

826 Boston Tutor Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Dear 826 Boston Tutors,

I could not begin this letter in any other way than to **thank you** for your commitment to improving the education of Boston's youth. **Last year alone, we served nearly 4,000 students** in the Boston Public Schools through our in-school and out-of-school time programming, **providing over 35,000 hours of tutoring support** to some of city's most underserved students. We could not achieve anything close to that level of impact without the most key ingredient in our special sauce: **YOU!** Each and every day at 826 Boston and the Greater Boston Bigfoot Research Institute, we are deeply grateful for your contributions.

Recently we asked ourselves, *“Are we doing everything that we can to support our incredible tutor corps, without whom none of this would be possible?”* This question came at a time when we were planning strategically for our expansion into more schools to build more Writers' Rooms, and when we also anticipated bringing on more team members to increase our capacity as a staff. This guide is one of the products of our efforts to improve and optimize your experience as a volunteer with us. We hope that you will find it helpful.

I started working at 826 Boston as program director in 2011. I was thrilled to join an organization that was not only highly creative and engaging for kids, but also provided straightforward services to both students and teachers. By lowering the student-to-teacher ratio from 25:1 to 5:1, students receive the individualized attention that they need to help them develop their writing skills. And at the same time, our partner teachers receive support in meeting those needs - often a daunting task when high-quality writing is the result of multiple rounds of conversation and coaching.

The 826 Boston Tutor Guide contains resources to support you in those conversations about writing with our students, including strategies for providing different kinds of feedback. This guide also shares with you our philosophy for building lifelong writers, and our framework for what good writing looks like (both adapted from the work of literary consultant and writer, Carl Anderson). In that section, we also offer you tips for working with English Language Learners, and how to address grammar in a tutoring session.

Through a grant with Lesley University and in partnership with the Boston Public Schools, 826 Boston received customized resources for how to support students during independent reading in our after-school programs. You will find some of those tools in here, as well as a few words about the important “reading writing connection.”

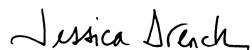
Finally, we share with you recommendations for how to meet our students where they are, and provide critical interventions and resources for working with students who have had

experiences of grief and/or trauma, followed by a section that outlines our work related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Perhaps the most important message that I can bring to your attention before closing is that so many of our students don't believe that their stories matter. This never ceases to amaze the adults in our community, given our students' imagination and unique perspectives, and the incredible life experiences that they have often had. However, through your steady attention, thoughtful questions, and consistent tutoring support, significant changes have taken place when our youth understand that in fact their stories matter very much. They can even start to see themselves differently. This process is, in a word, transformational.

Again, thank you for joining our movement to help raise a community of youth writers - and keep up the wonderful work.

Warmly,



Jessica Drench
Executive Director, 826 Boston
August, 2016

826 Boston General Tutoring Guidelines

“I walked away from them feasting on the lasagnasaurus and noticed candy unicorns in the jungle.” - Nazahah Abdullah, *I Rate Today a -1,000*

We are going to begin at the beginning. The following guidelines have served our tutor corps since our chapter’s inception back in 2009...so, it’s a good place to start! Please consider them as some of the staples in your kitchen pantry. From here we will go into depth in the core topics discussed in the introduction.

#1 Every draft has potential

Our philosophy at 826 Boston is that hard work, not magic and thunderbolts, makes good writing. It’s just a fact that all writers need to revise; even Stephen King has an editor. If a student is still learning the ropes with more basic punctuation or grammar, but has an ear for the music of language, then first focus on the writer’s strength. “You’ve got a great ear for the music of language,” you might say. “All we need to do is get some of this grammar cleared up. Let’s get started.”

#2 Asking questions is a great tutor strategy

Suggestions and corrections are often best made by asking questions. Students are more likely to retain what they learn if they come to realizations for themselves. (*Do you agree? Why? :-)*).

#3 Respect the directions of the student’s classroom teacher

826 tutors are present to provide support, and so shouldn’t question the assignment or the grades given by the teacher. Please defer to the lesson plan and overall wisdom of the student’s teacher when working with a student - even if they raise questions for you. Instead, please bring any of those questions to 826 Boston staff.

