Practicing Equitable and Sustainable Trauma-Informed Writing Program Administration through Disability Justice

Kaitlin M. Clinnin

Content warning: References to suicide, deportation, gun violence, and other sensitive topics.

Abstract

Given the increasing prevalence of widespread trauma and its effects on individuals and communities, how do we create trauma-informed writing programs that are radically inclusive, accessible, and sustainable? In this article, I present a framework for trauma-informed writing program administration that combines trauma-informed care practices with intersectional disability justice activism (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018). Trauma-informed writing program administration is a community effort where all faculty and administrators are responsible for trauma-informed practices and have equal access to trauma-informed support. This approach can ultimately make trauma-informed work inclusive for all who need it and more sustainable for those who enact it. I present several concrete ways that other administrators and instructors can implement trauma-informed writing program administration in their own contexts.

Writing Programs (And Administrators) in Traumatic Times

I am writing again in the midst of writing program traumas.[1] Right before spring break, a long-time adjunct faculty member died by suicide, leaving colleagues and students bereft. Meanwhile, a graduate student is concerned about one of their students who has been missing class and assignments. The cause emerges: there is a very sick child at home, and the family is scared to seek medical care for fear that their undocumented status will result in deportation or, at the very least, prohibitively expensive medical bills. Another graduate student sends me an email sharing their suicidal ideations and letting me know they are a bit behind on their lesson planning and grading. These are just the traumas that I am aware of, and I know

that, like an iceberg, the vast majority remain unseen with the potential for future wreckage.

An unexpectedly high percentage of my job as a WPA is triage. I triage situations to assess damage, determine action, and, when appropriate, act. It is work that I have not been trained to do but that I am surprisingly adept at, most likely thanks to my own trauma exposure. I am no longer surprised by trauma; I anticipate it and greet it with weary recognition. Oh, it is you, trauma, again. What is it this time? Will this be a situation I have seen before—a student in distress, a disclosure, a violent threat to campus, a hate crime? Or will this be a new tragedy, like an ongoing global pandemic?

I am not alone in serving as triage or a first responder in the writing program (Clinnin, 2020). WPAs have written about their roles in the wake of traumas like student sexual assault, terrorism, shootings, pandemics, student death, and racial violence (Blackburn, 2022; Boquet, 2016; Borrowman, 2005; Hensley Owens, 2020). Although trauma's appearance in writing program administration does not surprise me, I am continually surprised by the lack of a professional response to this unrecognized job responsibility. There is no CWPA statement on even the existence of trauma, crisis, or tragedy in writing programs, let alone guidance on how to prepare WPAs for this work, support them as they undertake it, or value this labor (because if we must do this work, it should be recognized in some way). Separately, Jessie Blackburn (2022) and I have recognized the need for trauma-informed approaches to writing program administration. Perhaps this is a pessimistic take that suggests I do not believe that trauma will disappear from writing programs (true). Perhaps I am buying into neoliberal labor conditions because I suggest WPAs must take on additional responsibilities in a profession that already overworks, under-compensates, and exploits, especially untenured, female, and/or administrators of color. And yet, I am regularly faced with the reality of students, staff, faculty, and administrators and their trauma, past and present. Ignoring trauma means ignoring people. I cannot do that. I will not do that.

In this article, I ask: How do we create more trauma-informed writing programs that are equitable and sustainable? At its best, current trauma-informed approaches make space for trauma in learning and working; at its worst, trauma-informed approaches further marginalize individuals and communities who already face substantial barriers while burning out those who try to help. I present a framework for trauma-informed writing program administration (TI-WPA) that combines trauma-informed care principles with disability justice activism (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018; Sins Invalid, 2019). By rooting trauma-informed principles in disability justice's anti-ableist and antiracist activism, TI-WPA becomes a community effort

where all faculty and administrators are responsible for trauma-informed practices and have equal access to trauma-informed support. This approach can ultimately make trauma-informed work inclusive for all who need it and more sustainable for those who enact it.

