

Recognizing Trauma: Scenario One

James has just started attending your night class. On the TABE test, he achieved a National Reporting Standards (NRS) level 3 score in math and NRS Level 5 score in reading. James always sits in the back of the classroom and does not make eye contact with you, a male instructor, or any other males in the classroom. Anytime the class works in small groups, James finds an excuse to leave the classroom.

Questions	Response
1. What are possible traumas James may be dealing with?	
2. How can you assist James in acclimating to your classroom routine?	
3. What are some personal goals you might make related to instilling a positive sense of self-efficacy within James?	

Recognizing Trauma: Scenario Two

Thaddaeus is 22 years old and just enrolled in your High School Equivalency (HSE) class as part of the conditions of his supervised parole, after serving three years in a state correctional institution. He tends to sit on the edges of the classroom. He appears to be very apprehensive when other students look in his direction. Thaddaeus has tattoos on his hands, arms, neck, and face. He dropped out of school in the 8th grade. While incarcerated, he attempted to attain his high school equivalency twice. During your first meeting with him, he stated he was unable to get his HSE because his teachers were difficult to interact with and seemed afraid of the inmates in the classroom. After coming to class for a few weeks, Thaddaeus told you the reason he couldn't finish while incarcerated was because he "couldn't do math." Prior to a TABE test in math, Alex told you he was used to performing poorly when taking standardized tests. His teacher in middle school told him we would always fail standardized math tests because he lacked the ability to pay attention in class.

Questions	Response
1. What are possible traumas Thaddaeus may be dealing with?	
2. How can you assist Thaddaeus in acclimating to your classroom routine?	
3. What are some personal goals you might make related to instilling a positive sense of self-efficacy within Thaddaeus?	

Recognizing Trauma: Scenario Three

Geraldina is 42 years old and has lived in the U.S. for 15 years. She is originally from Tegucigalpa, Honduras. She crossed into the U.S. from the southern border with Mexico in 2008. She has worked on a construction crew, rebuilding interstates across the southeastern U.S. for ten years. Geraldina signed up for your part-time ESL Class two months ago and attends at least once a week. She articulates herself well when speaking English. She has an extensive vocabulary in English. She has also told you that her boss very often uses her as a translator to give instructions to the workers from Mexico here on temporary work visas. She is responsive and loves to participate in speaking exercises but tends to be less interested in participating in assignments and activities written on the board. She also tends to avoid completing written handouts. She will very often give you a reason for needing to leave early if most of the assignments involve reading, writing, or computer activities.

Questions	Response
1. What are possible traumas Geraldina may be dealing with?	
2. How can you assist Geraldina in acclimating to your classroom routine?	
3. What are some personal goals you might make related to instilling a positive sense of self-efficacy within Geraldina?	

Recognizing Trauma: Scenario Four

Afsoon is 19 years old and from Kabul, Afghanistan. Her family arrived here in North Carolina three months ago after seeking asylum in the U.S. Afsoon attended a form of secondary school in Kabul prior to the Taliban retaking the capital. Once the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan in September 2021, they established a theocratic government that holds a strict interpretation of Sharia Law. The Taliban government quickly established a new law which made it illegal for Afsoon and other young girls to receive a formal education in a public setting. She speaks some English but has not mastered the English alphabet and does not understand basic grammatical constructs in English. She always sits away from other students and becomes very uncomfortable sitting in the same classroom as male students. When any male enters her classroom, she covers her face with her hijab. For the first few weeks after her enrollment, there were only female students in the classroom. Recently, a male student was placed in her classroom. Afsoon stayed after class yesterday and asked you to move her to a class that only had women in it.

Questions	Response
1. What are possible traumas Afsoon may be dealing with?	
2. How can you assist Afsoon in acclimating to your classroom routine?	
3. What are some personal goals you might make related to instilling a positive sense of self-efficacy within Afsoon?	

Recognizing Trauma: Scenario Five

Michael is 20 years old and recently enrolled in your High School Equivalency class. He completed the 11th grade at the local high school prior to quitting school three years ago. He has not held any formal jobs since dropping out of school. His father came with him when Michael enrolled and told you a group of boys were cyberstalking him in high school and eventually attacked him after school. Michael suffered a broken arm, a fractured jaw, and several broken bones from the attack. Michael rarely leaves the house and tends to stay on the computer all day. Michael is always asking for individual work and prefers to work from a computer. Annette, a 62-year-old retiree from New York has been attending your class for approximately two months. She has become the unofficial student leader within the class because she is so outgoing. She has taken an interest in Michael and continuously engages with him in conversation during breaks. Annette is the only person in the class you have seen Michael interact with during the past three weeks. When you call on Michael to answer a question or read a passage in front of the classroom, his hands begin to shake and his voice cracks. He generally does not make eye contact with you or any students other than Annette.

