

**Trauma-Informed Care for
Children & Adolescents**

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Today's Training Objectives

- Today, we will try to answer these questions...

1. What is trauma?
2. How does trauma impact children and adolescents?
3. How can we help children who have experienced trauma?

What is trauma?

What is trauma?

- **Trauma** means being exposed to some sort of stressful event or situation that creates an intense sense of fear, helplessness, or horror.
- This stressful experience was so intense that it has shaped the way a survivor defines **the world** and **their own identity**.

What is trauma?

- Recent research has expanded our understanding of what early life factors create trauma responses & behaviors.
- Six early risk factors of “children from hard places”:
 1. **Difficult pregnancy**
 2. **Difficult birth**
 3. **Early hospitalization**
 4. **Abuse**
 5. **Neglect**
 6. **Trauma**

What is trauma?

- Chronic stressors are often environmental and include hassles related to conditions in the community (such as lack of access to health care, education, or housing, poverty, inability to meet nutritional needs, etc.)
- Chronic stressors (or **accumulated traumatic circumstances**) impact our experience of trauma.
 - Can be traumatic in and of themselves
 - Can exacerbate maladaptive trauma responses
 - Can limit access to protective factors & resiliency

Understanding the impact of trauma means shifting from “What’s wrong with you?” to “What happened to you?”

How does trauma impact children and adolescents?

Erikson’s Developmental Stages

Age	Psychosocial Crisis	Virtue	Question
Infancy	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope	<u>Can I trust the world?</u>
Toddler	Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt	Will	<u>Is it okay to be me?</u>
Early Childhood	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose	<u>Is it okay for me to do, move, and act?</u>
Middle Childhood	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competence	<u>Can I make it in the world of people and things?</u>
Adolescent	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity	<u>Who am I? Who can I be?</u>

Trauma and the Brain

- When we (or our attachment relationships) feel threatened, we often go into a diffuse physiological arousal (DPA) state.
- Also known as **flooding** or **fight, flight, or freeze** stress or fear response.
- When we are in a DPA state, our responses are limited and our ability to learn and judge accurately is greatly diminished.
- **Trauma can lock us into a DPA state or make it easier for us to enter this state.**

The Fear Response

- When we experience this fear response, we focus strictly on meeting our survival needs, such as:
 - Safety
 - Hunger & thirst
 - Fatigue
 - Escaping scary situations
 - Making hurts stop and go away
 - Staying in control

The Fear Response

- When we are experiencing the fear response, we cannot grasp...
 - Discussions, sermons, or lectures
 - Complex reasoning, logic, or stories
 - Philosophical discussions or abstract concepts
 - Solving puzzles or mathematics

Trauma responses are adaptive!

- Trauma responses or behaviors may be indicative of...
 - **Coping mechanisms**
 - A teenage abuse survivor who self-harms as a way to manage the pain from flashbacks of the abuse
 - **Survival techniques**
 - A neglected child may hoard food or have a meltdown at mealtimes
 - **Resiliency**
 - An abuse survivor foster child may be reluctant to open up to caregivers because of previous abusive caregivers

How can we help children who have experienced trauma?

Felt Safety

- Our primary goal is to disarm the fear response created by trauma through an experience of felt safety.
- We do this by arranging the environment and our behavior so that our children know they are safe with us.
- Creating felt safety opens opportunities for healing and learning.

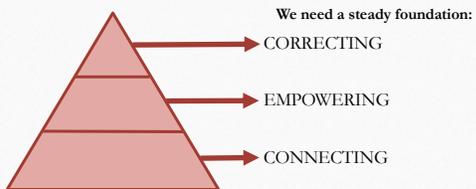
Felt Safety

- We can create felt safety by...
 - Building trust
 - Creating predictability
 - Sharing control when appropriate
 - Staying calm
 - Projecting confidence and security
 - Being mindful of sensory needs
 - Honoring and validating their emotional experience
 - Being approachable

Felt Safety

- Be aware of your nonverbal communication!
 - Eye contact
 - Facial expression
 - Tone of voice
 - Gestures
 - Posture
 - Timing
 - Intensity of Response

Trust-Based Relational Intervention



Connecting Principles

- Engagement Strategies:
 - Valuing eye contact
 - Authoritative voice
 - Healthy touch
 - Behavioral matching
 - Playful interaction
- Mindfulness Strategies:
 - Attunement and awareness
 - Calm presence
 - Creative problem solving
 - Flexible responding

Empowering Principles

- Physiological Strategies:
 - Sensory needs
 - Fight, Flight, Freeze
 - Hydration
 - Blood Glucose
 - Physical Needs
 - Breathing
- Ecological Strategies:
 - Transitions
 - Rituals
 - Teaching self-regulation

Correcting Principles

- Life Value Terms:
 - Using words
 - With respect
 - Accepting "no"
 - Gentle & kind
 - Listen & obey
- Behavioral Scripts:
 - Choices
 - Compromises
 - Re-dos
- IDEAL Response©
 - Immediate
 - Direct
 - Efficient
 - Action-based
 - Leveled at behavior
- Levels of Response™
 - Playful engagement
 - Structured engagement
 - Calming engagement
 - Protective engagement

Trust-Based Relational Intervention

- For more information on TBRI:
 - *The Connected Child* by Karyn Purvis & David Cross
 - Healing Families DVD series & lecture series
 - Trainings for both parents & practitioners
 - Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development
 - On YouTube & social media
 - Online at <http://child.tcu.edu>

Any questions?

Thank you!