Trauma-Informed Approaches in Education

Faced with the presence of trauma in the writing classroom and writing program, I turned to research to answer questions like "How do I teach writing in the midst of trauma?" and "How do I continue to show up to the classroom, one of the locations of my own trauma?" I found some initially comforting answers in trauma-informed pedagogy, answers that validated the pain that I saw and felt in writing classrooms. Although there is not a single definition of trauma-informed pedagogy, there are some shared premises.

First, trauma is widespread. 57.8% of adults have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience (ACE) such as abuse, food and housing insecurity, or a family death (Giano, Wheeler, & Hubach, 2020), a statistic that does not account for traumatic experiences that occur in adulthood. Second, individuals who have experienced trauma may experience various degrees of physical, mental, emotional, social, behavioral, and learning effects (Felitti et al., 1998). Finally, trauma is not a singular event. Traumatic responses can compound due to new and continuing traumatic events, including secondary exposures to trauma. Even during recovery, trauma survivors may experience stress responses when they encounter situations similar to past traumatic events, an experience known as retraumatization.

Given the prevalence and effects of trauma on learners, trauma-informed pedagogies (TIPs) seek to create educational environments for students who have experienced trauma and may have traumatic stress disorders. Trauma-informed educator Alex Shevrin Venet (2021) offers four general principles of TIP that can be adapted to various classes and students: predictability, flexibility, connection, and empowerment. Venet encourages educators to provide consistent structure and transparency in the classroom (predictability) while also working with individual students to meet their socioemotional and learning needs as they may change from day to day or over time (flexibility). Educators should also establish healthy relationships with students and encourage peer relationships (connection), while students should feel that they have some agency in the class and can make choices related to their learning (empowerment). Notably, TIPs do not attempt to diagnose or treat students' trauma but instead seek to consciously design

learning environments in which all students can succeed, regardless of whether they have or have not experienced trauma.

Writing instructors have increasingly adopted trauma-informed writing pedagogy (TIWP) due to the nature and structure of writing classes. The small class size and frequent, meaningful interactions with peers and instructors can result in students disclosing traumatic experiences. Trauma-informed practices already align with many "best practices" in writing pedagogy, like active learning, transparent assignment design, backward design, and Universal Design for Learning. In one of the few published articles on TIWP, Melissa Tayles (2021) offers two components of her own TIWP practices: the instructor as a buffer and classrooms as psychologically safer spaces. In her role as a buffer, Tayles discusses topics such as mental health, coping strategies, and resilience with students throughout the semester. Psychologically safer classrooms attempt to avoid triggering or retraumatizing those who have experienced trauma. Tayles cultivates a psychologically safer writing classroom by removing authoritarian language from course materials, changing conferencing procedures to be more egalitarian and comfortable for students and herself, and providing a clear structure for class sessions. By making relatively small changes like replacing syllabus language that mandates ("students *will* do") with more invitational phrasing ("you have the opportunity to . . ."), Tayles fosters connection and empowerment for students who may have experienced trauma. TIWP recognizes the effects of stress and trauma in the learning process and helps students to develop their own health(ier) strategies.

A student may be fortunate enough to have one faculty member like Tayles, but the student will likely encounter other instructors and institutional barriers that are not trauma-aware and may even, inadvertently, retraumatize or exacerbate symptoms of trauma exposure. Instead, a programmatic commitment to trauma-informed practice is necessary. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) explains that a trauma-informed program, organization, or system

> **realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; **recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and **responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively **resist re-traumatization**. (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 9)

In a trauma-informed organization, all organization members share basic knowledge about trauma's prevalence and its effects on individuals and communities. All members recognize signs of trauma and respond to

trauma within their respective roles. Furthermore, the organization's structure, policies, and procedures reflect the knowledge of trauma-informed practices. Finally, trauma-informed organizations attempt to prevent retraumatization of both clients and practitioners.

