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On Rage, Shame, "Realness," and Accountability to Survivors

Kathleen Ann Livingston

This essay examines the rhetorical moves made on all sides of the recent conversation on trigger warnings. Calling for accountability to survivors, it positions trigger warnings as one practice of consent. Though in practice trigger warnings bring up issues of censorship, they can be understood as a way for survivors to take their power back by telling a bit of their trauma narrative and requesting accommodations and accountability. Unpacking the histories and the language of trigger warnings reveals how our culture thinks of survivors and how far anti-violence movements have to go.

Feminists had already been arguing about trigger warnings (TWs) online when [*The New York Times*](#) took up the story of a resolution at UC Santa Barbara to make it mandatory to use trigger warnings on course syllabi. The resolution happened in the context of news that ["55 Colleges Face Sexual Assault Investigations"](#) related to compliance with Title IX, a gender equity law requiring certain policies and procedures be followed in relation to campus safety and sexual violence.

Those Women and Their Feelings

Whenever a new argument on trigger warnings emerged, I would read it diligently, fully. What we're actually talking about when we talk about trigger warnings started to make sense. The commentators were university professors, community activists, survivors, respected writers, queer theorists, and on and on. When they were disrespectful of survivors, or when the lyrical narratives on trauma were too real, my body would fill with rage and remembering, and I would be speechless.

Oh, I've said plenty to my partner, mentor, and friends, raged about the wrongness of so many of the arguments, which seemed to be the same sexist, ableist, and ageist rhetoric re-packaged for a left-leaning, liberal academic audience. I've

wished to somehow sharpen a shame-filled memory to carve right to the heart of the issue. I've hesitated to write on trigger warnings because the figure of the 'over-emotional' woman haunts the conversation on trigger warnings.

As cultural theorist Sara Ahmed reminds us in her recent post ["Feminist Hurt/Feminism Hurts."](#) the figure of the hurt student has long been used against those in Women's Studies to claim the discipline is anti-intellectual: "This widely circulating figure of the too-easily-hurt student thus has a longer history, one that might also relate back to the figure of the feminist killjoy." Ahmed explains, "the hurt of some gets in the way of the happiness of others." Pointing out the tendency to degrade emotions by associating them with women is critical. In doing so, Ahmed teaches us how to trace the rhetoric around trigger warnings to the histories underneath.

What is a Trigger Warning?

Trigger warnings seem to me like common courtesy for trauma survivors. If you're going to show something graphic, putting a warning on it might help trauma survivors not be surprised and viscerally taken back to their trauma. Baffled by the backlash over trigger warnings, I set out to understand their rhetorical purposes by unpacking the rhetoric of the public debate on TWs in education.

I'd like us to entertain the idea that a request for a trigger warning is a disclosure. English Studies professor and trauma scholar Ann Cvetkovich writes in *An Archive of Feeling*, "because trauma can be unspeakable and unrepresentable and because it is marked by forgetting and dissociation, it often seems to leave behind no records at all." The fact that telling trauma narratives is so painful is evidence of a cultural predisposition to avoid thinking about violence. Though they might seem like a highly individualized form of healing, trigger warnings are useful for what they teach us about consent in communities, especially disclosure and risk. Students who request trigger warnings are making a disclosure about what triggers them. By talking about trauma openly, survivors are resisting forgetting and dissociation and making violence known as a cultural issue.

University of Michigan professor Melanie Yergeau's well-received keynote at the 2014 Computers & Writing conference, "Disable All the Things," addressed how such disclosures are also a request for accommodations for people with invisible disabilities, and an issue of access. Grounding the use of the word "coddled" in the TWs debate in ableist

histories, including the backlash against the ADA when it was first passed in 1990, Yergeau demonstrates how the backlash against trigger warnings often uses the same ableist language.

Her work gets at part of what is underneath the arguments on trigger warnings—the language used to talk about trigger warnings reveals the way we (teachers, administrators, staff, students of higher education) regard students with invisible disabilities, including PTSD and complex trauma, and whole communities of people: survivors of violence and trauma, and veterans, to name two.

A trigger warning is an attempt to publicly acknowledge trauma by requesting accommodations. Requesting a trigger warning could be understood as a way of regaining a sense of power over one's own body after an experience of trauma or violence. Reading indigenous feminist writer [Andrea Smith](#) on histories of trigger warnings, I remember why disclosures that function to acknowledge or transform experiences of violence are important. I remember how hard it is to tell trauma narratives, how important they are to accountability for survivors, how they say to survivors: you are here. You are real. You are believed.