#4 Tutors work with students at 826 sites during programming only.

Please do not schedule tutoring appointments at your own home or the student’s, or anywhere else outside of 826 Boston sites during programming.

#5 Tutoring at 826 Boston can be a vehicle for mentorship - so have fun with it!

Let’s face it: while most of our tutors are passionate about writing, all of our tutors are here because they are passionate about helping kids. We encourage you to take some time to get to know the students better. This can actually be a great incentive for them. “So it looks like we have about ten minutes left before we finish this summary about sea turtles,” you might say. “When we’re done, how about we take five minutes for you to tell me about how your baseball game went over the weekend?” We see it happen with our tutors all of the time - when you take interest in students’ lives and interests, they develop trust, and take interest in you.

TUTORING IN WRITING

THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIFELONG WRITER¹

“My journal is red and has a broken cover. It has 180 sheets of paper. It smells old, like Mama Margarita’s perfume. There are black ink stains on the pages.”

- Margarita Diaz, *I Want You To Have This: A Collection of Objects and Their Stories from Around the World*

At 826 Boston, we want to see students learn how to identify writing topics that matter to them, revise their drafts in order to make them more and more powerful, and derive a sense of pride and ownership that comes with sharing high-quality work with a public audience.

Ultimately, our goal is to raise a community of lifelong writers: students who have a sense of purpose and are confident about their writing, and who develop a set of writing skills that they can bring with them into college, career, and life.

Let’s pause here to share what a “Lifelong Writer” looks like.

A Lifelong Writer has *initiative* as a writer when she

- Writes by choice for purposes that matter to her.
- Writes for audiences that matter to her.

A Lifelong Writer *writes well* when she

- Communicates meaning in her writing.
- Structures texts in ways that enables readers to grasp her meaning.
- Uses precise detail to develop parts of the structure.
- Gives her writing an appropriate voice to enhance her meaning.
- Uses conventions to guide the reader through the text and enhance her meaning.

A Lifelong Writer has a *writing process* that works for her when

- She has a repertoire of writing tools and strategies that she uses to navigate the writing process (rehearsal/brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing) that enable her to write well time and time again.

¹ Carl Anderson, <http://twu.firstclassconferences.com/3-6%20Assessment.pdf>

DEFINITIONS OF THE TRAITS OF GOOD WRITING

“Around my neck, I wore something with a shine that the stars would envy.”

- Jasmine Alexis Brown, *We Think You're Old Enough to Know*

One of our primary goals moving forward is to have a shared understanding and language for what good writing looks like. Here are Carl Anderson's five traits of good writing, adopted by 826 Boston as a framework to discuss, teach, and assess the writing of our students.

Meaning

- We expect that an author has “something to say” or will have “a point” to make about his topic.
- Meaning influences almost all of the decisions a writer makes while composing a text.
- Some children see writing as retelling, instead of communicating meaning.

Structure

- Structure refers to the sections of a text, and their roles and interrelationships within a text.
- A writer's meaning helps her decide which parts to include (or focus on) in a text. The role of each part, then, is to help develop meaning.
- A writer decides which kinds of parts to include in a text.
- In narrative genres, a writer orders parts in time; in non-narrative texts, logic binds the parts.
- Leads, endings and transitions help guide the reader along the path towards creating meaning.
- A writer weights some parts more than others because they play a more crucial role in developing meaning.

Detail

- Details are the particulars (or specifics) of a piece of writing.
- Every detail plays a role in helping a writer develop what he's trying to say about his topic.
- Writers use a range of detail to develop meaning (i.e. actions, dialogue, thoughts, feelings).
- In their details, writers use specific words that describe exactly what happens in a narrative, or that describe exactly the subject of a non-narrative.

Voice

- Voice is the writer's presence on the page...the sense that there is a person behind the words.
- Writers use voice to enhance their meaning.
- Writers create voice in the way they write sentences.
- Writers create voice in the way they use punctuation.
- Writers create voice through their choice of details.

Conventions

- The conventions of written English are tools for writers to help them communicate meaning.
- Student errors are either careless errors, or errors that are signs that they are growing as writers.

