

SUPPORTING STUDENTS OF COLOR

During Moments of Racial Trauma

Students of color may be dealing with feelings of grief, anger and loss after the grand jury decision in regards to the killing of Breonna Taylor by police in Louisville, KY. This graphic is designed for instructors who are thinking about ways of supporting their students during this time. If you'd like to discuss anything further, CELT is eager to support you at <http://bit.ly/askcelt>.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many students may be feeling a range of emotions from disappointment to sorrow or even anger and despair. One way to establish an empathetic learning environment is to acknowledge the painful circumstances and emphasize that you're eager to support students.

SPACE

Students may feel vulnerable and need space to process this announcement. They may also feel uncomfortable participating in formal learning spaces such as the classroom or videoconference. Working with students individually on missed or late requirements helps them feel valued in the class community.

PARTICIPATION

Students may not be ready to speak during class, especially about the grand jury decision. Avoid putting students of color on the spot to speak about racial trauma. If you're concerned about a student's participation, sending a quick message checking in with them will go a long way.

INTERVENTION

If harmful comments are made during class or between students, it's important to address the situation in a way that rejects the offensive ideas and affirms students' safety and dignity. Ignoring these comments can further alienate students of color.

MINDFULNESS

Our experiences of the Breonna Taylor case are complex, and we benefit from reflecting on them just as much as our students do. Being open about our own reactions can build rapport with students if we're comfortable sharing, and if it feels like the right time to do so.

OPENNESS

The more students feel they can communicate with you, the better. Often, just listening is more than enough, but if a student might benefit from resources on campus, you can point them in that direction. Some important resources are listed below.

FLEXIBILITY

Students may have difficulty processing the news and focusing on learning, especially as racial trauma is compounded with the pandemic. When possible, flexibility with how students engage in the course can keep them on track to finish successfully.

RESOURCES

Counseling Center: <https://www.uky.edu/counselingcenter/>
The Office of Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice: BISS@uky.edu
Martin Luther King Center: <https://www.uky.edu/mlkc/home>