

OCYF TRAUMA TEAM NEWSLETTER

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Understanding Child Trauma

Child trauma occurs more than you think.

More than **TWO THIRDS OF CHILDREN** reported at least 1 traumatic event by age 16.¹ Potentially traumatic events include:

- PSYCHOLOGICAL, PHYSICAL, OR SEXUAL ABUSE
- COMMUNITY OR SCHOOL VIOLENCE
- WITNESSING OR EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
- NATURAL DISASTERS OR TERRORISM
- COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
- SUDDEN OR VIOLENT LOSS OF A LOVED ONE
- REFUGEE OR WAR EXPERIENCES
- MILITARY FAMILY-RELATED STRESSORS (E.G., DEPLOYMENT, PARENTAL LOSS OR INJURY)
- PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ASSAULT
- NEGLECT
- SERIOUS ACCIDENTS OR LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESS

The national average of child abuse and neglect victims in 2013 was **679,000**, or **9.1 victims per 1,000 children**.²

Each year, the number of youth requiring hospital treatment for physical assault-related injuries would fill **EVERY SEAT IN 9 STADIUMS**.³

1 IN 4 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS was in at least **1 PHYSICAL FIGHT**.⁴

1 in 5 high school students was bullied at school; **1 IN 6 EXPERIENCED CYBERBULLYING**.⁵

19% of injured and **12%** of physically ill youth have post-traumatic stress disorder.⁶

More than half of U.S. families have been affected by some type of disaster (**54%**).⁷

1. Copeland, M.E., Mazer G., Angold, A., & Costello, E.J. (2007). Traumatic Events and Posttraumatic Stress in Childhood. *Archives of General Psychiatry* 64(5), 577-584.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2015). *Child maltreatment 2013*. <http://www.aclufhhs.gov/childabuseandneglect/2013.pdf>
3. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention (2014). *Taking Action to Prevent Youth Violence: A Campaign Guide to Preventing Youth Violence: Opportunities for Action*. http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/pdfdocuments/50147main_0418.pdf
4. Kellam, S., Flory, K. C., Nagstrom, E. H., & O'Leary, D. (2015). Posttraumatic stress in youth experiencing violence and injuries: An exploratory meta-analysis. *Traumatology*, 12, 148-161. doi: 10.1177/1534755015239452
5. Save The Children (2014). 2014 National Report Card on Protecting Children in Disasters. <http://www.savethechildren.org/sites/default/files/2014-07/2014%20National%20Report%20Card%20-%20ENGLISH%20FINAL.pdf>

“What do I do?” Trauma-Informed Support for Children

www.echotraining.org

1 Create safety

If the child is overwhelmed, perhaps guide them to a quiet corner or allow them to decompress by visiting the restroom. If you are in a classroom, maybe you have a peace corner that you've outfitted with blankets or a screen so that it feels like a safe place.

2 Regulate the nervous system

Stress brings a predictable pattern of physiological responses and anyone who has suffered toxic stress or trauma is going to be quickly stressed into hyperarousal (explosive, jittery, irritable) or hypoarousal (depressed, withdrawn, zombie-like). No matter how ingenious our regulation strategies, how artsy-crafty we get with tools, the child has to find what works for them.

3 Build a connected relationship

This is the number one way to regulate the nervous system. When we are around people we care about, our bodies produce oxytocin, which is the hormone responsible for calming our nervous system after stress. If we stay connected, then eventually the calm discussion of each person's feelings and needs can take place.

4 Support development of coherent narrative

Creating predictability through structure, routines and the presence of reliable adults helps reduce the chaos a child may feel and allows them to start creating the kind of logical sequential connections that not only help them understand their own narrative, but are also the fundamental requirement of many types of learning.

5 Practice 'power-with' strategies

One of the hallmarks of trauma is a loss of power and control. When someone is wielding power over you with no regard to your thoughts or feelings, the toxic shame of the original trauma may come flooding back. As adults, we should use our power well. If we model a 'power-with' relationship with children it's our best chance of creating adults who will treat others with dignity and respect.

6 Build social emotional and resiliency skills

Trauma robs us of time spent developing social and emotional skills. The brain is too occupied with survival to devote much of its energy to learning how to build relationships and it's a good chance we didn't see those skills modeled for us. Learning to care for one another is the most important job we have growing up.

7 Foster post-traumatic growth

We know that there are qualities and skills that allow people to overcome the most devastating trauma and not just survive but find new purpose and meaning in their lives. Problem solving, planning, maintaining focus despite discomfort, self-control and seeking support are all known to lead to post-traumatic growth and are skills we can foster in children.

TEAM UPDATE

The Trauma Team sent **Trauma Informed Care (TIC) surveys** on April 1, 2022 to all CCYAs, foster, and adoption agencies and are awaiting responses to move this work on trauma awareness forward. The Team acknowledges that there were glitches in the survey making it difficult to submit, these issues have been addressed. Due to the delay this caused, the Trauma Team has extended the due date until **May 10, 2022**. We thank you for your time and apologize for the inconvenience that this may have caused.