



RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL  
MODULE FIVE:  
CHILD TRAUMA AND LOSS & TRANSITIONS

Pre-Service Training

## Agenda

2

- Types of Childhood Trauma
- Traumatic Stress Response Cycle
- Understanding Trauma Triggers
- Impact of Trauma Exposure

---



---



---



---



---



---

## Childhood Trauma Defined

3

- Being witness to and/or experiencing an event that creates an actual or perceived threat of imminent danger to either the child or someone of meaning to the child (e.g., parent, sibling, teacher, friend etc.).
- The trauma event then interferes with the child's natural ability to cope causing a range of negative emotions and daily stressors.

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

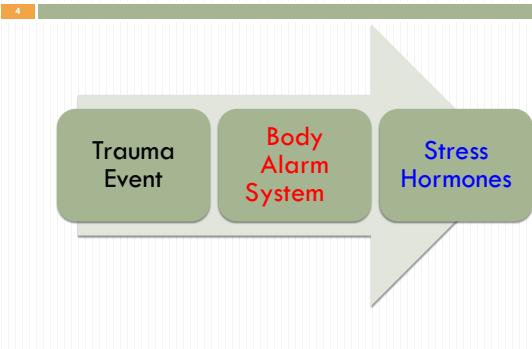


---



---

## Traumatic Stress Response Cycle




---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Types of Childhood Trauma

5

- Acute Trauma
  - A single event that is limited in duration
  - Examples Include:
    - Serious Accidents
    - Natural Disasters
    - Sudden death or Loss
    - Community Violence
  - An acute trauma does not imply a minimal impact on the child's emotional well-being.
  - Every child responds differently to traumatic stress which can cause a range of negative emotions and/or daily stressors.

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Types of Childhood Trauma

6

- Chronic Trauma
  - Exposure to multiple traumatic events that may or may not be related to one another
  - Examples Include:
    - Related Example: longstanding exposure to domestic violence and/or child maltreatment
    - Unrelated Example: exposure to community violence, general neglect from parent, involvement in physically abusive adolescent relationship

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Types of Childhood Trauma

7

### □ Complex Trauma

- Accounts for both the exposure to multiple traumatic events and the longstanding impact on a child's developmental functioning

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## The Impact of Childhood Trauma

8

### □ Traumatic Stress

- Is the cumulative impact of our thoughts, feelings and bodily responses to a trauma event

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Critical Factors Influencing Traumatic Stress Response

9

### □ Critical Factors Include:

- Child's Age & Developmental Level
- Child's Experience as Witness or Victim
- Child's Perceived Level of Fear and/or Danger
- Child's Relationship to the Victim or Perpetrator
- Child's History of Trauma Events
- Child's Removal & Placement in Foster Care following Trauma Event
- Child's Level of Support following Trauma Event

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Audio: A Child's 911 Call

10



---

---

---

---

www.nature.com/scientificreports/

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Activity

## Caring for Children Following a Trauma Event

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Understanding Trauma Triggers

12

- Trauma triggers are any combination of events, reminders and/or cues that reactivate a child's traumatic stress response cycle
- Common Triggers for Traumatized Children Include:
  - Sights, Sounds, or Scents
  - Transitions, Loss of Control or Sensory Overload
  - Feelings of Loneliness, Vulnerability or Rejection
  - Confrontation, Authority or Limit Setting
  - Birthdays, Holidays or Anniversary Effects

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Traumatic Stress Response: Fight

13



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Traumatic Stress Response: Flight

14



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Traumatic Stress Response: Freeze

15



---

---

---

---

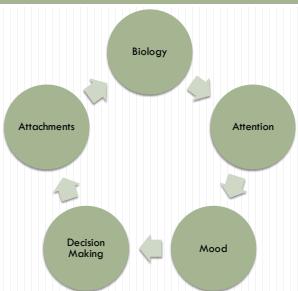
---

---

---

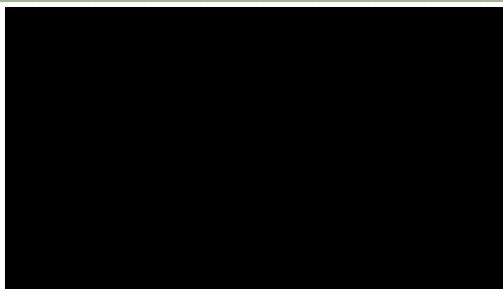
## Daily Impact of Trauma Exposure

16



## Video: Through Our Eyes— Children, Violence & Trauma

17



Next...

18

- ❑ Grief & Loss
- ❑ Transitions
- ❑ Case Vignette
- ❑ Resiliency

## Separation, Loss & Grief

19

- **Separation:**
  - Is the act of disruption to a meaningful relationship
- **Loss:**
  - Is the impact caused by the disruption to the meaningful relationship
- **Grief:**
  - Is the emotional process of working through the experience of separation and loss

## Activity

## Five Connections

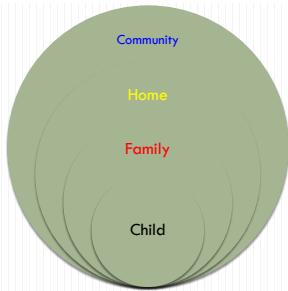
## Video: ReMoved

31



## Placement in Foster Care: Understanding the Extent of Separations

22




---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

23

## Activity

Resource Families: Impact of Loss

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Living with Loss: Shock, Denial & Protest

