

How Trauma Impacts Children and Youth – and What You Can Do About It

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Rady Children's Health

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Agenda

I. What is child traumatic stress?

- Impacts of trauma on children and youth
- Misunderstood aspects of trauma

II. What can we do as parents?

- Impact of trauma on parenting
- When a child is in F/F/F
- Positive evidence-based strategies

What is Child Trauma?

- Witnessing or experiencing an event that poses a real or perceived threat
- The event overwhelms one's ability to cope



WHAT IS TRAUMA?



Someone broke the private part rule



Grown-up hit or hurt kids



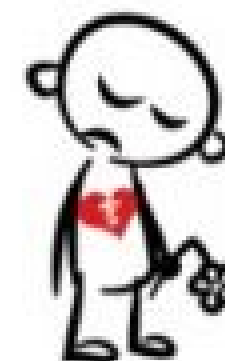
Kid didn't have food and hugs and clothes and things kids need



Grown-ups in the family hit each other, or yell, or hurt



Moving to a new home

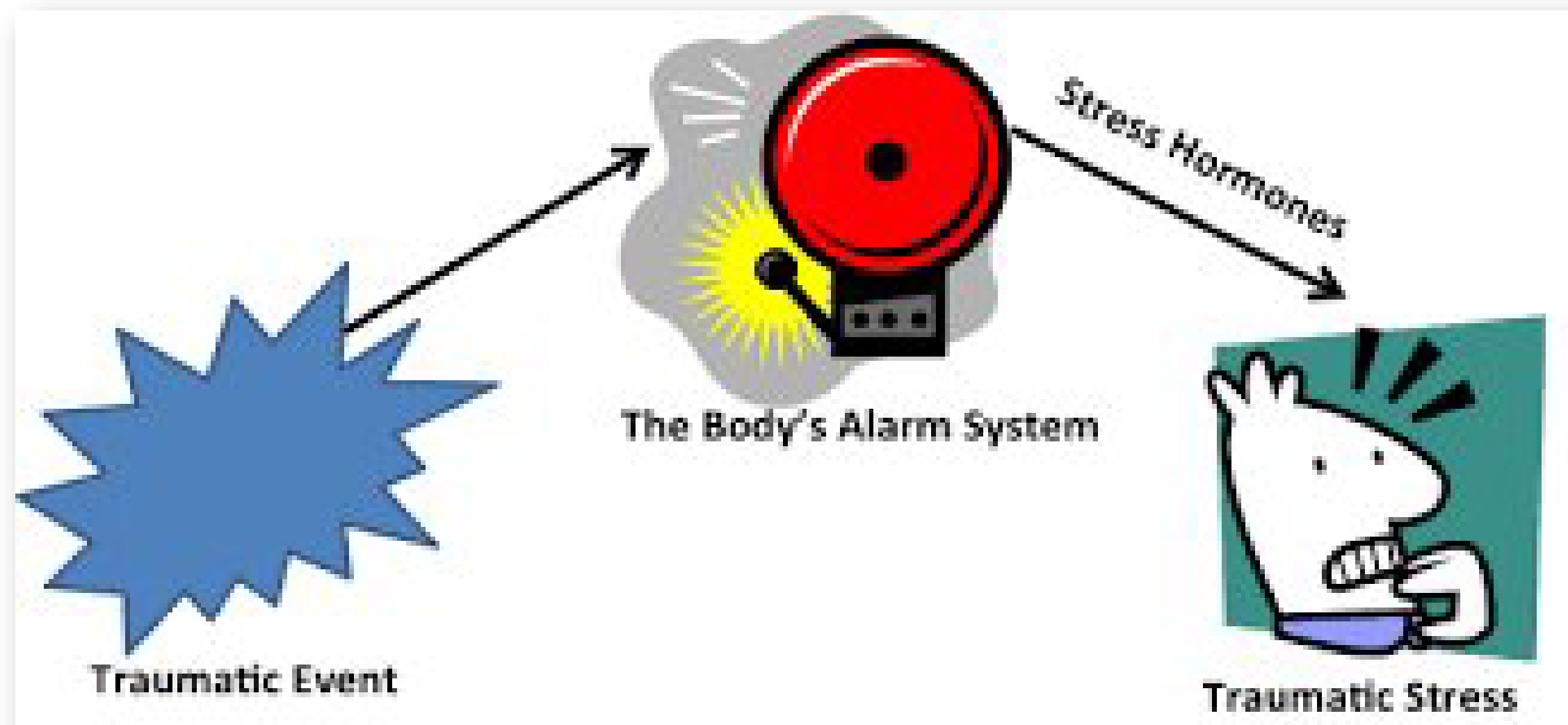


Someone you love leaving or dying



Scary things happening with the weather

Fight / Flight / Freeze





Emotional Impacts

- **Anger**
- **Shame**



- **Fear**
- **Sadness**
- **Anxiety**
- **Numbing**



Behavioral Impacts

Avoidance

- Spacey, not engaged
- Less interest in activities or things they enjoyed
- Rejecting comfort from others