Questions	Response
1. What are possible traumas Michael may be dealing with?	
2. How can you assist Michael in acclimating to your classroom routine?	
3. What are some personal goals you might make related to instilling a positive sense of self-efficacy within Michael?	

Recognizing Trauma: Scenario Six

Juan Manuel is 32 years old. He is currently serving 23 months in one of the state’s correctional institutions supported by your community college. He is a new enrollee in your multi-level, Adult Basic Education (ABE) and High School Equivalency (HSE) classroom. During his orientation on his first day in class, when asked to identify his educational goals, he told you he is just in class for gain time (days earned towards reducing his time to the minimum sentence). During the orientation, you asked him where he was from. He told you he was born in Mexico and his family immigrated to El Paso, Texas when he was six years old. He only completed the eighth grade prior to dropping out of school. He moved to Raleigh approximately five years ago and worked various construction jobs. During the first day of class, you learned that Juan Manuel cannot read and write in either Spanish or English. When you attempted to assign him work appropriate for his individual needs, he became agitated and refused to do the work. When you pulled him aside after class, he confided that he was embarrassed about his situation and did not like his classmates knowing about it.

Questions	Response
1. What are possible traumas Juan Manuel may be dealing with?	
2. How can you assist Juan Manuel in acclimating to the classroom routine?	
3. What are some personal goals you might make related to instilling a positive sense of self-efficacy within Juan Manuel?	

Recognizing Trauma: Scenario Seven

Gabriel is 42 years old and works as a roofer. He is well-read and can speak very intelligently on any number of subjects, including science, history, politics, and literature. He has attended your night-time High School Equivalency (HSE) class for approximately five months. He scored a National Reporting Standards (NRS) level of five in reading and was assessed at NRS level two in math. Gabriel passed the High School Equivalency Tests (HiSET) in Reading, Writing, Social Studies, and Science within his first two months in class with you. However, he struggles with math tests. He has the ability to understand and apply mathematical concepts when they are introduced. Gabriel excels at the math handouts and interactive activities provided in class. He can even explain how to solve multi-step geometry problems and complex algebraic expressions to the rest of the class on the board. However, he seems to struggle with formal math tests, such as the TABE and HiSET Official Practice Tests (OPT). You have noticed that his demeanor is very different when he takes any type of math test. He becomes nervous and unsure of himself. When you brought the problem up to him, he seemed to accept his fate. He stated that his mind goes blank when he sits down to take a math exam. He told you he was in a “learning disability” class in high school. He stated that for all four years of high school, he begged his teacher to move him to regular classes so that he could receive an actual diploma. His teacher told him he could not move to regular classes because he did not demonstrate the aptitude to learn mathematical concepts and he would never be able to pass a standardized math test.

Questions	Response
1. What are possible traumas Gabriel may be dealing with?	
2. How can you assist Gabriel in acclimating to your classroom routine?	
3. What are some personal goals you might make related to instilling a positive sense of self-efficacy within Gabriel?	

Recognizing Trauma: Scenario Eight

Ashaad is 19 years old and began your High School Equivalency (HSE) class three weeks ago. He scored very high in both reading and math on the TABE test. He dropped out of school his senior year to work in the local turkey processing plant. His father received a life sentence at the beginning of his senior year. He lives with his mother and three younger siblings who are ages 9, 13, and 15. He took the job at the processing plant in order to help his mother pay bills. Ashaad and his family live in a low-income housing unit within the city. The local news station covers stories about drug activity and gang violence occurring in Ashaad's neighborhood at least once per week. Ashaad always arrives to class 15 minutes early and stays for the entire class. However, he does not like to participate in group discussions. He also seems distracted during most lessons.

Questions	Response
1. What are possible traumas Ashaad may be dealing with?	
2. How can you assist Ashaad in acclimating to your classroom routine?	
3. What are some personal goals you might make related to instilling a positive sense of self-efficacy within Ashaad?	

Recognizing Trauma: Scenario Nine

Tammy is a 65-year-old retiree who was born and raised in New York City. She was a single mom who raised three children by herself. All three of her children graduated from college and still live in New York. Tammy moved to North Carolina two years ago with her significant other who had a brother and sister-in-law living here. Tammy's boyfriend abruptly passed away one year ago but left her the property she lives in. Shortly after her boyfriend's funeral, Tammy became light-headed while standing in her kitchen and fainted. She hit her head on the edge of the countertop as she fell and suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI). She has difficulty remembering things and making decisions because of the TBI. Tammy joined your class four months ago because she wanted to finally earn her High School Equivalency (HSE). She also told you she enjoys coming to class for the social interaction. She is very active in class activities.

Questions	Response
1. What are possible traumas Tammy may be dealing with?	
2. How can you assist Tammy in acclimating to your classroom routine?	
3. What are some personal goals you might make related to instilling a positive sense of self-efficacy within Tammy?	