HOW TO GET STARTED

“I step out slowly, my heels tapping against the dusty wooden floor.”

- Leryan Reyes, *Before This Place Was Filled with Zombies*

Typically, our writing sessions with students last around 45 minutes. That time can fly by. It helps tremendously to have a clear goal in mind. Is your student going to add details to a draft? Write an introduction from scratch? Clean up the conventions/grammar?

First and foremost, if there is a draft, it should be read aloud - by either you or your student. Then, here are some questions that we recommend that you ask before diving into the work at hand.

- *What do you like about your draft so far?*
- *What would you like to change about it?*
- *What revisions/changes have you made so far? Why?*

By engaging students in these conversations, we are setting them up to for independence. Lifelong writers ask themselves these questions and discuss them with one another all of the time. Furthermore, we are indicating to students that they have ownership over their own writing drafts, and can feel some confidence about identifying what is strong, and what needs attention during a tutoring session. In this way, they are actively helping us drive the revision process.

Quick Tip ---> Another important question is *when is it due?* For example, say the deadline for the piece is coming up the next day. Whether it is a research paper on women’s rights, a short story about a world made of chocolate, or a poem about a thunderstorm, it’s not the time to mess around (i.e., with the meaning or structure of the piece). Instead, focus on polishing up conventions and the overall presentation. And then ,when that’s done, it’s time to practice some serious high-fives.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE: STRATEGIES FOR WRITING CONFERENCES

“Glasses can reveal the future.” - Raheem Miller, *All This Ticking*

When working with students of any age, there are trends that consistently come up at different stages of the writing process. Below you will find a series of suggestions for tutoring responses to a variety of familiar moments that we have experienced with our student authors.

The following table is modified from:

https://www.nesacenter.org/uploaded/conferences/SEC/2010/spkr_handouts/AndesonCarlConferring.pdf

<http://twu.firstclassconferences.com/3-6%20Assessment.pdf>

Stage of Writing Process	If I see this...	I'll teach this to the student...
Brainstorming	The student has trouble coming up with topics to write about.	-Writing Territories (see next section) -Writing off of everyday life
Brainstorming	The student jumps into drafting without brainstorming his topic; consequently the draft is skimpy and undeveloped.	-Talk out piece before drafting -Sketch parts of piece before drafting -Read sources for details before drafting
Brainstorming	The student complains that writing is boring.	Introduce student to genres that (hopefully) give the student the chance to write for meaningful purposes.
Brainstorming	When given a choice, the student tends to write in the same genre over and over.	Introduce student to other writing genres give the student the opportunity to write for new purposes
Brainstorming	The student rehearses her writing, but jumps into a draft without planning how it will go.	Create flow charts; webs; outlines; etc.
Brainstorming	The student is unable to answer the question, “What do I want to say to readers in my draft?”	Ask student, “What do you want to say in this piece?” Take notes for your student (bullets are okay).

Drafting	The student is “done” as soon as he writes a draft.	-Reread, stop, pause and ask, “What else could you say?” Add sentences, phrases, details. -Peer conferring
Drafting	The student includes parts in a generally focused piece that don’t connect to meaning.	-Touch each part, ask if it is connected to what’s important.
Drafting	The student writes undeveloped sections in his pieces.	-Add details: --Action, dialogue, thinking (narrative) --Facts, definitions, comments (nonfiction) -Add Similes -Circle parts and “stretch” them out by envisioning them in your head. Ask, “Which parts really help me get my point across?”
Drafting	The student uses general nouns and verbs in his writing.	Circle general words, and brainstorm alternatives.
Drafting	The student “stretches” parts of her pieces, but not the most important ones.	Identify and develop the “heart” of a story, or the most important parts of a nonfiction piece.
Revising	The student moves abruptly from one part to another in a piece.	Introduce time transitions (narrative) or subheadings, bullets, topic sentences (nonfiction)
Revising	The student writes “all about” a topic	Ask, “What’s important?” then delete parts that aren’t connected, expand parts that are -Use revision tools: post-its, spiderlegs, footnotes, arrows, cutting and inserting more paper -Get feedback from classmates
Revising	The student makes simple revisions, but not the major one a draft needs because there is not room to do so on drafts	Use post-it notes; spiderlegs; asterisks; arrows, etc.
Revising	The student revises, but not always the most important parts.	Circle parts of draft; put stars next to most important parts and develop those further if needed.