Hypervigilance

- Quick to startle
- Jumpy and nervous
- Quick to fight



Re-experiencing

- Sleep problems
- Problems concentrating, learning, or taking in new information



Cognitive Impacts

- Inaccurate Beliefs
- Distrust
- Distorted Self-Image
- Negative view of the world and future



Common Beliefs Impacted by Trauma

	Of Self	Of Others/World
Trust	I make bad decisions. I can't trust my own judgement.	People can't be trusted. Don't trust the system/authority.
Control/Power	I don't have control of the future. Control is all or nothing. Must control what I can.	Life is unpredictable/uncontrollable.
Esteem	I am a bad kid. I am worthless. I am only valuable for...	People are bad and they will hurt you.
Intimacy	I shouldn't get close to people.	Others will take advantage of me. Relationships cause pain.
Safety	I am unsafe. Something bad will happen to me.	Adults won't keep me safe. Adults are dangerous.

Relational Impacts

- Isolation
- Trouble developing healthy relationships
- Violence/aggression



Common 'Misunderstandings' of Child Behavior

Developmentally inappropriate expectations

- Pathological liar
- No remorse. Not upset unless caught.

Over-personalizing misbehavior

- My child is doing this to "get at" me.
- My child is disrespecting me.

Pathologizing child behavior

- Attachment issues
- Manipulative

Adaptation
Rather than
Damage

COPING

SAFETY

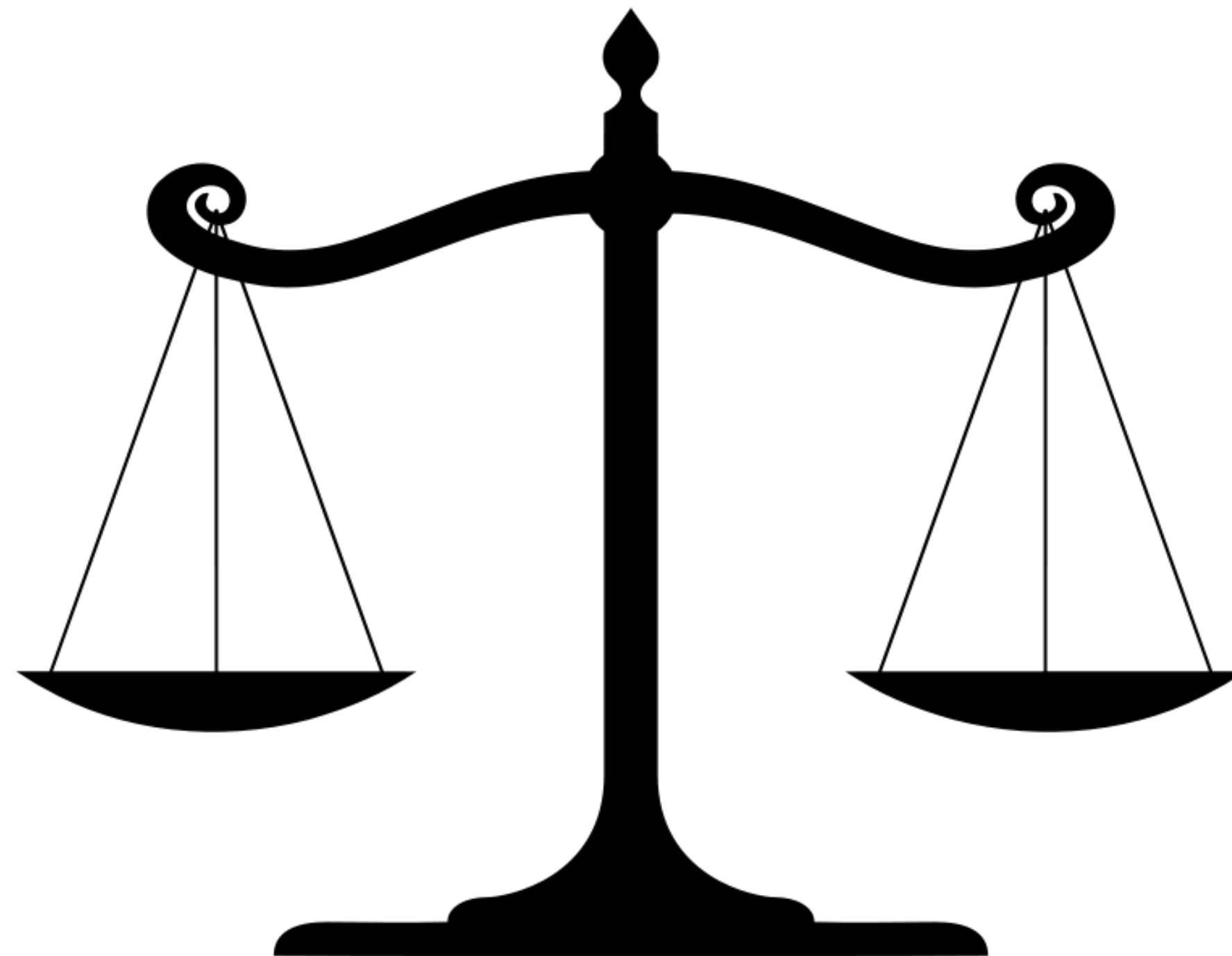
LEARNED

SURVIVAL

WHAT CAN WE DO AS CAREGIVERS?

What Does “Ideal” Parenting Look Like?