Smith explains, "What is missing is the larger context from which trigger warnings emerged. In particular, this intervention emerged from recommendations of many of us in the anti-violence movement that we were building a movement that continued to marginalize survivors by privatizing healing" ("Beyond the Pros and Cons of Trigger Warnings: Collectivized Healing").

Requesting a trigger warning is a disclosure that may come with a request for accommodations or accountability. We could think of a trigger warning as a queer gesture, an attempt to leave behind a record of trauma through disclosure. When a student asks for a trigger warning, they are 'outing' themselves as having a trauma history, in order to be able to access a particular space, such as a college classroom. As just one part of a larger practice of consent, trigger warnings are one way some survivors use to make their communities accountable to trauma survivors. Remember, it is hard in this culture to be believed. But survivors are real. We're in your classrooms, and we want accommodations and accountability.

Three Misconceptions about Trigger Warnings

Assumption 1: Triggers and being triggered are not real.

Questioning the realness of a practice like trigger warnings is a classic tool of derailment. Take a look at the language of many of the arguments on trigger warnings and notice how it invokes questions about the realness of triggers. For instance, when History professor Jonathan Zimmerman writes in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article ["My Syllabus, With Trigger Warnings,"](#) that anyone who needs a trigger warning can't handle real life, what he does is question whether trigger warnings are real, or just a ploy of the over-protected to get out of learning about history.

What Zimmerman and other commentators miss is that triggers are real. The National Institutes of Mental Health recognize triggers, writing in their health education materials:

PTSD is an anxiety disorder that some people get after seeing or living through a dangerous event. When in danger, it's natural to feel afraid. This fear triggers many split-second changes in the body to prepare to defend against danger or to avoid it. This 'fight or flight' response is a healthy reaction meant to protect a person from harm. But in PTSD, this reaction is changed or damaged. People who have PTSD may feel stressed or frightened even when they're no longer in danger. ("What is PTSD?")

Knowing that an organization like NIMH recognizes triggers makes the problematic rhetoric around trigger warnings even more evident. The assumption that triggers are not real is false. The way it's being talked about is sexist, ableist, and ageist. This rhetoric disrespects survivors' histories by claiming triggered responses to trauma aren't real.

Assumption 2: Trigger warnings benefit only the most privileged students.

Other mis-information about trauma includes assumptions about who and what trigger warnings are for. Political blogger Kevin Drum claims in ["What's the Endgame for the Trigger Warning Movement?"](#) for *Mother Jones* that all trigger warnings do is "semi-protect sensitive students for a few more years of their lives instead of teaching them how to deal with upsetting material."

I am not entirely sure who Drum imagines the students are in college classrooms. What I do know is that last month in Ferguson, MO, Michael Brown, an 18-year-old kid on his way to college this fall was killed by police. I know that racially motivated violence happens all the time. What I do know is that there has been a video circulating online that shows a young person coming out to his parents and their violent, homophobic response. I know that homophobic violence happens all the time. Violence in all forms is a part of the lives of college students. So when Drum uses language like "protect," "sensitive," and "teaching them to deal with upsetting material," this rhetorical choice functions to diminish the call for TWs on the grounds of age and experience. Invoking the image of a millennial student, sheltered and special, does nothing to illuminate the realities of contemporary university students, who may have had more than their share of trauma.

Megan Milks critiques the tendency to assume who students are in part 2 of ["Trigger Warnings: A Roundtable" on "Generational Tensions"](#) for *Entropy*. How much of the backlash against TWs is about generational tensions, she asks, and I would add: what's with the assumptions about who survivors are (young, female)? Even if the students requesting trigger warnings are primarily younger people, what's with the fear of young people knowing what they want and need?

Assumption 3: Institutions know what's best for survivors.

Many of the people who have spoken on trigger warnings seem intent to position them as either an over-reaction by a sensitive few, or the be all, end all of supporting trauma survivors in education. One recommendation I would have is for institutions to listen to survivors and ask what they need. Far from being a monolithic group, survivors have voiced conflicting accessibility needs in their writing.

