Twitter Thread by Johnny Cole



Johnny Cole
@LexingtonDEI

While it left very little time for personal processing, I'm proud that our leadership team worked for hours last night to prepare guidance for staff today. These are a few of the points. (LPS educators, your building teams have shared/will be sharing more specifics!)

Name what happened. The events of January 6, 2021 were violent and unlawful. This is not an opportunity for exploring "both sides."

Follow your students' lead. They will tell you how much or how little they want to process. Always make allowance for individuals who differ from their peers; make space for those who aren't ready to talk or those who want to continue talking.

Acknowledge this was a traumatic event. We all react differently to trauma. Individuals process in different ways, and there is no one correct way to respond; therefore, it is important to acknowledge individual reactions and feelings.

Be aware of your own reactions to events. Children of all ages take their cues from the adults around them. Staff members should seek support for themselves to process events if needed.

Make time and space to process events. It is appropriate and necessary to create time and space during class to process troubling events.

Acknowledge you may not be ready to discuss the events yourself. As a staff member. if you don’t feel ready to address these events, you should still address it in some way. Silence is not an act of neutrality; it can negate the validity of children’s feelings.

It’s okay to say, “I don’t know.” We may not all feel sure of how best to respond when students express worry or have difficult questions. Just know that sometimes what your students need the most is knowing that you are listening and that you care.

Clearly distinguish between peaceful protest and violence. There should be no celebration in what happened on January 6, 2021. While we encourage respecting differing views, we also must remember that free speech is not absolute.

Think heart, not head. Well-intended civic discourse can cause events to be re-lived, resulting in further trauma for some. For some, it is not possible to avoid challenging emotions like fear and grief in discussing these events.

Suggest limiting news consumption. We live in a 24/7 news cycle, especially when major events occur. Encourage students to moderate their media watching and encourage critical thinking when reading, watching or listening to news.

Help students identify coping strategies. Give students concrete ideas for working through their thoughts and emotions and time to do them.