



System Offering Actions for Resilience In Early Childhood

TRAUMA-INFORMED PARENTING



Trauma is an emotional response to an intense event that threatens or causes harm, whether physical or emotional. It can happen in several ways and can have a lasting effect on your child's development.

What are some common signs of trauma in children?

Some common signs of trauma are: startling easily, having difficulty calming down, acting younger than their age, tantrums, becoming quiet or withdrawn, changes in sleep or appetite, and frequent headaches or stomachaches. It is important to remember that every child reacts to trauma differently. Reactions can fall into three categories: hyperarousal, re-experiencing, or avoidance/withdrawal.

How can children dealing with trauma recover?

Children are resilient, and resilience is the ability to recover from trauma. This recovery is easier when the child feels safe, capable and lovable. These feelings come from healthy relationships with competent, caring and supportive adults, connections with positive role models, having their strengths acknowledged, having a sense of control, and from being a part of a community.

What can I do to help?

- **HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE.** Reassure them with a predictable environment and a structured routine.
- **RECOGNIZE THE IMPACT THE TRAUMA HAS HAD ON YOUR CHILD.** While children can present difficult behaviors, it is important to question these behaviors with a “lens” of their traumatic experience. Use this understanding to come up with strategies to help the child.
- **HELP CHILDREN UNDERSTAND AND MANAGE THEIR EMOTIONS.** Provide calm, consistent loving care and through this, set the example of how to express and handle their feelings.
- **HELP CHILDREN CONNECT THEIR DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS.** Help them draw connections between their thoughts and feelings with their actions.
- **BE AWARE OF YOUR OWN RESPONSE TO TRAUMA.** Your feelings can influence how your children cope. Seek support if you need it and take care of yourself.
- **FIND HELP WHEN NEEDED.** If your child's problems last more than a few weeks or if they continue to worsen, ask for help. A mental health professional can help you with proven strategies for coping with traumatic experiences.