Trauma-informed approaches to educational administration have emerged primarily in K–12 settings but increasingly in higher education. Trauma-informed schools integrate trauma-informed practices into the school culture, classrooms, administrative levels, and faculty and staff strategies so that all feel safe, welcomed, and supported (Cole et al., 2005). Drawing on the work in K–12 scholarship, writing studies scholars have called for TI-WPA to extend trauma-informed support to all students, faculty, and administrators in writing programs (Blackburn, 2022; Clinnin, 2021). Writing in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and racial protests, Jessie Blackburn (2022) encourages WPAs to use a trauma-informed approach to "build [trauma-informed] professional development for their faculty; lead trauma-informed program initiatives; conduct curriculum mapping for trauma-sensitive matter; and create intersectional, responsible, and culturally sensitive responses" (Conclusions section, para. 1).

The 1 October 2017 shooting a few miles away from my institution initiated my commitment to becoming a trauma-informed WPA as I struggled to manage my own trauma response while also supporting students and instructors as they responded to and, eventually, recovered from that traumatic event. Over the past six years, through deaths, campus violence, and pandemics, I took actions to recognize, respond to, and recover from trauma in the writing program that align with Tayles's and Blackburn's respective suggestions. I removed the programmatic punitive attendance policy to establish a more flexible one so that students did not fail based on a set number of class absences. I facilitated trauma-informed professional development events for faculty and staff across campus as the institution returned to face-to-face operations. I organized department resource fairs and invited the campus psychological center, disability resource center, student support triage team, and other local resource centers to present to graduate teaching assistants, part-time instructors, and full-time faculty. I created resource guides for students that listed institutional and community organizations that could provide financial and emotional support and a complementary guide for instructors that listed organizations that could assist their physical, mental, and financial health; printed copies of the one-page guides were placed in every instructor's office space. These efforts created a general program awareness of trauma, helped instructors understand their role when working with a student in distress, and made referral

resources easily available. And yet, it never felt like enough, and it never felt like these actions were arcing toward justice.

If not implemented with equity and sustainability in mind, TIP can perpetuate existing social inequities (Dutro, 2019; Venet, 2021). TIP can also operate from a medicalized perspective of disability. Oprah Winfrey and Bruce D. Perry's (2021) recent NYT best-selling book on trauma asks, "What happened to you?" The question is a common one that perpetuates the idea that there was an event, a catastrophe, a crisis, and ultimately an injury that has fundamentally changed one's ability to think, learn, and retain information. From this neurological understanding of trauma emerges a deficit perspective that compares those who have experienced trauma to normative assumptions about learning. TIP guides list "symptoms" such as challenges focusing, retaining, and recalling information; challenges with attendance; challenges with anxiety; and challenges with emotional regulation (Davidson, 2017). These are challenges that so many students (and instructors) experience, but in the context of trauma, these challenges become a list of symptoms, a list of ways that the traumatized learner is neurologically different from their peers, and a list of ways that a traumatized learner cannot succeed in a neurotypical classroom without accommodations. TIP can problematically identify the "problem" as the student who has experienced trauma instead of the real problems: an inaccessible learning environment and a traumatizing society.

Trauma becomes a lens through which we see not only individuals but also their communities. Elizabeth Dutro writes, "it is a slippery slope between identifying trauma in a child's life and ascribing pathology to children, families, and communities" (2019, p. 33). An individual who has experienced trauma represents their entire community, whether that community is of veterans, LGBTQIA+, low-income households, or families of color. There is the potential to ascribe the trauma to the community itself rather than the systemic conditions that cause or make trauma more likely. By focusing only on individuals, the root of the trauma, their need for accommodations, and the pathology of their communities as inherently deviant, there is no need to confront the traumatizing and oppressive structures and systems. There is no need to build a radically equitable, accessible, and caring society.