**Nurturing
Interactions**



**Appropriate
Limits**

What Can Happen to Balance after Trauma?

**High
Nurturing**



**Low
Limits**

What Can Happen to Balance after Trauma?

**Low
Nurturing**



**High
Limits**

Clues That a Child Is Stuck in Fight/Flight/Freeze

- Extreme emotions
- Behavior feels like it's out of the blue
- Big response over very minor issue
- Happens quickly (0 to 60)
- Child is unable to calm down
- Doesn't respond to reasoning
- Distress may last a long time
- Apologetic later





Let's Connect™

TUNE-IN

What am I feeling? What do I need?

- This is a gesture of self-care that builds self-awareness and acknowledges that feelings reflect important needs.
- It also calms the body and mind and helps us to tap into our intuition, creativity, and wisdom.
- This pause and reflection promotes a response versus reaction.



When in Fight or Flight

Create

Create a sense of safety

- Stand a few feet away from the child.
- Speak in a calm and quiet voice.

Reflect

Briefly reflect emotion

- Tell the child you can see they are feeling upset and you are available if they need you.

Offer

Offer to do a favorite coping skill together

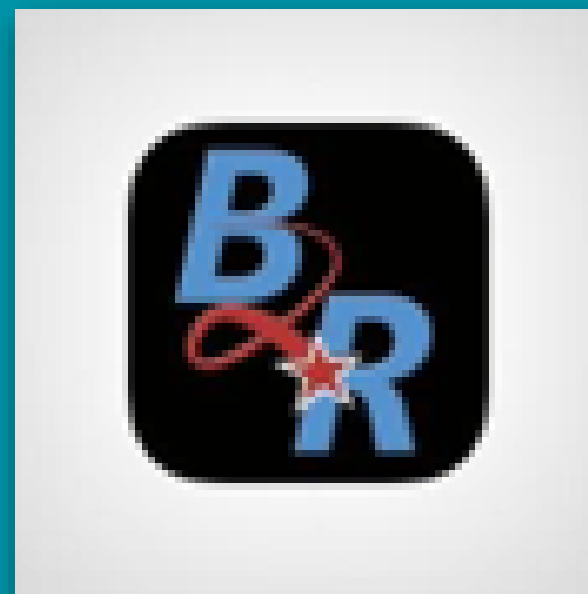
- You may need to model a skill if the child is unable to join you.

Allow

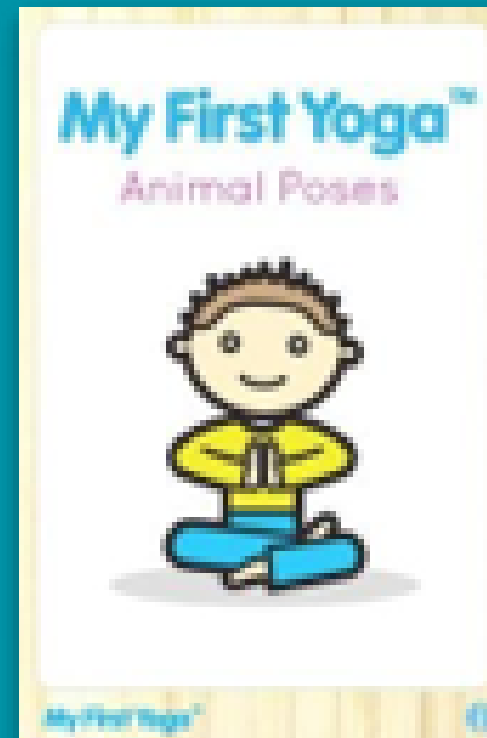
Allow the child time to calm

- This means backing away and being quiet! Use fewer words!
- Stay close by so the child can come to you when they are ready.

