Trauma-Informed Tools for Transition

**Expect**

*Expect Uncertainty*
We know that transitions bring up a sense of uncertainty about what is going to happen next. Uncertainty is stressful. Stress is seen and experienced in bodies, in feelings, in behaviors, and in thoughts. Signs of stress will continue until we feel safe and connected to others.

*Expect Seeking Safety*
We know that transitions bring up a need to seek safety. We do this through finding connection with others and participating in familiar routines. These provide a safe haven where stress can be soothed, and we can feel and express big emotions.

*Expect Expression of Big Feelings*
We know that transitions bring up big feelings of all kinds. Big feelings will be seen in words, gestures, behaviors, and facial expressions. Big feelings that are met with understanding and care will find a safe place to be felt with and calmed.

**Provide**

*Provide Opportunities for Mastery*
We provide opportunities for mastery through planning carefully and breaking down tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces. By experiencing the joy of success we increase our confidence and our willingness to try something new.

*Provide Caring Connection*
We provide care and connection through sharing in the feelings of others, being responsive to needs, and actively listening. Even when we can’t be physically close, we can connect through facial movements, gestures, and gentle voices. Our goal is to create a caring holding space.

*Provide Calm*
We provide calm through first breathing, reflecting on our stressors, and slowing ourselves down. By finding our calm state, we can effectively respond, rather than react, to stressful moments. We can then lend our calm to others.

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Montclair State University
Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health
SEFI (Socio-Emotional Formation Initiative)
Trauma-Informed
Tools for Transition

Expect

Expect Uncertainty
"I don't know what’s happening!"

Expect Seeking Safety
"I need you!"

Expect Expression of Big Feelings
"I can’t do this!"

Provide

Provide Opportunities for Mastery
"We did it!"

Provide Caring Connection
"We are together."

Provide Calm
"We can take deep breaths."

Approved by Montclair State University Center for Autism & Early Childhood Mental Health and SEFI Socio-Emotional Formation Initiative.