My own experience with TIP demonstrates some of the challenges. I work at an institution that serves many of the communities that trauma-informed guides identify as most likely to have experienced trauma. As I presented on trauma-informed education across campus, I heard many well-meaning educators discuss what was "wrong" with our students compared to "normal" students at other institutions (notably, institutions

with a whiter, more affluent student body). I heard how we would need to lower the academic expectations for students because they were "incapable," "damaged," and "broken." I became increasingly aware that trauma-informed scholarship was legitimizing deficit perspectives about our students and their communities.

The sustainability of trauma-informed practice was also called into question. I became the trauma go-to person, essentially serving as a mental health first responder for the writing program and department that far exceeded my role and training. I completed Mental Health First Aid training to be "certified" to recognize signs of distress and to respond appropriately. But in the absence of others in the program, department, and institution who were trauma-aware, let alone practicing trauma-informed approaches, any student or faculty situation that involved the slightest negative emotion or trauma was diverted to me. I referred to my office as the "crying room" because so many people came to my office, shut the door, and broke down. I wanted to help everyone who came to me in need of support, but the emotional labor took a toll (Clinnin, 2020). I was not able to focus on my actual job responsibilities, nor was I feeling safe or satisfied in my position. My own PTSD symptoms were exacerbated by the situations that I encountered; a threatening email sent me into a dissociative episode or a discussion about gun violence would activate an adrenaline surge. I was present less on campus and less present when I was there. In short, I burned out.

Despite these challenges, I remain committed to trauma-informed work. We need trauma-informed practices and practitioners. Trauma will not go away, and ignoring trauma means ignoring the lives and needs of those who experience it. It means ignoring our students, our colleagues, and ourselves. But we need a trauma-informed approach that does not further marginalize or pathologize those who need it. We need a trauma-informed approach that does not try to "fix" those who have experienced trauma by fitting them into normative ideas about ability, productivity, and value. We need a trauma-informed approach that confronts the traumatizing *systems* instead of focusing only on the individuals who have been traumatized. We need a trauma-informed approach that proactively confronts the causes of trauma and does not just react to the effects of trauma. We need a trauma-informed approach that does not burn out or (re)traumatize those who practice it. In the rest of this article, I offer disability justice as a generative framework to help reconceptualize trauma and to develop an equitable and sustainable model of TI-WPA.

Disability Justice and Trauma-Informed Approach

Disability studies approaches to writing program administration are already evident. In their 2016 CWPA keynote address, Remi Yergeau called out the discipline on the structural ableism that excludes people from WPA work, scholarship, and the conference. Yergeau encourages WPAs to start "disabling and cripping and fucking with everything" (2016, p. 160). Similarly, Amy Vidali calls for WPAs to disable writing program administration, an ongoing process of "knowingly and innovatively thinking through and with disability . . . making our writing program work accessible and inclusive" to "innovate, include, and transgress expected and exclusionary norms" (2015, p. 33). I take Yergeau and Vidali's calls to examine the ways that structural oppression is enacted within writing programs and to take radical action. I turn to disability justice scholarship as a framework to understand trauma in more equitable ways and to enact trauma-informed practices that are more equitable and sustainable while working towards more radical societal change.

Disability justice emerges from disabled, queers of color activists working individually and in collectives such as Sins Invalid and the Disability Justice Collective. According to activist-artist Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, disability justice is a political movement that "centers sick and disabled people of color, queer and trans disabled folks of color" (2018, p. 22). Disability justice is an active commitment to eradicating structural ableism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, colonialism, and other forms of oppression that harm all throughout society. A disability justice framework strives to create a future of collective liberation and access through intersectional social justice activism. Previous traditions of disability activism sought full inclusion of disabled people into "mainstream" society, most notably through retrofits and accommodations that offered limited access and necessitated individuals fight for every entry point into an innately inaccessible society. Disability justice seeks the radical recreation of the world so that disabled people do not need to adapt to normative standards of how to move, work, learn, live, and be. Instead, disabled people can fully engage in the world in ways that are most comfortable for them in the moment, knowing that their access needs and preferences will change over time.