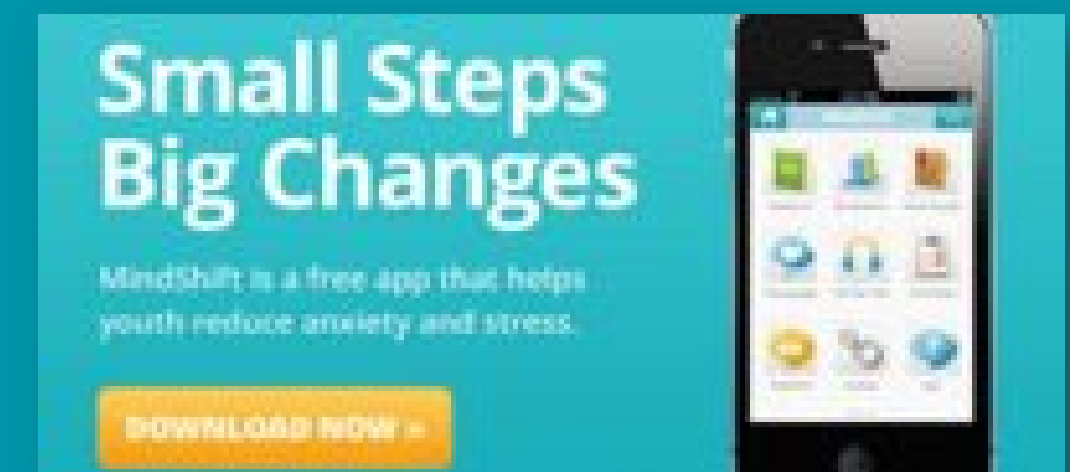
Popular Relaxation Apps



Breathe2Relax



White Noise Free



Disciplining strategies are less effective if a positive relationship is not established.

Special Time

School Age

- 5 minutes a day, 5-7 days a week
- Choose several toys that the child can choose (i.e., Crayons, Legos, Blocks, Play Dough)
- Avoid toys that limit conversation, encourage aggression, or toys that have rules.

Teen years

- 3-4 days a week for 15 minutes
- Activity that is enjoyable that the teen chooses or join them in an already engaged activity.

Labeled Praise

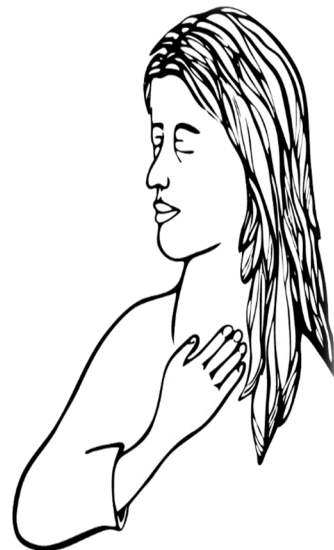
- Praise compliments child on their behavior
- Labeled praise increases the behavior it describes
- Labeled praise increases child's self-esteem



Neuroscience of Emotions

Labeling our emotions helps to shift brain activity from the Emotion Response Center (Amygdala) to the Reasoning Center of the brain (Prefrontal Cortex)

"I feel..."

