

Trauma-Exposed Children: A Primer on Impact, Trauma- related Responses, and Intervention

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SCOPE Vermont Training Series

Supporting Children of the Opioid Epidemic



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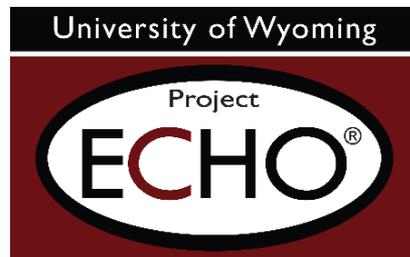
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Vermont Child Health Improvement Program
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This project is supported, in part, by:



Objectives

- Learn how trauma and traumatic stress is defined for children
- Increase understanding of how traumatic stress impacts children and youth.
- Become familiar with evidence-based interventions.
- Gain an understanding of trauma-informed care and trauma-informed interventions used with children and caregivers.



Defining Trauma for Children and Youth

A traumatic event is a frightening, dangerous, or violent event that poses a threat to a child or youth's life or bodily integrity. Witnessing a traumatic event that threatens the life or physical security of a loved one can also be traumatic.

Traumatic events can lead to strong emotions and physical reactions. Children and youth may feel terror, helplessness, or fear, as well as physiological reactions such as heart pounding, vomiting, or loss of bladder or bowel control.



A Traumatic Experience Can Be...

A one-time experience
(a car crash; a physical
assault; witnessing a
violent event in the
community; a natural
disaster)

Or it can be ongoing -
(living in an unsafe
community; experiencing
sexual or physical abuse;
living in a home with
extreme conflict or
violence)



Experiences That May Be Traumatic for Children and Youth

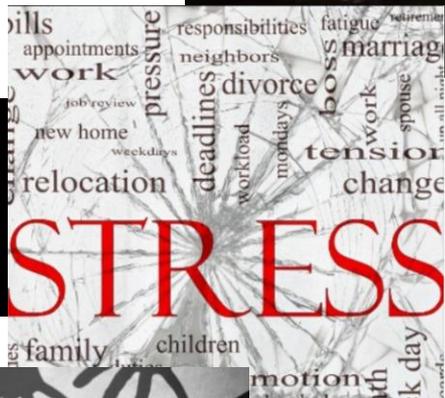
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Neglect
- Parental separation
- Caregiver disruptions
- Systemic Racism
- Sudden/violent loss of loved one
- Family violence
- Serious accidents
- Illness and medical procedures
- Community violence
- Refugee and war experience
- Historical trauma
- Caregiver substance misuse
- Caregiver mental illness
- Military family-related stressors
- Natural disasters



Grief



Domestic Violence



DIAL EMERGENCY 911

Child Abuse



Children and Youth who Have Experienced Trauma May:

Develop

- Develop an expectation that bad things will happen to them.

Have

- Have a hard time forming relationships with others.

Experience

- Experience challenges managing their feelings and behavior.

Struggle

- Struggle to develop a positive sense of themselves.



Trauma-related responses are patterns or repetitive routines that play themselves out in the relationships and environments that children and young people are engaged in.



Trauma Reactions in Children May Include:

- Intense and ongoing emotional upset.
- Depressive symptoms or anxiety.
- Behavioral changes.
- Difficulties with self-regulation.
- Problems relating to others or forming attachments.
- Regression or loss of previously acquired skills.
- Attention and academic difficulties.
- Nightmares, difficulty sleeping and eating.
- Physical symptoms, such as aches and pains.

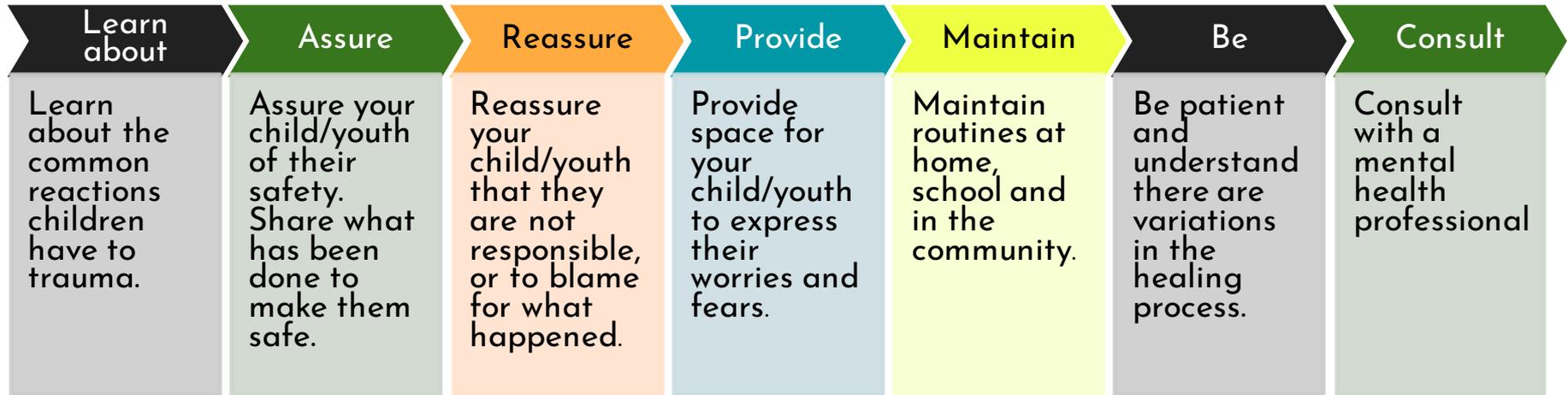


Therapeutic Interventions



How to Support Trauma-impacted Children

Adapted from Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators, NCTSN.org



Children and Youth Heal When They Experience:

Strong, positive relationship with a primary caregiver.

