Capstone Project by Kamal Chowdhury

Introduction:

"Safety", one of the key principles of Trauma Informed Approach will be topic of my Capstone project. I found myself to be more drawn towards it than other principles of TIA, felt a personal connection as I too experienced the lack of safety in a classroom environment impacting on my engagement with learning and personal growth and how it also changed my motivation to learn when safety is ensured in a learning environment.

Selection Rationale:

In one of my class, I asked the students about one component they would love to have in a classroom and most of them voices that they look for a space where they feel "not judged" by teachers and peers. I felt they were just talking about the issue that, even as a student I also felt, and I now realize how it impeded my growth when I was student in my school, college and university. That is one of the reasons, I am choosing this principle and decided to do my capstone project focusing on this issue. Two other issues that I have learnt in the modules: "Learning vs Survival Brain" and the debate on "Maslow vs. Bloom" also influenced me to select this principle of TIA.

Application Strategy:

I plan to carry out a three hour workshop with my post grad students (8-10) of clinical psychology at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The proposed title of the WS will be: "Creating a safe classroom through Trauma Informed Approach". The workshop will have three sections. In the first, a brainstorming session starting with questions such as, what students think that can make a classroom environment unsafe, what makes them feel unprotected in a classroom and how this feelings impact on their learning and engagement. It will be followed by questions such as, what do they need in a classroom environment to make them feel safe, what are their expectations and how they think it would benefit them in their learning and engagement. Students will share their opinions connected with their personal experiences, in both brainstorming sessions. They will talk about their feelings and how they coped with the situation when they felt unsafe. They will also emphasize their feelings when they felt safe in a classroom and how it impacted their learning.

In the second part of the workshop, a discussion will focus on how safety in a classroom can increase function of the "learning brain" diminishing the process of "survival brain" with the video demonstration by Professor Jakob Ham.

In the final session, I plan to do a " Mindfulness" exercise and orient the students with some tools of distress tolerance and emotion regulation.

Evaluation:

After the session, feedback from the students will be collected both in verbal and in written format. Students' recommendations will be listed for refining future workshops. A follow up meeting with the students will be arranged later (maybe after a few weeks) exploring whether the workshop had any impact on their well-being as a student. I plan to develop a module of the workshop based on my experience so that it can be replicated with other groups of students and in different settings.

Conclusion: Trauma informed approach in education is an innovative tool In the context of Bangladesh, and the "Safety" can play a major role in transforming the education environment through increasing students' engagement and growth.