In a searing essay for *The Rumpus*, ["The Illusion of Safety/The Safety of Illusion,"](#) Roxane Gay points out one of the assumptions being made about what survivors need: "When I see trigger warnings, I think, 'How dare you presume what I need to be protected from?'" Trigger warnings can't protect us, she says, because "there is nothing words on the screen can do that has not already been done."

Tracy Strauss' position in ["Twitter, Why the 'Trigger Warning' for Dylan Farrow's Open Letter?"](#) for *The Huffington Post*, reminds us of the work feminists have done to fight for the space to talk openly about healing from or

transforming ourselves after violence. Strauss wants readers to know that we CAN handle knowing the truth about violence:

Let us not believe the warnings that say we can't handle the truth, because we can.

For certain, coming to terms with sexual abuse – with anything unspeakable – is difficult terrain, but it is one that is worth traversing. Knowing about terrible things, and grappling with them, gives us the ability to mobilize, to change our world.

Juxtapose Strauss' call that we learn to talk about violence with Angela Shaw-Thornburg's work in "[This is a Trigger Warning](#)" for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, in which she details a visceral response to being triggered in a college classroom, and is for trigger warnings.

Comparing just these perspectives from survivors, it's clear that we need to talk about the difficulties of handling trauma and disclosures in the context of education. Trauma is emotional, and educational institutions are often very invested in appearing rational and stable. But, even the commentators who argued that those who require TWs are irrational, over-emotional, possibly crazy, did so by appealing to the emotions of their audiences.

Emotional Appeals in the Conversation on Trigger Warnings

The focus of the debate has been the question of whether TWs can effectively be brought into institutional policy or classroom pedagogy. That is less interesting to me at the moment than the language and rhetorical moves made in arguments about trigger warnings. Emotional appeals have organized arguments all along the spectrum.

What I'd like to do now is rhetorically analyze three of the emotional appeals in the conversation on trigger warnings. I understand this as a form of self-care and community care because I will hold survivors in high regard while unpacking the rhetorical appeals of the arguments. Holding the requests for TWs by some survivors in tension with fears about censorship in academic contexts, I suggest that trigger warnings are only a small part of a larger practice of consent and trauma-informed pedagogy.

1. Appeals to common sense, in which there is mansplaining about trauma

As the debate got heated, and many commentators slung around insults about survivors, many of us were taken aback by the attitudes their language revealed. Interestingly, those who appealed to common sense about handling trauma in education appeared to have little to no understanding of trauma.

Even the fairly balanced critique of trigger warnings by [Conor Friedersdorf for *The Atlantic*](#) seemed to misunderstand the purpose of TWs: "most confounding is the notion of students pushing to be warned about classroom material more tame than much of what they encounter in daily life."

Here is what's confounding to me: that many students encounter so much violence in everyday life—rape, murder, suicide, misogyny, racism, homophobia, ableism, colonialism, and on and on—that Friedersdorf and many others seem to believe it should be normalized by now. Violence may be common. Violence is not normal. Violence is not natural. Trigger warnings, imperfect as they may be in practice, are an attempt to call attention to the epidemic of violence and the ways violence gets normalized culturally. They may not be able to protect survivors, but asking for a trigger warning does do rhetorical work to express a desire for a more just and habitable world.

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* article by Zimmerman, mentioned above, appeals to common sense in a way that suggests anyone who needs a trigger warning can't handle real life. History is violent and students need to deal with it. There is no doubt that one of the dangers of trigger warnings is that they could be used to avoid dealing with hard topics by those misinformed about their histories and uses.

The issue I take with arguments like the ones made in Zimmerman's snarky syllabus is the language used, which signals how he regards survivors: "If the topic threatens to provoke feelings of trauma or panic in you, let me know beforehand," Zimmerman writes. Through his tone, he dismisses trigger warnings by diminishing those who need them. The word "threatens" signals a power dynamic and "provoke feelings" is condescending and inflammatory, conjuring an image of a cowering, over-emotional mess. The implication is only a threatened, unstable, "crazy" person would need a trigger warning.

["The Peculiar Madness of 'Trigger Warnings'"](#) for *The LA Times* follows this way of thinking. When Jonah Goldberg jokes, "Trigger Warning: I am going to make fun of trigger warnings," I know the offensive rhetoric around trigger warnings is deeply engrained. "Peculiar" signals the otherness of trigger warnings, in the commentator's mind, and

"madness" signals the "craziness" of those who need them. Questions remain: if a student does need mental health services because of trauma, do they still belong in academia? If a student does request a trigger warning before graphic material, who gets to decide if that request for accommodations is legitimate? How is it that we are still talking about legitimacy and belonging in academic culture?

