as a verb

Reflect KEEP UP THE WORK: center students CREATE MORE EQUITY AND SUCCESS	4. Reflect, as individual and institutions: a. Surveys b. Campus listening sessions c. Workshops that use lessons learned as the framing device d. Other creative ideas, like this from Adelphi University (autlc.com, faculty testimonial wall) 5. What can we do in the future a. Keep centering students, faculty, and staff in our practices and policies i. Pandemic put emphasis on student agency, flexibility ii. Convo about grading and attendance and workload and flexibility and types of assessments: how do we recognize the humanity of students and use that in our pedagogy? Spotlight is fading there, but we need to keep it up iii. Similarly: faculty flexibility and remote work also got more attention. He is focusing much more on sociality in learning than ever before. iv. Emotional component of learning: also has gotten more attention in the past 15 months. It matters for what we do as educators. In an emotional crisis, the ability to learn is diminished. b. We cannot yield the floor i. Promote data and scholarship about the effects of the pandemic 1. See Jesse and Martha's new essay about instructional design 2. Kate Denail? And Maha Bali: Pedagogy of Care 3. Michelle ?? and Karen Costa: Humanizing 4. Peter Felton 5. Inclusive Teaching: Kelly Hogan and Vijay Sathy, Brian Dewsbery 6. Science of Learning: Sara Rose Cavanaugh
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	7. <i>I didn't get all the references..his point was that there is tons of work to pay attention to!</i> ii. Refuse to let the conversation change 1. Faculty and students will remember the changes that happened! People know that change is possible iii. Consider leadership roles
Summary	We need the people who care the most to lead conversations that get us all together pushing for change in higher education. We have seen some positive changes happen during the pandemic--together we can keep the pressure for meaningful change on.