Editing	The student edits by reading her pieces silently to herself.	-Self-edit by reading aloud. -Peer editing
Editing	The student uses end punctuation inconsistently, or not at all	Read aloud for sentence endings.
Editing	The student overuses “and”	Discuss where to use—and not to use—“and”
Editing	The student doesn’t capitalize the beginning of sentences consistently.	-Touch each period and check that the next word is capitalized.
Editing	The student reads her writing with voice, but doesn’t cue the reader to do the same.	Use punctuation, such as exclamation marks, ellipses, and dashes; font treatment; types of sentences that cue changes in voice.

WRITING TERRITORIES

“Experienced writers often have a few favorite topics that they write about again and again—we sometimes call these favorite topics ‘writing territories.’ They are the topics that are extremely important to the writer.” - Carl Anderson

A writing territory can be anything, and it is specific to the writer. Members of your family, a friend, or anyone important to you can be a writing territory. An activity, sport, or hobby can also be a writing territory. Some writers even write often about places that are special to them, like a country, a town, or a landscape. Writers write again and again about things in the world that fascinate them, confuse them, or that they love to learn about. And many writers write about issues that concern them, that they want to do something about.

Coach the Student

To find your writing territories, ask yourself what is important to you:

- *What are you very, very interested in?*
- *What topics do you think might be writing territories for you?*
- *Is there someone in your family that you want to write about over and over again because there’s so much to think about related to that person?*
- *Is there an activity or interest you are passionate about?*
- *Is there an issue that you care deeply about that could become a territory?*

Suggest writing territories to the student based on what you know about her. If a student and his brother are inseparable, for example, you could suggest the brother as a possible writing territory. Or, if you know that a student is a soccer fanatic and an avid butterfly collector, you might suggest those as potential territories.

Excerpted from: <http://www.strategicwritingconferences.com/resources/SWCTopicCon4.pdf>, pgs. 5-7

Carl Anderson is one of the nation's leading experts on teaching writing to students in grades K-12. He dedicates his energies exclusively as an education consultant and writer.

Carl recently worked for Teachers College Reading and Writing Project at Columbia University as a Lead Staff Developer, providing staff development in the teaching of writing grades K-8. He spent school days in New York City elementary and middle schools demonstrating effective teaching in the writing workshop and coaching teachers. He gave day-long workshops for teachers at Teachers College on launching the writing workshop, conferring with student writers, mini-lessons, and developing curriculum for the writing workshop.

As a national consultant, Carl works with schools, districts and educational organizations around the country. He is known for his keynote speeches and courses at writing institutes as well as for his presentations at national conferences.

Carl also taught for eight years in the Bronx, New York, Bardstown, Kentucky and Northbrook, Illinois in grades five to eight. To read more about Carl and his publications, visit <http://www.heinemann.com/authors/1417.aspx>

SUPPORTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

“Fenway Park es mi papa, que me cuida.”
- Miguel Novelle-Ruddy, *I’m A Flame You Can’t Put Out/
Soy Una Llama Que No Puedes Apagar*

English Language Learners, or ELLs, are the fastest growing population in the Boston Public Schools - over 30% - and growing. From our Writers’ Rooms to our Young Authors’ Book Projects, we work with students who speak English as a second, third, or even fourth language.

Here are few strategies for working with ELLs that we recognize as tried and true:

- **Read the work aloud.** Yes - you have heard this from us before. This strategy particularly benefits ELLs. Some students have stronger verbal English proficiency than written, and will detect areas that need attention when they hear work read back to them.
- **Let your student dictate the story to you.** Take notes and/or bullets down on paper. This tutoring move can be very supportive during brainstorming and drafting.
- **If you know your student’s native language, use it!** There is absolutely nothing wrong with providing feedback and coaching in a language other than English, if you have that ability to do so. It is simply one more tool in your tutoring toolkit.