Goldberg asks, "We live in a culture in which it is considered bigotry to question whether women should join combat units, but it is also apparently outrageous to subject women of the same age to realistic books and films about war without a warning?" The fact of the matter is, no one is trying to take away Goldberg's war movies. "Women of the same age" is loaded with assumptions about who requests TWs and who manages to be offensive to women, young people, and veterans of any gender. Worse, his problem seems to be not with a violent culture, but with people (women, and "woman-like" people) who can't handle it.

The characterization of who trigger warnings are for—young, white, female, heavily protected, over-sensitive, possibly crazy—is a red herring, meant to distract from two purposes of trigger warnings, to provide accommodations and accountability for trauma survivors. The image of the 'over-sensitive' woman denies both the complexities of who students are and the embodied experiences of being a survivor.

Disability Studies scholar Margaret Price's work in the book *Mad at School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability in Academic Life* is particularly poignant here, helping us read the ableist rhetoric in the debate on trigger warnings. Her critique of academic culture for being un-inhabitable for students with mental disabilities (mental illnesses) points to the ways these students get shut out on the basis of their "madness."

This same rhetoric is being used in arguments about trigger warnings to discredit the practice based on the requester's perceived mental health status. These are appeals to common sense because they imply that anyone who needs a trigger warning must be "crazy" (read: unreasonable, irrational, unable). These characterizations of who trigger warnings are for are over-simplified, and these critiques of TWs blame and shame survivors. As ableist rhetoric, the purpose of the above commentary is to diminish people who request the accommodation of a trigger warning. It also signals who they think belongs in academia. *Hint*: not people triggered by violence; trauma survivors, women, and "woman-like" people are probably too emotionally fragile.

"Requesting a trigger warning is a disclosure that may come with a request for accommodations or accountability. We could think of a trigger warning as a queer gesture, an attempt to leave behind a record of trauma through disclosure."

2. Appeals to empathy, or, let me show you how it feels

Empathy has been an important counter-point to assumptions about the purposes of trigger warnings and the students who stand to benefit from them. Writer Soraya Chemaly reminds us in ["What's Really Important about 'Trigger Warnings'"](#) to be aware of the embodied experiences of being triggered. "'Squirm,' and 'discomfort,'" she writes, "do not accurately capture the sensation of white heat, rapid heartbeat, the feeling that you are about to die or vivid flashbacks of assault." Her call to empathy functions to expose how critics minimize the need for trigger warnings by unpacking their language and comparing it to what it feels like to be triggered.

It was obvious to me, in the public debate on trigger warnings, that some people highly valued empathy and some thought it was touchy feely nonsense. This is why the use of personal narratives in the debate is so interesting. Regardless of whether their intended purpose is to bear witness, to testify, to unburden oneself from shame and silence, or something else, personal narratives have served another purpose in the conversation on trigger warnings: to provoke empathy. However, there were a couple of unanticipated problems with using empathy to further arguments on TWs:

1. Personal narratives about trauma intending to provoke empathy tended to be triggering;
2. Perhaps by invoking particular sense memories, getting the audience to feel what they felt, trauma narratives are most persuasive to those they trigger, other trauma survivors who may understand the desire for a TW, even if they question their use.

In a lyrical litany of her own triggers, Roxane Gay is vulnerable enough to pull off a critique of trigger warnings on the privilege of those who still have the illusion that safety could be real. "I don't believe in safety. I wish I did," she writes in her piece for *The Rumpus*. "I am not brave. I simply know what to be scared of; I know to be scared of everything." After reading her position against trigger warnings, my stomach hurt for a week. She's right—none of us are safe from violence. Historically underrepresented communities are particularly vulnerable, but I don't want us to accept that as normal.