Social support from family, school, community, friends.

Safety across settings.

A sense of belonging and affiliation.

Access to basic resources.

Meaning in one's life.

A sense of themselves in the future.

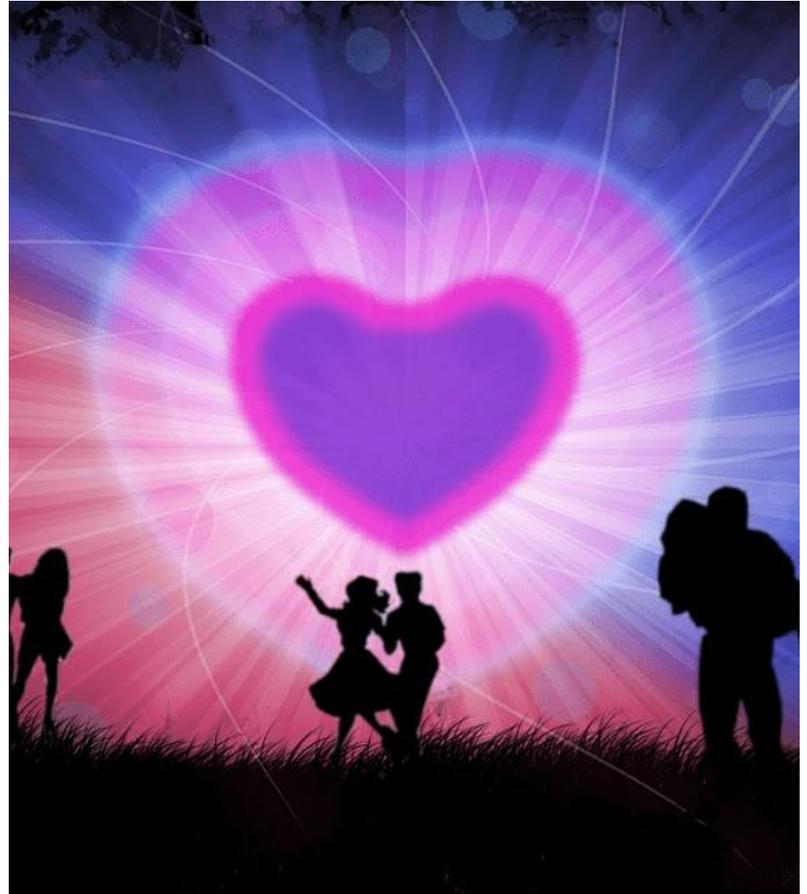
Access to trauma-informed services.



The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely they will be able to recover from trauma and thrive.

Relationships are the agents of change, and the most powerful therapy is human love.

- Bruce Perry, M.D.



Attachment, Regulation & Competency (ARC) Model

- Developed for children and adolescents who have experienced complex trauma, and their caregiving systems.
- The model incorporates aspects of normative child development, traumatic stress, attachment, and risk and resilience.
- The goal is to support families in building safe, healthy relationships.
- The concepts in ARC can be applied to individuals from birth to young adulthood and have been effective with children and youth with a range of developmental and cognitive profiles.
- ARC can be utilized in many different caregiver and organizational settings.

(Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2018)

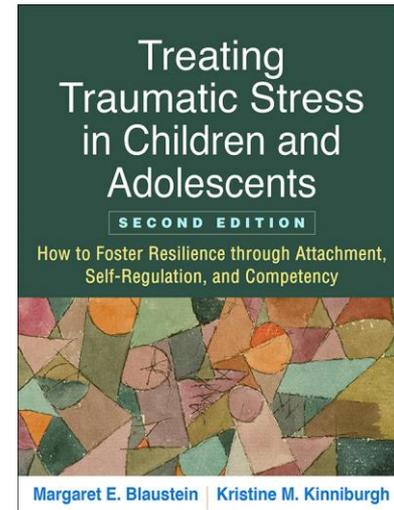


Domains of Intervention & Treatment Targets

ATTACHMENT - Focus on strengthening the caregiving system and the caregiver-child relationship.

REGULATION - Focus on enhancing child AND caregiver awareness and skill in identifying, understanding, tolerating, and managing internal experience.

COMPETENCY - Goal is to increase positive/resilient outcomes for children and youth.



Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

- **Overview:** Approach incorporating trauma-sensitive interventions with cognitive behavioral, family, and humanistic principles and techniques. TF-CBT addresses the multiple domains of trauma impact including but not limited to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, externalizing behavior problems, relationship and attachment problems, school problems and cognitive problems.
- **Age Range:** 3-21
- **Key Concepts:** TF-CBT includes skills for regulating affect, behavior, thoughts and relationships, trauma processing, and enhancing safety, trust, parenting skills and family communication.



What is Trauma-Informed Care?

Trauma-informed care is an approach to engaging people with histories of trauma that recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives.

(AHRQ, 2015)

A Trauma-informed organization is one in which every member of the organization; child, parent, provider, feel safe, supported and empowered.

(ARC.org)



Four Principles of Trauma-Informed Care

- **REALIZE** the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential pathways for recovery.
- **RECOGNIZE** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system.
- **RESPOND** by fully integrating knowledge into policies, procedures, and practices.
- **RESIST** re-traumatization of children as well as the adults who care for them.



(SAMHSA, 2014)



If you have any questions,
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