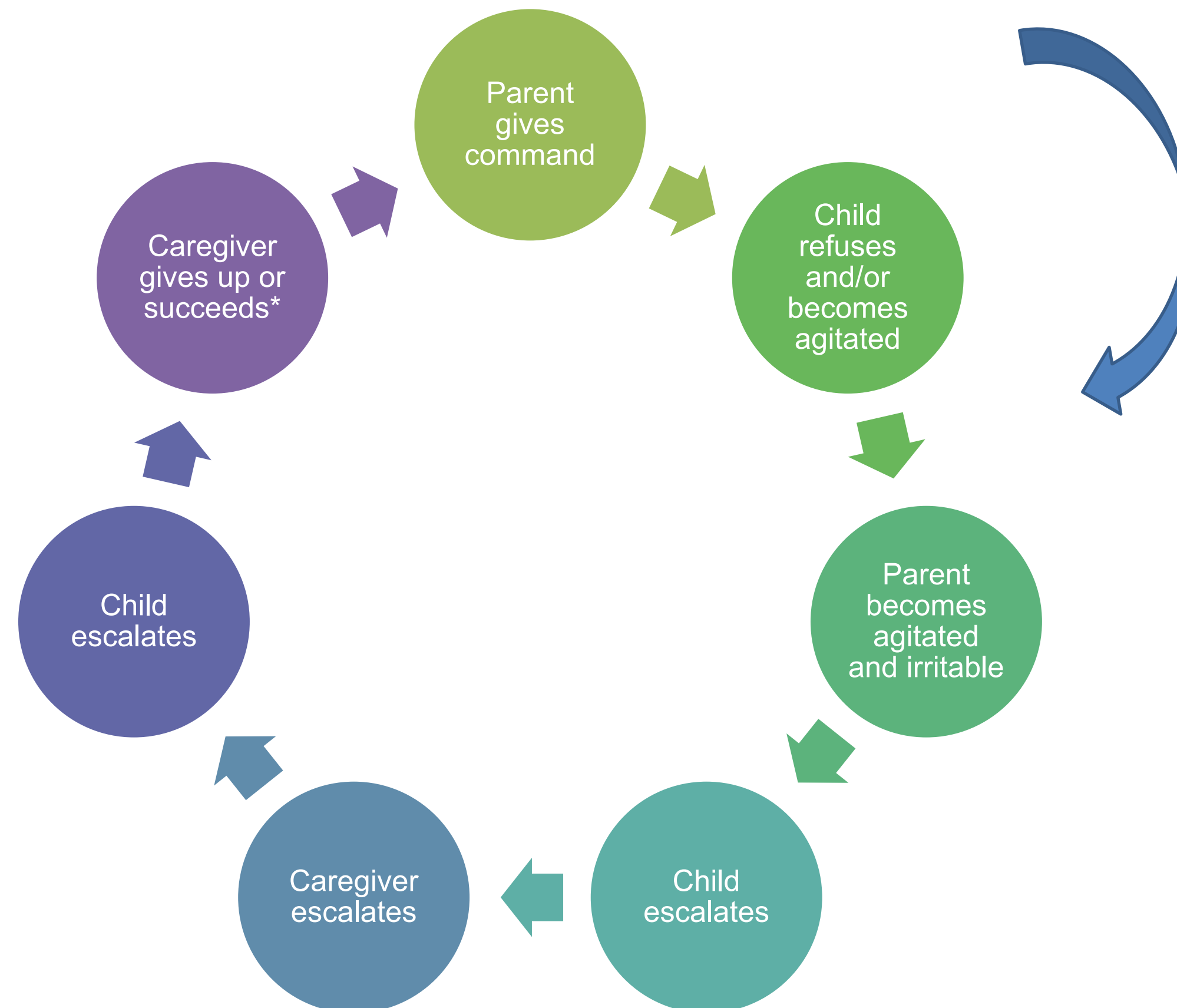


The Prefrontal Cortex helps us to slow down, think, plan, and make decisions using information about the situation and our emotions.

Labeled Praise

Opposition/Anger	• You're doing so well being patient • I'm so proud of you for cooperating • Nice job using your words
Hyperactive/Destructive/Careless	• I like the way you're being gentle • That's awesome asking first • Way to keep your hands to yourself • Excellent job sitting in your seat
Inattention	• Great job following my direction • I can tell you're listening, great job! • You're doing so well taking your time
Attention Seeking/Interrupting	• Thanks for waiting patiently • I like the way you're taking turns • Thanks for letting me finish this

Breaking the Cycle



Breaking the Cycle

Selective Attention

- Walk away, busy oneself with an activity
- There will be a 'burst' in the behavior – stay consistent!
- Immediately praise “the opposite” (wanted) behavior

Consequences

- Natural Consequences
- Removal of Privileges
- Time-out

Behavioral System

Rewards

- Pick out movie
- Choose game
- Stay up 10 minutes late
- Have a friend come over
- Sundae night

Stickers

8

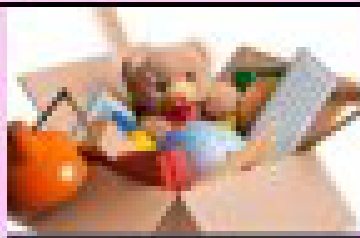
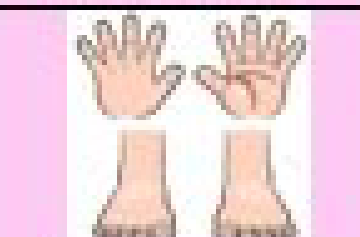
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15

