



Trauma-Informed Design Rubric

Run it on any module — yours or a partner's — before it ships

Seven checks for whether a learning experience adds avoidable harm. A module doesn't need every box on the first pass — the rubric's job is to make the gaps visible and give you the next fix. Grounded in SAMHSA's trauma-informed framework.

CHECK	STATUS	NOTE / NEXT FIX
1 · No forced exposure. Reflection is the learner's choice — real or hypothetical. No prompt requires disclosing something personal, and nothing is shared publicly without consent.	☐ In place ☐ Not yet	
2 · Predictable structure. Expectations, sequence, and what-happens-next are stated up front. No surprises sprung on the learner.	☐ In place ☐ Not yet	
3 · Genuine choice. Real options in pacing, format, and participation — with the standard kept intact. Choice is not the same as optional.	☐ In place ☐ Not yet	
4 · Self-referenced progress. Learners measure against their own growth and clear criteria — not a public ranking or a countdown.	☐ In place ☐ Not yet	
5 · Low-threat feedback. Correction is calm and specific. It names the work and, where it helps, the fear underneath — not the “attitude.”	☐ In place ☐ Not yet	
6 · Culture & identity by design. The material accounts for the cultural, historical, and identity contexts learners bring, rather than assuming one default learner.	☐ In place ☐ Not yet	
7 · A clear boundary. The design supports and refers — it doesn't attempt to treat. The path to real help is visible when a learner needs more than the module can give.	☐ In place ☐ Not yet	

One change is the win. After a review, pick the single check that would protect a real learner the most, and fix that one first. Trauma-informed design is iterative — same as the rest of the practice.