"These were my first memories," Angela Shaw-Thornburg writes for her piece for trigger warnings in *The Chronicle*. ["This is a Trigger Warning"](#) breaks you a bit, tracing the embodied experiences of one survivor of sexual violence from her abuse to her experience of being triggered in a college classroom—"I am curled up in my bed reading, so when I blank out this time, there is no danger of my falling ... I do remember feeling as if some blunt force had struck the front part of my brain. In the weeks that follow, I am all animal. I eat infrequently and refuse to bathe because I cannot bear to touch my own body." Yeah, I thought, it's like that, as she put that familiar feeling of spacing out, or dissociation, into words.

I also appreciated the perspective of Jos Charles in part 1 of the Roundtable for *Entropy*, that TWs aren't censorship, or a hassle, but a way to give trauma survivors options, noting, "it seems like a small risk to me though to miss out on one poem versus reliving a traumatic experience, having a public panic attack, at worst mocked and at best fetishized as victim, be unable to drive for hours, take medication (when I can afford medication), find people who can care for me, etc."

One strategy in the use of personal experiences is to patiently explain the very real, material ways being triggered effects some survivors' everyday lives. But rather than being met with empathy, honest and explicit trauma narratives have been met with skepticism about the "realness" of triggers. Gaslighting may be one explanation for why. This word refers to a type of manipulation where an aggressor makes the victim question their memories, feelings, and sanity when they try and act in their own defense. Say, for instance, speaking out against the culturally sanctioned violence, of rape or war, against people's bodies and spirits, by disclosing one's survivor status and requesting a trigger warning on syllabi and readings in a college classroom.

3. Appeals to histories and the fear of misuse, in which the left seems to agree with the right that trigger warnings are dangerous

A third emotional appeal in the argument against trigger warnings has to do with fears of how trigger warnings might be co-opted, taken up against their purposes and used to victimize people who did not actually do violence. In theory, trigger warnings are meant to give students who are trauma survivors options, but might they be used by some students to avoid dealing with controversial topics? Might TWs be used by some institutions to censor what can be taught and thought?

Sarah Schulman has been one of the people speaking out strongly against the potential for TWs to be used for censorship. There are echoes of the Sex Wars in her logic, of cultural conflict in the late 80s and early 90s, where feminists argued over issues of morality and taste, boundaries and desire. To support her argument, Schulman offers the example of the criminalization of people with HIV. People living with HIV have been stigmatized and criminalized for non-disclosure, while being denied life-saving health care, education, and prevention materials by the federal government.

TWs are meant to offer accommodations and accountability, not to be used to reduce access. These histories bring up practical questions: for instance, what happens when students have conflicting accessibility needs? When one survivor's need to write about their trauma conflicts with another survivor's need to not hear about it without consent? There is always the danger of co-optation, of people using "triggering" as an excuse to avoid dealing with material that makes them uncomfortable, but there is a difference between being uncomfortable and being triggered. Whose role is it to decide what is an accessibility need?

Who cares? That seems to be the underlying question of Jack Halberstam's *Bully Bloggers* piece, ["You Are Triggering Me! The Neoliberal Rhetoric of Harm, Danger and Trauma."](#) Recalling the cultural feminism and lesbian separatism of the 70s and 80s, Halberstam frames trigger warnings as a rhetoric of harm and trauma that "casts all social difference in terms of hurt feelings that divides up politically allied subjects into hierarchies of woundedness." The way Halberstam is able to understand TWs is to recall a sort of "oppression Olympics":

People with various kinds of fatigue, easily activated allergies, poorly managed trauma were constantly holding up proceedings to shout in loud voices about how bad they felt because someone had said, smoked, or sprayed something near them that had fouled up their breathing room. Others made adjustments, curbed their use of deodorant, tried to avoid patriarchal language, thought before they spoke, held each other, cried, moped, and ultimately disintegrated into a messy, unappealing morass of weepy, hypo-allergic, psychosomatic, anti-sex, anti-fun, anti-porn, pro-drama, pro-processing post-political subjects. As people "call each other out" to a chorus of finger snapping, we seem to be rapidly losing all sense of perspective and instead of building alliances, we are dismantling hard fought for coalitions. ("You're Triggering Me!")

I was so mad at Halberstam's ableist rant that I tended my wounds by indulging in the JockHalberslam twitter ([@halberslam](#)) for about a week. Then I took a deep breath because it is important to pay attention to histories of how

trigger warnings, and similarly, content warnings, or ratings, have been taken up in the past. There is no arguing with histories of censorship. Many of those who can recall the histories of the Sex Wars are understandably wary of any practice that seems like censorship.