Here is a great list of “Do’s and Dont’s,” modified from a post on the education blog Edutopia.

<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/esl-ell-tips-ferlazzo-sypnieski>

Quick Tip → Most of these strategies are great for ALL of our students!

Modeling

Do model for students what they are expected to do or produce by discussing mentor texts (i.e. sample writing, by a professional author, the teacher, you, or another student). **Do** share your thinking processes aloud. Modeling promotes learning and motivation, and increases student self-confidence; they will have a stronger belief that they can accomplish the learning task if they follow steps that were demonstrated for them.

Don't just tell students what to do and expect them to do it.

Rate of Speech and Wait Time

Do speak slowly and clearly, and provide students with enough time to formulate their responses, whether in speaking or in writing. Remember, they are thinking and producing in two or more languages! After asking a question, wait for a few seconds before asking for a response. This "wait time" provides all students with an opportunity to think and process, and especially gives ELLs a needed period to formulate a response.

Don't speak too fast, and if a student tells you they didn't understand what you said, never, ever repeat the same thing in a louder voice!

Use of Non-Linguistic Cues

Do use visuals, sketches, gestures, intonation, and other nonverbal cues to make both language and content more accessible to students.

Don't lecture, or rely on a textbook as your only "visual aid."

Giving Instructions

Do give verbal *and* written instructions -- this practice can help all learners, especially ELLs.

Don't act surprised if students are lost when you haven't clearly written and explained step-by-step directions.

Check for Understanding

Do regularly check that students are understanding the lesson. After an explanation or lesson, a teacher could say, "Please put thumbs up, thumbs down, or sideways to let me know if this is clear, *and it's perfectly fine if you don't understand or are unsure -- I just need to know.*" This last phrase is essential if you want students to respond honestly.

Don't simply ask, "Are there any questions?" This is not an effective way to gauge what all your students are thinking. Also, don't assume that students are understanding because they are smiling and nodding their heads -- sometimes they are just being polite!

TEACHING GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT

“Dr Hodini is a bad, bad guy who has hot dogs for arms.”

- Martin Gonzalez Jr, *I Rate Today a -1,000*

At what point do we intervene to correct grammar? Is it trampling on student voices to do so? How do we avoid the red pen and the feelings of shame that come with it? These are all questions that have come up time and time again in our centers. In fact, how to teach grammar effectively is an age-old debate in education, in general.

We see it as our job as staff to help ease that tension for our tutors. So, we have boiled things down to a few essential guidelines. Perhaps the most important question to ask yourself as a tutor when you encounter a grammatical error in a student’s piece is “*Does this error interfere with meaning?*” If the draft has come to a halt and can no longer be understood due to a breakdown in grammar, then yes, the issue should be addressed and corrected.

Otherwise, the attention of you and your student should almost always be on the other four traits of writing: Meaning, Detail, Structure, and Voice. Conventions are last on that list for a reason - they are often the last thing that you should be worrying about!

We also recommend teaching grammar in context. For example, utilize the reading libraries in our center and satellite sites to pull out a book and point out examples of punctuation being used correctly. Or model it yourself in the margins. Our aim is for students to learn how to use grammar correctly to support their meaning. It is not our goal that they (or you for that matter) memorize “rules.”

And remember that all-important question of *when is this due?* The bulk of time spent on a piece of writing should be spent on developing meaning. However, if you are supporting a student to complete an assignment, and the deadline is the following day, it’s “Grammar Time.”

READING WITH STUDENTS

“Read to them. Take their breath away. Teach your children to be moved and you will be preparing them to move others.” - Cynthia Rylant

During the 826 Boston After-School Program, we facilitate independent reading sessions daily so that students can spend 20-30 minutes reading on their own or with tutors. The time that students spend in paired reading can be extremely valuable when focused in the right direction. And the great news is: it’s not rocket science. You don’t need to have to be a reading specialist or an ELA teacher to help students become better readers.

Think about the last time that you were in a book club or classroom discussion about a piece of shared reading. The excitement and energy in the room that is focused on a book is generated by conversation: asking questions, sharing opinions, making predictions about what happens next.

