

# 8 Tips for Delivering Trauma-Informed Feedback

Students who have experienced trauma often react to both positive and negative feedback a bit differently than other students. Keep these tips in mind when delivering trauma-informed feedback in your classroom.

## For positive feedback, make it:



**Low-key and private.** Use nonverbal signals like giving a thumbs-up, jotting a few words on a sticky note, or tapping the edge of the desk as a secret signal that students are doing well. As trust grows, feedback can become more specific and public.



**Highly genuine and positive.** Students with trauma are highly sensitized to anything that feels disingenuous. Find something in a student's set of behaviors that you can authentically notice.



**Frequent.** Intersperse specific verbal feedback with gestures of approval and other short, positive modes of non-specific feedback. The idea is to help the student become accustomed to positive feedback, to develop trust in us and what we say.

## For corrective feedback:



**Do a quick redirect** when students misbehave in small ways.



**Tag the behavior** with a short, low-key verbalization or gesture, but don't stay around for a debate or power struggle.



**Check in:** respond to negative behavior with a question such as *Are you okay?* or *Can I help with something?*



**Separate the behavior from the person**—"I heard about the fight. I have seen what efforts you have been making, and I know you are better than this. We will get beyond this; I will be here for you".



**Invite self-assessment** by asking students to keep a simple success journal—a bulleted list of short, positive items of any sort—or by graphing positive behaviors.

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