

## Four-Step Mindful Check-in

**When to do this:** When you are experiencing frustration or another emotional reaction to an interaction with a student OR when you are not sure how to respond to a student

### **Benefits of the Mindful Check-in:**

- Respond more effectively to students
- Potentially provide a corrective experience to students
- Reduce compassion fatigue
- Reduce effects of vicarious traumatization

### **Step 1: What am I experiencing in response to this student?**

- Physically (e.g., heart racing, shortness of breath, feeling flushed or warm, tension in jaw, shoulders, neck)
- Emotionally (e.g., anger, frustration, sadness, numbness, concern, fear/anxiety)
- Cognitively (e.g., judgement of the student, negative thoughts about self, asking, “why me?”, comparing self to others)

### **Step 2: What responses do you feel an urge to take? What factors could be contributing to your experience?**

- Possible urges - all completely understandable - (e.g., to judge the student, to avoid the student, to fight/argue back with the student, to punish the student/teach them a lesson)
- Possible contributing factors to my reaction (e.g., not sleeping well the previous night, had an argument with partner before coming to work, history of frustration experience with student in the past, have a meeting with supervisor in an hour)

### **Step 3: Could this student be having a trauma response right now? If so, what kind? What could be contributing to this student's response?**

- If the student is being triggered by a past experience, are they more likely in hyperarousal mode or avoidant mode?
- Possible contributing factors to the student's response (e.g., extra stress due to midterms, taking 18 credits, family stress, immigration stress, history of abuse)

### **Step 4: What would be a trauma-informed response to this student?**

- What action can I take right now that would most likely help meet the needs of the student? What kind of response could be a corrective experience for the student? If the student is in hyperarousal, what can I do to de-escalate the situation?
- What do I need to let go of in order to take that action (e.g., judgement, urge to avoid the student, desire to fight back)?
- How can I make sure I am taking care of myself while attending to the student (e.g., setting and maintaining boundaries, consulting with colleagues)?