24

### □ Signs of Struggle:

- **Shock**–
  - Confusion
  - Emotional Paralysis/Numbness
  - Periods of Intense Emotion
- **Denial**–
  - Absence of Distress
  - Fantasy or Magical Thinking
  - Persistent Requests to Return Home
- **Protest**–
  - Emotional Outbursts
  - Physical Outbursts
  - Disruption in Eating, Sleep & Daily Routines

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Living with Loss: Shock, Denial & Protest

25

Tools for Resource Families:

- Invite comfort and familiarity into your home:
  - Ask questions about favorite foods, TV shows, bedtime routines and provide opportunities to recreate these norms and routines
- Model the importance of feeling expression through observational statements:
  - "You seem upset. It's okay to feel upset about what's happened. Would you like to talk about how you are feeling?"
- Provide answers to the child in an age appropriate and reassuring manner:
  - "I know you really want to go home right now, but right now your parent(s) are working out a plan with the Social Worker. Once we know the plan, you will know too."

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Living with Loss: Bargaining

26

Signs of Struggle:

- **Striking a Deal:**
  - "I promise to behave better if you let me go home to my parents."
- **Power to Fix the Problem:**
  - "If I act out really bad with my resource family parent then my social worker will change his/her mind and send me home."
- **Self Blame:**
  - "It's all my fault. I should have never told my teacher what was going on at home."
- **Blame of Others:**
  - "It's all because of you [social worker or resource family parent] that I'm not with my parent(s)!"

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Living with Loss: Bargaining

27

Tools for Resource Families:

- Reaffirm to the child that his/her behaviors were not the cause of their removal
- Encourage the expression of all feelings both (+) & (-)
- Do not take it personally when a child blames you for their placement– emotionally it is easier for a child to blame the social worker or the resource family parent than to blame their parent(s)
- Understand the meaning behind the behavior & focus on strengthening the relationship

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Living with Loss: Disorganization

28

□ Signs of Struggle:

- **Anger:** A universal response to grief & loss; Often expressed by children through behavioral patterns characteristic of depression and disruptive behavior
- **Depression-like Symptoms:**
  - Anger turned Inward
  - Heightened Sadness
  - Withdrawal
  - Worries & Fears
  - Too much sleep or Too little sleep
  - Self harm behaviors & Suicidal thoughts and planning
- **Disruptive Behavior-like Symptoms:**
  - Anger turned Outward
  - Verbal Aggression & Physical Aggression
  - Property Damage
  - Stealing and/or Lying
  - Aggression towards family pets
  - High Risk Behaviors (drugs, alcohol, sexual promiscuity)

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Living with Loss: Disorganization

29

□ Tools for Resource Families:

- Give permission to feel angry but with emphasis on healthier ways for feeling expression
- Offer emotional containment through daily structure, safety and consistency in parenting style
- Support ongoing connections with birth families
- Use encouragement and praise to rebuild a child's sense of security and self esteem
- Document the behaviors & Talk with the Social Worker
- Advocate for mental health services, drug & alcohol counseling and/or behavioral support services

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Living with Loss: Reorganization

30

□ Signs of Recovery:

- **Acceptance:**
  - Accepting support of bio parent, resource family and other members of the professional team
  - Trying on new coping tools and daily living routines
- **Resilience:**
  - Utilizing strengths of self and support system
  - Committing to healthier forms of coping
  - Allowing self to re-experience joy and happiness
- **Forgiveness:**
  - A powerful shift in a child's response to the trauma and loss;
  - Is NOT forgetting the trauma;
  - Is NOT reconciling with the person responsible for the trauma and loss
  - Forgiveness is letting go of the ANGER

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

31

## Activity

Role Play: Transitions

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## The Impact of Transitions

32

**Integrating a child into your home:**

➢ **Advocating for familiarities of home:**

- Clothing
- Pictures
- Pillows and Blankets
- Favorite toys or stuffed animals

➢ **Facilitating familiarities of home:**

- Preparing favorite meals
- Watching favorite TV show or cartoon together
- Asking about routines and norms and making adjustments

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## The Impact of Transitions

33

**Removals & Placement Changes**

➢ **Exhausting All Resources Prior To A Removal:**

- Talking with the Social Worker
- Advocating for Support and/or Resources
- Requesting a Team Decision Making Meeting

➢ **Handling A 7 Day Notice for Removal:**

- Handling this Transition with Dignity and Respect
- Preparing all Children for this Transition
- Coping with your Decision for the Removal

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## The Impact of Transitions

34

- Reunification, Adoption & Legal Guardianship:
  - Acceptance of Permanency Plan
  - Preparing for the Upcoming Transition and Loss
  - Maintaining Professionalism during the Upcoming Transition
  - Caring for yourself in relation to the Loss
  - Facilitating & Maintaining Life-long Connections

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Resource Family Self Care

35

- Setting Limits
- Respite Care
- Physical Exercise and/or Calming Activities
- Support Groups
- Religious/Spiritual Support
- Short Term Individual Therapy
- Breaks in Service

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

36

## Activity

Case Vignette: Living With Loss

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

## Fostering Resiliency

37

- Recognize** the effect trauma has had on the child/family's life
- Create** an atmosphere of safety and nurturance
- Provide** calm, consistent, and loving care to set an example of how to regulate, express, and manage emotions
- Support** connections and relationships
- Advocate** for the child and/or family's needs
- Responsive Care** for YOURSELF & OTHERS

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Foster Youth Video

38

- ILSP Youth Sharing Their Story

---

---

---

---

---

---

---