

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

CREATED BY HEBISD'S CRISIS INTERVENTION & PREVENTION TEAM

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We are here for you, even more so during these trying times, which can further cause distress for kids who have issues with anxiety, depression, and general worry over what is happening in our country at this time. We can provide support through crisis intervention, mental health referrals and on-campus check-ins for students and their families. **YOU CAN SUBMIT A REFERRAL TO OUR TEAM BY [CLICKING HERE.](#)**

How do I know if my child has experienced Trauma?

TRAUMA CAN BE DEFINED AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL, EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO AN EVENT OR AN EXPERIENCE THAT IS DEEPLY DISTRESSING OR DISTURBING.

Adverse childhood experiences or ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years):

- experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect
- witnessing violence in the home or community
- having a family member attempt or die by suicide

Also included are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding, such as growing up in a household with:

- substance use problems
- mental health problems
- instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison

ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential.

Please note the examples above are not meant to be a complete list of adverse experiences. There are many other traumatic experiences that could impact health and wellbeing.

[GET ACES SCORE HERE](#)

Strengthening your relationship with a child as a caregiver

Connecting Principles is a term used in the Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) model. Connecting Principles describes an interaction between child and caregiver that produces warmth and trust. It disarms fear, promotes attachment and builds social competence. Even adolescents who seem resistant and challenging actually love the opportunities for joyful, silly connection. Parents, in turn, become more attuned to their children and experience more connection and joy.

Engagement Strategies.

Behavioral Matching - This is mirroring a child's behavior or physical position in a way that would increase their feeling of safety and build a connection. Matching Physical Position - instead of standing over the child - sit down on the floor cross-legged as well. Get on their level!

Playful Engagement - Engaging playfully helps to ease fears and limiting the fight, flight or freeze reactions. This can look like making an appropriate joke, playing a board game, using "Simon Says" game to help with transitions, rock-paper-scissors, etc. When a parent must be more firm to provide a correction the parent should return to playful engagement as soon as possible.

Valuing Eye Contact - Eye-contact is vital - when a child sees a warm face and soft eyes that look at him or her knowing that they are beautiful and precious, they can feel it. These are feelings our kids need to feel and be reminded of consistently.

Healthy Touch - Affectionate touch is important for the connection. Safe touch stimulates pleasure receptors in the brain and curbs stress hormones like cortisol. A hug, high five, hand shake, tap on the back or even just sitting next to each other shoulder to shoulder goes a long way!

Authoritative Voice - Being aware of the tone and cadence of your voice can have a significant impact on your communication and connection with your child. The goal is always connection and building trust before correction.

Mindful Awareness

This is essentially becoming self-aware and having awareness in the daily moments of parenting. It allows us to "see" our children's need behind the behavior and also to "see" our own needs as caregivers. Mindfulness is often associated with meditation but it doesn't have to stop there. Try this exercise: make some tea or find a piece of chocolate to eat. While making the tea pay close attention to the smell, the steam from the hot water, the temperature of the water, the color and finally, the taste. Try and see if you can taste the different herbs in the tea. You can do the same with the chocolate. Mindfulness is just paying attention to the details. Notice how your body responds to certain things and pay close attention to how your child's body responds too.

[If you would like more information about Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care, click here.](#)



HEALING FROM PANDEMIC TRAUMA

A mass trauma (otherwise known as a "collective trauma" takes place when the same event, or series of events, traumatizes a large number of people within some shared time span. Healing from mass trauma can be difficult specially when the collective trauma, such as the pandemic, doesn't seem to have an expiration date. The trauma that COVID19 brought about ranges from the constant state of fear or unknown, losing loved ones to the disease, severe isolation, increase in family tension, job loss and intensified mental health symptoms. Many people have maxed out their capacity to cope with the stressors that this pandemic has brought therefore, seeking help is advised. One way that trauma can be addressed by anyone is to talk it out. We like to use the term coined by Dan Siegel, trauma specialist, NAME IT TO TAME IT! This concept is rooted in the idea that if we can talk about the situation at hand we are better able to process and cope with it which allows our brain to better integrate the experience and minimize the long term impact that could create post-traumatic symptoms.

Resources:

[PTSD Coach APP](#)

[Trauma Counseling in DFW](#)

[HEBISD Social Services](#)

What is my child's grieving process supposed to look like?

Whether or not it is pandemic related, grief is a necessary part of healing after loss of a loved one. If your child is presenting behaviors that are out of their character or developmental stage, they may be expressing grief.

Children do not know how to verbally express their emotions, so they tell us through their behaviors. This could look like:

- clinginess
- bed wetting
- 'baby talk' (under developed vocabulary for their age)
- failing grades
- lack of sleep
- lack of concentration
- hypervigilance
- intense reactions

Some behaviors are warning flags they are having difficulty processing the loss:

- Excessively imitating the deceased person
- Believing they are talking to the deceased person
- Extended period of depression

7 WAYS TO BUILD RESILIENCY

- Allow your children to learn from and correct their mistakes.
- Have open & honest communication with your children.
- Help your children see problems can be solved.
- Encourage your children to take responsibility for their actions.
- Provide support. Help them see there are people who care about them and can give them advice when needed.
- Remind your children to keep things in perspective- the problem is usually only confined to one part of their life.
- Create a positive environment that emphasizes the importance of relationships and a sense of purpose.

Resources