If you pause while reading to interact with your students and engage in this process - similar to a mini-book club - you are helping them form “movies in their minds.” They can SEE the story. That is what we’re going for. It is honestly as simple as that.

We also want to observe kids sticking with the books that they start, so that they can follow these movies from beginning to end. For that reason, choosing the right books for independent reading is a very important shopping experience. And there is no need to rush it. Our reading libraries are organized by genre, and in the Egleston center, by general reading level (many of our library books are also designated by a more specific benchmark reading level in our online catalogue - just ask staff about it). Talk to your students about their interests, and pick out a small stack of books to try out. Look at the covers, read the blurbs together, and ask the student to read the first page or two out loud. A book is “just right” is a student can read it without laboring, but can still be properly engaged and challenged by the content.

Through our partnership with Lesley University, 826 Boston was extremely fortunate to host a visit by Dr. Irene Fountas, Director of the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative. Dr. Fountas and her team identified a series of questions for us that tutors can select from during a paired reading session. By integrating these into your time reading with students, you will support them in their process to become more active readers. Please see below!

Quick Tip → We printed and laminated these questions into “tutor cards” that are available in the reading areas of both the Egleston and Grove Hall after-school programs. Feel free to bring them with you when you find a nook to read with your student - that is what they are there for!

Fiction or Nonfiction

- What kind of book is this (type or genre)?
- What was the writer's message? What was s/he really trying to say?
- What did you notice (like) about the author's writing?

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Based on *The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades PreK -8* (2011) by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, published by Heinemann Publishers. Developed for use by 826 Boston.

Fiction

- Who are the important characters and why are they important?
- Who is telling the story?
- What is the setting for the story? Is it important?
- What is the problem in the story?
- How did the story end? Were your predictions correct?
- What lesson(s) does this story teach about life?
- How does the story make you feel?
- How would you summarize the story in two or three sentences?

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Based on *The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades PreK -8* (2011) by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, published by Heinemann Publishers. Developed for use by 826 Boston.

Informational

- Why did the author write this book?
- What did you learn that you didn't know before?
- Where did the writer get the information?
- How did the writer organize the information?
- What are some important words related to this topic?
- What are the key details and how do they support the big, important ideas about the topic?
- What information do the visuals or text features give you (diagrams, props, photos, time lines)?
- Did the writer tell the information in an interesting way?
- What information about the topic was missing for you?

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Based on *The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades PreK -8* (2011) by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, published by Heinemann Publishers. Developed for use by 826 Boston.

A FEW WORDS ON THE READING-WRITING CONNECTION

“Nobody but a reader ever became a writer.” - Richard Peck

Here are just a few ways that reading with students supports them as writers:

- Students learn what good writing looks like
- Students learn to explore examples in which professional authors utilize strategies for developing meaning, voice, structure, details, and proper use of conventions - and then use these techniques in their own writing
- Inspiration/ideas for writing topics (it is NOT stealing!)
- Exploration of different genres
- Excitement for the written word

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA OR GRIEF

“I stopped copying my cousin’s voice and let myself sing like I never had before, in my own voice.” - Elianny Ventura, *I Want You To Have This: A Collection of Objects and Their Stories from Around the World*

Across our programs, our staff and volunteers work with a number of students who have experienced depression, grief, and/or trauma. We do a lot of narrative writing with students, and sometimes our youth refer to traumatic experiences from their lives during a tutoring session - for example, the death of a loved one, or the loss of a family home. Students can also come into our tutoring spaces after seeing violent images on the Internet or on TV related to current events, which can have traumatizing and re-traumatizing effects. Truthfully, many of us find ourselves being saturated by images and feeling overwhelmed by these deeply upsetting events taking place. So how can we best be there for the kids?

In general, the HEART approach is a useful acronym for remembering how to respond to students who are sharing their grief with you:

- **H**ear what the student is saying
- **E**mpathize with student’s situation
- **A**ssess what the student’s needs are
- **R**efer to available resources
- **T**ell the appropriate 826 Boston staff member

By being present and non-judgmental about the student’s experience, you are providing meaningful support - it’s not your job to be a counselor, and you certainly don’t need to “have all the answers.” As students develop trust with our tutors, writing can become a healthy and critical outlet for them to process difficult emotions.