The goal of disability justice is universal, collective access that will lead to universal, collective liberation. Disability justice activists co-create this radically accessible society through shared principles of intersectionality, leadership of those most impacted, anti-capitalistic politics, cross-movement solidarity, recognition of wholeness, sustainability, commitment to

cross-disability solidarity, interdependence, collective access, and collective liberation (Sins Invalid, 2019, pp. 23–26). Notably, disability justice begins with intersectionality as the core premise that "each person has multiple identities, and that each identity can be a site of privilege or oppression" (Sins Invalid, 2019, p. 23). Just as important is the tenet that all people are valuable as they are. Relationships are foundational in disability justice. Building relationships and coalitions across identities, struggles, and communities will create a society that is radically accessible and non-exploitative. This work is achieved by centering those who are multiply oppressed within current society. Sustainability is a key concern as activism is an ongoing process, but collective action and care allow individuals to attend to their needs while the work continues.

Disability justice does not explicitly define itself as trauma-informed, but the presence of trauma is inherent within disability justice work, and applications of disability justice to trauma offer the following insights:

- **Trauma is a systemic problem:** Disability justice expands the focus of trauma from an individual experience to a broader societal critique of the conditions that enabled or exacerbated trauma. Trauma is widespread in current society due to historical and contemporary structural oppression, exploitation, and violence against individuals and communities, not because of individual or community pathologies.
- **Trauma is disparately experienced:** Disabled, queer crips of color and their communities are more likely to have experienced traumas due to their multiply oppressed identities. This increased likelihood of trauma exposure is due to inherent racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, transphobia, and other structural forms of oppression. Trauma effects are exacerbated by the frequency, duration, and intensity of traumatic events. Trauma effects may be shared and compounded across communities and generations.
- **Trauma can be disabling:** Trauma exposure can affect the holistic wellness of individuals and communities. Trauma survivors and communities may have different and diverse needs, behaviors, and preferences, some of which may be painful. Disability justice rejects the medicalized perspective of trauma that seeks to "cure" trauma survivors, emphasizing that trauma survivors are inherently worthy as they are.
- **Trauma is not a deficit:** Like all disabilities, trauma exposure is not deviant but a divergent way of engaging with the world. Trauma survivors are not inferior. People who have experienced trauma may not conform to societal norms and expectations, nor should they need to.

> Trauma survivors should be able to engage in society as they need or want without being criticized, pitied, or excluded.

A disability justice approach to trauma means supporting trauma survivors while simultaneously working to eradicate traumatizing conditions and systems. Disability justice activists recognize that this work is demanding, ongoing, and essential, so such activism must also be sustainable. The call to action and the principles of disability justice can guide this trauma-informed work in writing programs.

Equitable and Sustainable Trauma-Informed Writing Program Administration

In the following section, I consider what a trauma-informed writing program administrative practice rooted in disability justice could be. Disability justice activism is a continual imagining and striving towards a just and accessible future, a process that is never completed and always ongoing. These efforts toward disability justice in TI-WPA are nascent. I offer them in the hopes that others will further expand on this work in their own programs and scholarship.

The foundation of TI-WPA is trauma literacy, which I define as knowledge about trauma that a practitioner uses to understand a situation, act appropriately, and sustain these efforts over time. Previous instantiations of trauma literacy, including the professional development offerings that I facilitated, may have focused primarily on helping others to identify signs of trauma, retrofit their classrooms, and engage in self-care without contextualizing trauma within larger systems of oppression or striving for radical changes. Trauma literacy from a disability justice perspective employs an intersectional approach to fully realize the extent to which trauma is intertwined with racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, transphobia, colonialism, and other forms of oppression. Developing an intersectional trauma literacy requires practitioners to engage with culturally-relevant and sustaining approaches to trauma work,[2] not only the dominant Western model of trauma that emerges from military research on the experiences of predominantly white, male soldiers returning from war. More intersectional and culturally-grounded trauma work expands what is considered trauma, how trauma may be differentially experienced, and how to support trauma survivors in culturally relevant and sustaining ways.