The position against TWs on the basis of censorship is not the issue I have with Halberstam's approach. Creating one version of who survivors are has been a long-standing problem in anti-violence movements, one that is used quite purposefully here to distract from the purpose of trigger warnings. Creating a version of survivors that is this "morass of weepy, hypo-allergic, psychosomatic, anti-sex, anti-fun, anti-porn, pro-drama, pro-processing post-political subjects" is offensive and a caricature.

Beyond TWs: Toward Consent and Trauma-Informed Pedagogies

What to do about trigger warnings. Let's drop the victim-blaming rhetoric, which is mis-informed about trauma and offensive. Let's respect the varied ways survivors have said they could use support. If we could just drown out some of the rhetoric on whether triggers are real, the assumptions regarding who TWs are for, and the belief that institutions know what's best for survivors, we could focus on what survivors say they need.

Many people have spoken to what survivors need throughout the public debate on trigger warnings. Some, like Tracy Strauss for *The Huffington Post*, have pointed to the power of telling survival stories. Survival stories hold us up, help us connect the dots, offer language when before there was none. We can handle the truth, and we will together. In her essay for *The Rumpus*, "The Safety of Illusion/The Illusion of Safety," Roxane Gay also claims she doesn't believe in TWs because she doesn't like to be told what she can handle. In contrast, Angela Shaw-Thornburg writes for *The Chronicle* about the material consequences of being triggered. She explains feeling broken open by another person's account of sexual violence as an undergraduate, when the topic came up in a course text.

Survivors have conflicting accessibility needs, and how to handle personal disclosures has often been a topic of debate in education. Whether or not you believe in TWs, we're in a cultural moment where some students who are survivors are requesting them for course syllabi and media. These requests bring up important questions: What are the boundaries and limits of what the classroom can hold, and who decides? The answers we have to these questions have a lot to

reveal about how body politics, desire, and shame intertwine. They have a lot to show us about how our institutions regard trauma survivors.

A trigger warning is a disclosure about a student's histories that might involve a request for accommodations and/or accountability. What I mean is students who disclose being triggered are disclosing a trauma history. This may mean they are also going to ask for accommodations, which might include trigger warnings, not participating in certain classroom discussions, or having modified participation, resources available on campus, or a number of other things. Requesting a TW may also mean they need accountability, including participation in a grievance process on campus, a community of peers to bear witness to their trauma, or a variety of other things. A trigger warning is a way to say: I'm a survivor. We are here. We are real. We need accommodations. We need our communities to be accountable to survivors. We want consent and the autonomy to make decisions about our own transformation and healing after violence.

Because TWs have to do with disclosure and risk, they are a practice of consent. I want to encourage instructors, administrators, and staff in education to understand them as just one practice of consent, and honor survivors' requests. Becoming more comfortable with student disclosures is one step in being able to practice consent. Of course, there are caveats: we need to honor requests for TWs, as long as they respect the needs of the survivor, as well as the needs of fellow students; we need to honor requests for TWs, as long as they do not censor media; we need to honor requests for TWs, as long as they do not enable us to avoid talking about hard topics altogether.

Negotiating the often-conflicting accessibility needs of survivors with the needs of students more broadly, and the demands of curriculum with the mandates of institutional policy is a pedagogical challenge. This is why I believe trigger warnings are best practiced at the level of pedagogy, instead of codified in institutional policy. Trigger warnings can be considered part of a larger practice of consent as trauma-informed pedagogy. This means educating educators about the traumas students face before coming to our classrooms and developing consent as an ethical practice of teaching and learning relationships.

In survivor circles, it's long been a common practice to give a head's up about disclosures that might be triggering. People might say something like, "I need to talk about sexual assault, and I'm wondering if it's okay for you to hear

about that right now." The audience for this carefulness is other survivors. This approach respects the need to disclose and potential limits the audience might have.

Borrowing practices from supportive contexts can be a way of understanding and respecting the various needs of survivors. If nothing else, the conversation on trigger warnings brings up the fact that students are going to disclose histories of violence and instructors may want to be thinking about how to compassionately handle those disclosures in the classroom, as well as requests for accommodations and accountability. A trauma-informed pedagogy that practices consent would suggest instructors deal with disclosures of trauma histories by students in a few ways: 1. Believe them; 2. Ask, *what do you need?*

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