10

8

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Friday
Make bed before school	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
Get dressed before 8:00 am	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
Keep hands to yourself	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N

		M	T	W	TH	F
Respects other people's things with 3 or fewer reminders		😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞
Takes medication as instructed with 1 or fewer reminders		😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞
Keeps hands and feet to self with 3 or fewer reminders		😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞
Stays in bed after bedtime with 1 or fewer reminders		😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞	😊 😞

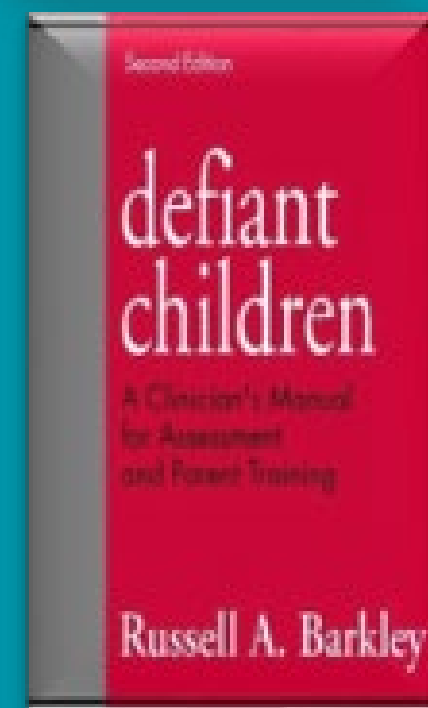
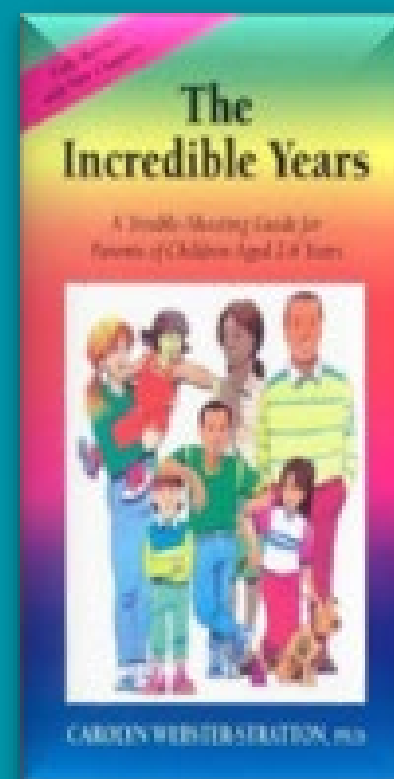
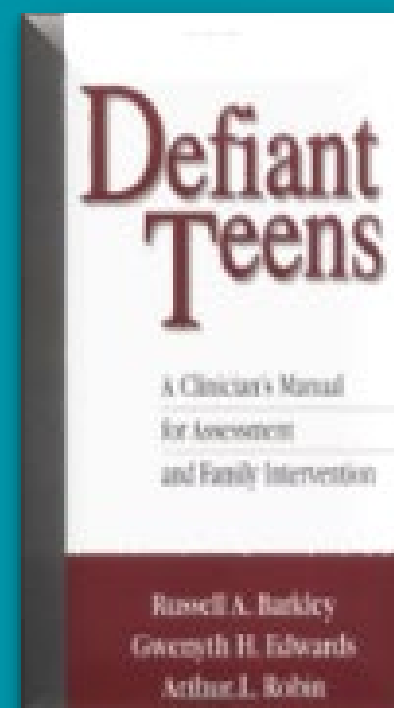
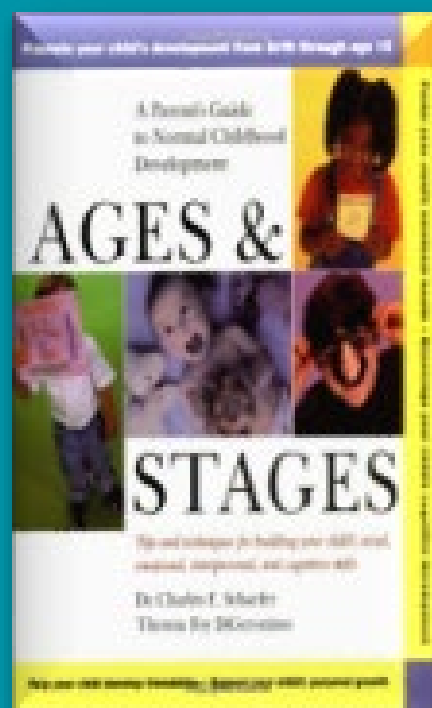
If N earns 3 😊 a day she can chose 1 daily reward