TRAUMA FACTS FOR EDUCATORS

Student: “They say I have potential but that I am slipping out of reach. I wish I could focus and soak in the material, but I just can’t...I wish they understood how hard it is. “ - traumasensitiveschools.org

Examples of traumatic stress include community violence, neglect, natural disasters, sexual and/or physical abuse, and refugee trauma. Given its prevalence, it can be very helpful to be informed about the impact of traumatic stress on our student population. Please see below for some useful information from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

FACT: One out of every 4 children attending school has been exposed to a traumatic event that can affect learning and/or behavior.

FACT: Trauma can impact school performance.

- Lower GPA
- Higher rate of school absences
- Increased drop-out
- More suspensions and expulsions
- Decreased reading ability

FACT: Trauma can impair learning. Single exposure to traumatic events may cause jumpiness, intrusive thoughts, interrupted sleep and nightmares, anger and moodiness, and/or social withdrawal—any of which can interfere with concentration and memory. Chronic exposure to traumatic events, especially during a child’s early years, can:

- Adversely affect attention, memory, and cognition
- Reduce a child’s ability to focus, organize, and process information
- Interfere with effective problem solving and/or planning
- Result in overwhelming feelings of frustration and anxiety

FACT: Traumatized children may experience physical and emotional distress.

- Physical symptoms like headaches and stomachaches
- Poor control of emotions
- Inconsistent academic performance
- Unpredictable and/or impulsive behavior
- Over or under-reacting to bells, physical contact, doors slamming, sirens, lighting, sudden movements
- Intense reactions to reminders of their traumatic event:
 - Thinking others are violating their personal space, i.e., “What are you looking at?”
 - Blowing up when being corrected or told what to do by an authority figure
 - Fighting when criticized or teased by others
 - Resisting transition and/or change

FACT: You can help a child who has been traumatized.

FIVE-STEP INTERVENTION FOR TUTORING SESSION

Building off of the HEART approach, here is a process to follow as a tutor working with a student who is sharing a story that stems from a traumatic experience.

1. **Please be aware of the surroundings.** In our tutoring centers, we often work with children of all ages in the same room. It may be necessary to move out of earshot of younger children as your student relates a personal story, and/or responses to recent violent events.
2. **Stay calm and supportive.** Remember that your role is to listen and be empathetic - you do not need to be an expert or problem solver.
3. **Make an outline or plan for your work together.** Students who have experienced trauma particularly benefit from structure, and knowing what's coming next.
4. If you feel overwhelmed or unsure, **bring in an 826 Boston staff member at any point** to provide support or answer questions. We are here for you!
5. **Always inform an 826 Boston staff member at the end of a session** if you have been made aware of a student's experience of trauma. If the session takes places at a school, our staff will act according to protocol.

SELF-CARE FOR THE CAREGIVER

“If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete.” - Jack Kornfield

Keeping ourselves healthy and well can be easier said than done, particularly when supporting students who are really struggling. And so we would like to share with you a useful five-step formula for your own well being, which our own staff members have referred to during times of stress.

Steps to Self-Care

Modified from:

<http://justjasmineblog.com/self-care-for-people-of-color-after-emotional-and-psychological-trauma>

- **Mindful Isolation:** Disconnect from triggering interactions or other situations that might trigger the fight-or-flight response.
- **Community:** Connect with people who you have identified as your empathetic and open support. Process your feelings with them.
- **Discharge Energy:** Find ways to exert physical energy. Go for a brisk walk or a run.
- **Well-Being:** Feed yourself well. Get good rest. Avoid toxins. Breathe deep.
- **Ask for Help:** If you find yourself unable to cope find a support group or therapist to assist you.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

826 NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION

As an organization committed to encouraging youth in their creative expression, personal growth, and academic success, 826 National and its chapters recognize the importance of diversity at all levels and in all aspects of our work. In order to build and maintain the safe, supportive 826 environment in which great leaps of learning occur, we commit to inclusion: in recruiting and maintaining our volunteer base, in our internal and external relations as members of an 826 staff and board, and in our relationships with parents, teachers, schools, and most importantly -- students.

