

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma can be a single event, multiple events, or complex. Children can experience trauma when they experience or witness something that makes them feel a threat to their well-being or the well-being of someone important to them.

This can cause an overactive stress response and a fight, flight, or freeze response. Trauma overwhelms the ability to cope and can have long-term effects that require extra support for our children.



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TRAUMA- INFORMED PARENTING



WHY SHOULD WE BE TRAUMA-INFORMED?

Over 50% of the nation's children have experienced at least one or more types of serious childhood trauma (34,835,978 children nationwide)

33% of children have experienced two or more types of childhood adversity

15% of all girls ages 14-17 have experienced sexual assault

33% of students have been bullied

60% of students 17 years or younger have been exposed to crime, violence, and abuse

30% of students in inner-city schools have witnessed a stabbing or shooting

16 million children in the United States live at or below the poverty level (6 million are under the age of 6)

Source - National Survey of Children's Health – CDC, 2017



HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILDREN WHO MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA?

- Know that a child that has experienced trauma may be overwhelmed, not choosing to act out. Feeling safe contributes to positive change.
- Recognize when a child is going into survival mode and respond in a kind, compassionate way. Survival mode might look like:
 - Disrespect/Defiance
 - Exhaustion, sleepiness, low energy
 - Work refusal
 - Crying/Emotional dysregulation
 - Inability to sit still or focus
 - High fear
 - High Anxiety
- Seek out the “why” before applying discipline.
- Consider if misbehavior is an attempt to exert control when life feels out of control.
- Prepare children ahead of changes or difficult situations and allow them to ask questions.
- Empower your children with shared decision making such as choosing a game to play, chores, or what to wear.
- Create joyful experiences.
- Be present.
- Co-regulate. Stay calm and help your child to mirror your calm.
- Acknowledge fear and teach calming strategies.
- Meet the feeling, not the behavior.
- Respond sensitively.
- Remind children that they can come to you anytime.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA?

- Rest time
- Loud spaces
- Feeling safe
- Situations that cause feelings of fear or shame, such as rejection or failure
- Certain verbal and nonverbal communication that might mimic trauma experiences, even not directed at them
- Memory and organization
- Attachment
- Tolerating frustration
- Adapting with flexibility to life changes, even if they seem minor

RESOURCES

Trauma-Informed Parent
traumainformedparent.com

Why We Need Trauma-Informed Parenting More Than Ever
bit.ly/3ADFYBm

How Mindfulness Can Help Kids (and Parents!) Weather Emotional Storms
to.pbs.org/39mpSjN