If N earns 16/20 😊 in a week she can chose 1 weekly reward

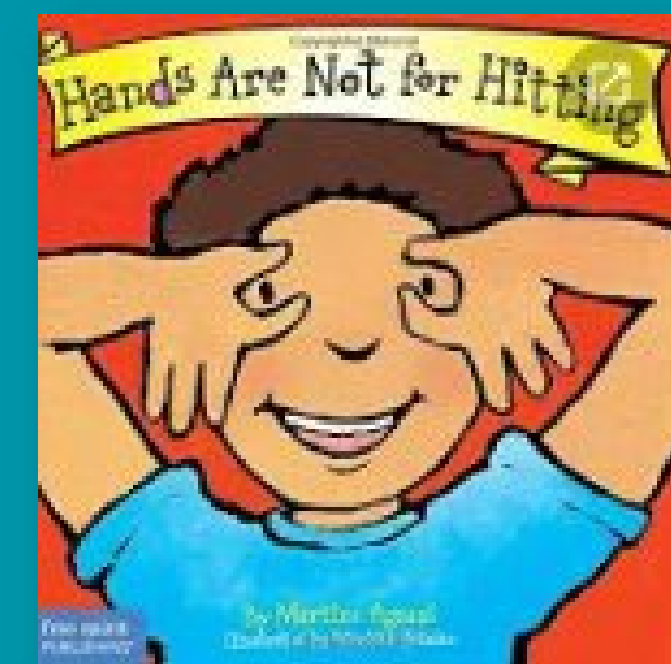
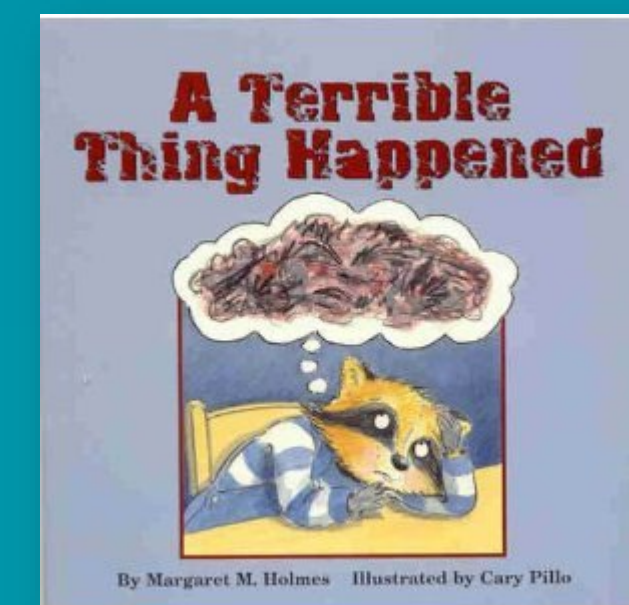
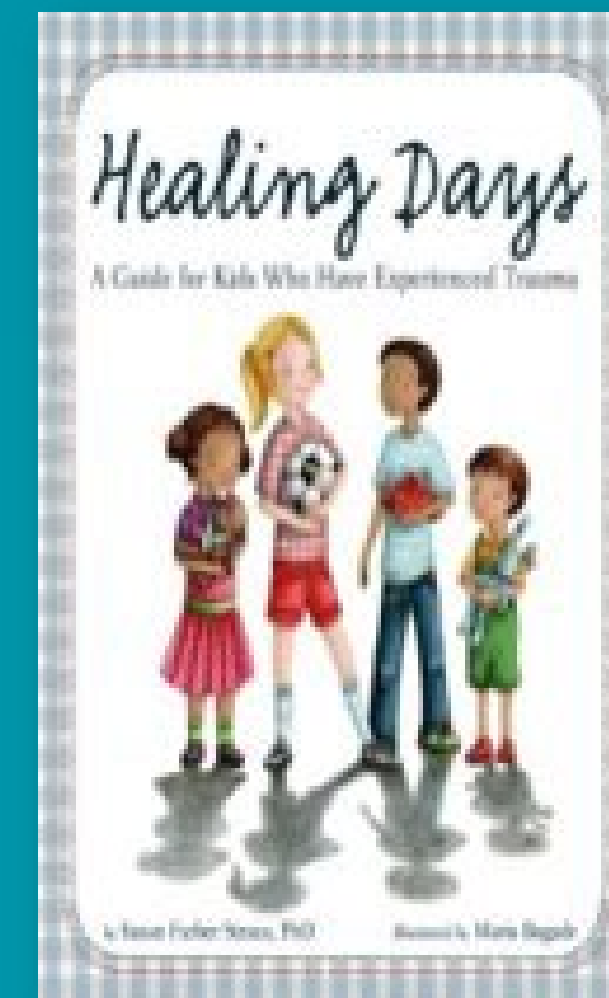
Child Trauma Evidence-Based Practices (EBP's)

- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
- Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS)
- Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

Psychoeducation for Caregivers



Psychoeducation for Children



“The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen”

-Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

THANK YOU!