In order for 826 to serve its students in a manner that is respectful, culturally sensitive, and effective, we must collectively and intentionally invest in building a diverse and inclusive organization where all are safe and welcomed. We recognize diversity as a complex constellation of factors in a given individual's background, including both inborn traits (race, gender) and life experiences (marital status, status as a veteran). We will not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, nationality, marital status, English fluency, parental status, status as a military veteran, or disability.

We understand that fostering a truly inclusive community is an on-going process, and that there is no end-point to this discussion and work. We see this statement as a positive step toward change, but by no means as a limit to the ways we can continue to grow and improve. We value and encourage feedback from our community, and strive to be transparent and proactive in making this statement not only a living-document, but one that inspires continual action and movement. By adopting this Statement of Inclusion, the staff and board members of 826 pledge to ourselves and to each other that we will uphold these values. Together we make an active commitment to the vibrancy of a diverse 826 network, now and into the future.

WHY INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY MATTER TO 826 NATIONAL

STAFF AND BOARD

As 826 staff and board members, we all benefit from developing awareness of the many cultural factors shaping our lives and the lives of our colleagues. We are tasked with representing 826 to a wide variety of audiences: volunteers, students, teachers, parents, donors, the media, and more. It is to our advantage, individually and collectively, to take an active role in understanding and effectively communicating with people of all backgrounds.

VOLUNTEERS

826 was founded on the simple yet striking idea that caring, committed one-on-one attention from an adult can be instrumental in the life of a young person. We aim to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities for adults from all walks of life. A diverse volunteer base reflects the variety of student populations we serve, and communicates to students that 826 spaces are safe for everybody. We will actively consider diversity of race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability (etc) in recruiting volunteers for 826 chapters, in training and appreciating volunteers, and in facilitating volunteers' communication with students and each other.

STUDENTS

At 826 we believe that confidence and dignity arise when students are asked, through writing, to place their experiences alongside those of others. In order for this to happen, young people in 826 programs must feel safe to express themselves as individuals, under the guidance of our volunteers and staff. Students and volunteers create important mentorship relationships as they work side-by-side, which encourages students to think critically about their environments and communities. This leads not only to personal growth, but also to academic success as students broaden their worldview and sharpen their analytical skills. At 826 we believe a diverse range of learning styles and intellectual interests can come together under the umbrella of writing, so we welcome students of all abilities to our programs. We believe that the worth of a student is inherent, and that any student can gain the tools to succeed in school and in life.

D.E.I. RESOURCES FOR VOLUNTEERS

826 youth writing centers nationwide have committed to ongoing training and professional development in topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Below you will find a list of resources that 826 Boston encourages our volunteers to explore, read, and discuss.

Title	Author or Editor	Content Focus	URL
White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack	Peggy McIntosh	<i>Pivotal work that acknowledges and explains the invisible phenomenon of white privilege and its manifestations in our culture.</i>	https://tfainternal.box.com/s/g3s4ogln8jb6hh2qw3sl
How to Tell Someone They Sound Racist	Jay Smooth	<i>Lessons on holding one another accountable to language/behavior.</i>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boTigkjiXc
Cracking the Codes: A Trip to the Grocery Store	Joy DeGruy	<i>Author and educator Joy DeGruy shares how her sister-in-law uses her white privilege to stand up to systemic inequity.</i>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf9QBnPK6Yg
Teaching About Race, Racism and Police Violence	Teaching Tolerance	<i>This web package includes external resources and Teaching Tolerance resources that address institutional violence more broadly; updated this page periodically to reflect current events.</i>	http://www.tolerance.org/racism-and-police-violence
Best Practices: Creating an LGBT-inclusive School Climate	Teaching Tolerance	<i>These best practices were compiled to give school leaders the knowledge they need to create a climate in which their most vulnerable students feel safe and valued.</i>	http://www.tolerance.org/lgbt-best-practices