

The Test of Time: Traumatic Stress

Shelby Borst

How do individuals experience traumatic stress differently, and what implication does trauma have on our thoughts and behaviors? Students rarely get the opportunity to learn about trauma and discuss traumatic events in an academic setting. This curriculum serves as an opportunity for students to see how trauma presents itself in a variety of contexts throughout one's lifetime by using character analysis. In this unit, students choose a piece of literature with a narrative that interests them, such as the Harry Potter series, their favorite videogame character, or a familiar childhood bedtime story. During the psychology unit on human development, students will engage in this literature to discover how the characters have developed cognitively, morally, physically, and socially as well as how traumatic events have shaped the character's thoughts, behaviors, and development milestones. Students will present their ideas together through a collaborative timeline to further examine the various impacts that traumatic stress has on many unique individuals throughout their lifetime. In doing so, students will have the opportunity to engage in academic discussions around trauma and conducting research through a trauma informed lens.