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- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.** Call: **988 or 1-800-273-TALK**; Spanish line: **888-628-9454**; TTY: **800-799-4TTY** (4889) (8255). You'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor at a crisis center in your area, anytime 24/7.
- **ParentGuidance.Org**
<https://parentguidance.org/>
Welcome - parentguidance.org
We offer education and therapeutic support to empower and give you hope as you support your child's mental health.
- **National Parent Helpline**
<https://www.nationalparenthelpline.org/>
We provide vital information, support, and referrals through calls, texts, and chats to diverse parents, children, and youth seeking help nationwide. The National Parent & Youth Helpline™ is operated by Parents Anonymous® and available 24 hours a day/7 days a week.
- **Mental Health America**
<https://mhanational.org/mental-health-resources-parents>
Find resources on caregiving as a parent - whether caring for children or your own parents.
- **San Diego County Office of Education**
<https://www.sdcoe.net/students/health-well-being/mental-health-supports>
Prioritizing mental health is important for students to be able to learn effectively; it's also a key component that helps staff teach and support learners every day. The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) has compiled resources and information for students, families, and schools that keep mental health supports top of mind.
- **Soluna App**
<https://solunaapp.com/>
Confidential support for 13- to 25-year-olds in California. No cost. No pressure. Chat 1:1 with a professional coach, use interactive tools to destress, or explore quizzes, videos, forums, and more.

San Diego County Resources

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.** Call: **988** or **1-800-273-TALK**; Spanish line: **888-628-9454**; TTY: **800-799-4TTY** (4889) (8255). You'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor at a crisis center in your area, anytime 24/7.
- **San Diego County Access and Crisis Line.** Call: **888-724-7240**. Crisis counseling or referrals, 24 hours a day/7 days a week.
- **Rady Children's Behavioral Health Urgent Care (BHUC) Walk-in Clinic.** Call: **858-966-5484**. 4 p.m.-8 p.m., Mon- Fri. 4305 University Avenue, Suite 150, San Diego, CA 92105. Serves youth ages 5-21 struggling with concerns that pose an imminent risk to their safety, the safety of others, or significantly impair their daily lives.
- **Rady Children's Hospital Emergency Room.** Call: **858-966-8005**. 3020 Children's Way, 1st Floor, San Diego, CA 92123.
- **San Diego County Emergency Screening Unit.** Call: **619-876-4502**. 4309 3rd Avenue, San Diego, CA 92103. Available to children and adolescents for emergency psychiatric assistance.
- **Center for Community Solutions.** Call: **888-385-4657**
- **Crisis Action and Connection.** Call: **619-591-5740**
- **North County Crisis Intervention and Response Team.** Mon-Fri from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Weekends from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Escondido, call: **760-233-0133** | Vista, call: **760-305-8225**.
- **2-1-1 San Diego:** Dial **2-1-1** from a mobile or **858-300-211** from any phone

California & National Resources

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- **California Coalition for Youth Crisis Line.** Call/text: **1-800-843-5200**. Available 24 hours/7 days a week. Languages other than English are available. Anonymous and confidential for youth and TAY struggling with behavioral issues. Provides local community resources for you and your family. Text and live chat available from 4:30pm-8:30pm daily via website **www.calyouth.org** or phone.
- **California Peer-Run Warm Line:** Call: **855-845-7415**. 24/7 non-emergency emotional support and referrals.
- **Crisis Text Line.** National crisis text line. Text the word "HOME" to **741-741 24/7**.
- **National Sexual Assault Hotline.** Call: **800-656-HOPE** (4673).
- **Teen Line.** Call: **800-852-8336**. 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. PST or text TEEN to **839863**.
- **Trevor Project Lifeline.** Call: **866-488-7386**. Text: Text the word "Trevor" to **202-304-1200**. 24-hour hotline that provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning young people (LGBTQ) ages 13-24. **www.thetrevorproject.org**.
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<https://solunaapp.com/>
Confidential support for 13- to 25-year-olds in California. No cost. No pressure. Chat 1:1 with a professional coach, use interactive tools to destress, or explore quizzes, videos, forums, and more.