Trauma literacy is not inert knowledge but must be implemented in an activist practice of understanding, acting, and sustaining. Returning to the SAMHSA's definition of trauma-informed organizations presented earlier, I build on the actions contained within the definition (the "4R's") to offer

six actions that can guide the practice of equitable, sustainable TI-WPA: realize, recognize, respond, resist, rest, and reciprocate. In table 1, I pair the actions with implementation suggestions within the work of writing program administration.

Table 1
6 R's of Trauma-Informed Writing Program Administration

6 R's Action	Writing Program Implementation
Realize how trauma relates to identity, power, and oppression	• Establish relationships with campus and community groups (identity affiliate groups such as veterans) to understand the experiences and needs within local context • Offer professional development that names the root of trauma in racism, sexism, ableism, colonialism, capitalism, anti-Semitism, etc. • Understand how writing classrooms and programs can (re)traumatize students, faculty, and staff, especially with regard to linguistic injustice and exploitative labor conditions
Recognize signs and effects of trauma on individuals and communities	• Establish relationships with campus and community social service providers (counseling services; women, LGBTQIA+, disability centers) or institutional departments (social work, counseling) • Facilitate compensated professional development (ideally offered by local providers) for all faculty to develop trauma literacy
Respond to individual traumas and structural causes of trauma	• Form compensated student and faculty-directed communities of practice to review program policies and curricula and to recommend new materials that are accessible, transparent, and flexible for faculty and students • Create accessible and usable resource lists for students and faculty • Develop writing program crisis response plans (see Clinnin 2021)

6 R's Action	Writing Program Implementation
Resist traumatizing systems	• Review programmatic policies for placement, attendance, grading, staffing, and scheduling to avoid (re)traumatization • Advocate for humane labor conditions and benefits for all faculty • Practice fugitive administrative rhetorics (see Dibrell, Hollinger, and Shelledy in this issue)
Rest intentionally	• Set and maintain boundaries to protect personal time and space (email hours, set working hours) while recognizing that these boundaries may change over time • Create a program environment where urgency does not mean immediacy and practice slow(er) responses • Engage in slow, reflective program work by being intentional about program priorities and establishing realistic deadlines and milestones
Reciprocate through caring relationships	• Center people (students, faculty, administrators) in all program decisions and actions • Engage in open dialogue with all campus and local partners, including student, faculty, and community members; be willing to be called out or in, and make changes appropriately

The first two actions, realize and recognize, develop trauma literacy throughout the writing program. Drawing on disability justice and culturally-responsive trauma studies, TI-WPA practitioners **realize** how trauma relates to identity, power, and oppression. They can also **recognize** the signs and effects of trauma on individuals and communities, understanding that these signs and effects will vary across contexts. The signs and effects are not a diagnostic tool used to identify and punish deviance from norms but instead should be treated holistically as observations to prompt further curiosity and conversation. These observations may demonstrate non-normative ways of engaging rather than a greater circumstance that requires additional discussion and response. The next two actions, respond and resist, compel TI-WPA practitioners to address individual needs while also combatting systemic issues. TI-WPA practitioners **respond** to individual traumas and structural causes of trauma. They also **resist** traumatizing systems and strive to create new systems that do not traumatize or retraumatize

students, faculty, or administrators.[3] The final two actions, rest and reciprocate, contribute to the sustainability of TI-WPA initiatives and practitioners. Encountering trauma and being in a community with those who have experienced trauma while simultaneously managing one's own physical, mental, emotional, and other needs is difficult. This work requires intentional **rest,** as difficult as that concept may be for WPAs. Rest is possible when TI-WPAs **reciprocate** the loving labor of caring for themselves and others through collectives. Reciprocating means building care collectives so that all involved share the responsibility for and benefits of a caring community that is working towards a radically just future.

