

# Handy Backpack Phrases for Trauma-Informed Educators

Delivering Trauma-Informed Art  
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When children are immersed in making art, it's often best not to converse with them at all. Teachers and parents honor the creative process by letting children work quietly, without words to interrupt them. Other times art making brings up feelings, as children engage in sensory play that activates their central nervous system. If this happens, they may verbalize fears or insecurities. How you respond is important. Children who have experienced pandemic stress and other traumas, look to caregivers to answer their unspoken questions: "Do you see me? Am I safe here? Do I matter to you?" Your words and intentions answer these questions.

When caregivers memorize and use these "backpack phrases," they help children feel safe, connected and calm...the 3 Pillars of Trauma-Informed Care.

## Safety

I'm here for you.  
You are safe.  
I like helping you.  
What do you need from me?  
Thank you for trusting me.



## Connection

We'll get through this together.  
We make a great team.  
I get scared too, and it's no fun.  
I know this is hard.  
I am proud of you for trying.



## Calm

What's your favorite breathing exercise?  
Let's both open and shut our hands a few times.  
Feelings come and go, this one will pass too.  
Let's feel our heartbeat by placing our fingers on our pulse.  
We can calm down by taking 3 deep breaths together, follow me!

**TRAUMA-INFORMED ART = OPEN ENDED ART EXPERIENCES  
DELIVERED BY TEACHERS WHOSE FOCUS IS ON  
SAFETY, CONNECTION AND CALM.**



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