In my work as a trauma-informed WPA, I have attempted, imperfectly and incompletely, to create a program where all members understand, act guided by, and sustain trauma-informed approaches. Many of these actions remain the same as my prior trauma-informed actions: connecting campus resources, reviewing program policies, and showing empathy to students and faculty. What has changed is how these actions are contextualized within a larger inclusive, collaborative, and programmatic framework. Understanding is not simply something that I as the "trauma person" am solely responsible for. I create new professional development materials that focus on broader trauma literacy and move away from prescriptive checklists that identify "deviant" behaviors. I encourage others to notice people from a position of curiosity, openness, and care rather than investigation and evaluation. I still offer campus resources and other trauma-informed materials but with greater awareness of their limitations and their caveats. I more intentionally cultivate relationships with local community resources that provide culturally relevant care.

More of my attention has been devoted to rest and reciprocation, which I am admittedly uncomfortable with. Instead of immediately acting, I slow down so that I can rest and reflect. I ask questions instead of making statements. In the time of accelerated learning, what does a writing curriculum that is intentionally decelerated look like? How do we build in strategic rest, pauses, and contemplation rather than pack a curriculum full? How do we care at a programmatic level rather than relying on individuals to attempt self-care in a capitalistic system that seeks to extract and exploit as much as possible? What does a writing program that is a community of care look like, act like, and feel like? TI-WPA is my current, imperfect answer, and the practice is following.

Not Really a Coda

I organize a memorial for the late part-time instructor. It is the most difficult thing I have done in my time as a WPA. There were fond memories, bittersweet reminisces, and tears as we collectively grieved and celebrated. What I thought was an opportunity for closure for part-time instructors was also for me.

I spend a day contacting every university connection and resource I know to help the student with a sick family member. I speak to allies for undocumented students. I talk to lawyers. I compile community resources and share my research with the graduate student. She is grateful and passes them along. The student disappears by the end of the semester. I hope the baby is well.

I talk to the distressed graduate student. The lack of accessible, affordable, and ongoing mental health care is frustrating. A group of junior faculty, department staff members, and graduate students join together to be a support network. I watch the student cross the stage to receive their diploma. I worry about what happens next for them when even the fragile safety net that graduate school provides is gone.

I keep going. I keep going in the face of this trauma. I continue to watch and reach out to those who need it. The difference now is that I do not go alone. I invite colleagues to the work. They watch and reach out to me. They recognize my tendencies; they can tell when I begin to lose my center. They care. They force me to rest, echoing my own admonitions and care to all in the writing program. It is not perfect. It is imperfect. It is enough. For now.

Notes

1. Throughout this article, I use the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) broad definition of trauma as "an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by as individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being" (2014, p. 7).

2. As a starting point, I recommend Renee Linklater's book *Decolonizing Trauma Work* for Indigenous approaches to trauma and Alex Shevrin Venet's book *Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education* for an education-focused overview.

3. Resistance is not futile, but it is complicated when WPAs are part of higher education institutions that are built on trauma from their inception (built on land stolen from Indigenous communities and built by the labor of enslaved African peoples) and continue to perpetuate trauma on students (marketing access while

gatekeeping and excluding students and burdening students with insurmountable debt), faculty (relying on contingent faculty labor without providing adequate pay, benefits, or respect), and communities (continuing expansionist land acquisitions and exploiting communities as research subjects without reciprocal care). I encourage you to read "Fugitive Administrative Rhetorics" by Denae Dibrell, Andrew Hollinger, and Maggie Shelledy in this issue.

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Kaitlin M. Clinnin is associate professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she directs the first-year writing program. She researches how writing instructors and writing program administrators can create effective learning environments for students given changing social and educational contexts. Her most recent research focuses on trauma-informed pedagogy in writing programs and classrooms. Her work has been published in *Computers & Composition*, *Composition Studies*, *Communications in Information Literacy*, *WPA: Writing Program Administration* and several edited collections including most recently *Understanding WPA Readiness and Renewal*.