

Trauma-Informed Parenting Tips & Resources

Helpful books/authors:

- Dr. Becky Bailey - Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline, I Love You Rituals
- Dr. Dan Siegel - Whole Brain Child, No-Drama Discipline, Brainstorm
- Dr. Bruce Perry - The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog
- Dr. Laura Markham - Aha! Parenting blog (<https://www.ahaparenting.com/>)

Resources to help caregivers understand the impact of trauma:

- Complex Trauma Resource Guide from NCTSN (geared towards youth, but also helpful for caregivers)
 - <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/what-complex-trauma-resource-guide-youth-and-those-who-care-about-them>
- Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma from Child Welfare Information Gateway
 - <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/child-trauma.pdf>
- Trauma-Informed Parenting - What You Should Know from Fostering Perspectives
 - <http://fosteringperspectives.org/fpv18n1/know.htm>
- What Survival Looks Like at Home
 - <https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/What-Survival-Looks-Like-At-Home.pdf>
- Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma - A Workshop for Resource Parents
 - Center for Child & Family Health + NCTSN partnership (highly recommended)
- Never Give Up - Video from NCTSN (geared toward teens/adolescents, but good info for caregivers)
 - <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/never-give-complex-trauma-film-youth-youth>

Emotion Coaching Resources & Handouts:

- 10 Emotion-Coaching Phrases to Use When Your Child is Upset + Infographic
 - <https://nutureandthriveblog.com/what-to-say-when-your-child-is-upset/>
- The Five Steps of Emotion Coaching - Younger Children
 - <http://www.parentingcounts.org/information/timeline/five-steps-of-emotion-coaching/>
- Your 6 Step Process for Emotion-Coaching when Your Child is Upset
 - <https://www.ahaparenting.com/blog/the-6-step-process-for-emotion-coaching-when-your-child-is-upset>

Activities and Analogies

Invisible Suitcase

- Utilize additional details from *Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma - A Workshop for Resource Parents* to facilitate caregiver discussions about the “Invisible Suitcase.”
- Make a symbolic suitcase or place a picture or toy/mini suitcase in caregiver’s home to help caregiver keep in mind the child’s “baggage” during interactions at home.

“Turning the Titanic” or “Turning the ship’s wheel” (credit to Christy Sullivan, LPC)

- A reminder that change will be slow; small changes in your course can lead to a vastly different destination over time.
- Place a photo of the Titanic or a ship’s wheel at home as a visual reminder
- Use a photo of either as a cover for an “I noticed” journal

Change your “measuring stick” (credit to Christy Sullivan, LPC)

- Encourage caregivers to reconsider comparing/measuring a child impacted by trauma to children who have not been impacted by trauma. Trauma-impacted kids often need a different “measuring stick” because their development, behaviors, motivations, etc. may differ significantly from peers or siblings not affected by trauma. Comparisons can be hurtful and exacerbate a trauma-impacted child’s self-defeating thoughts/feelings of not being “normal,” being “a screw up”, etc.
- Place a “symbolic” ruler or yardstick in the house to help caregivers recall this message.

The road less travelled (credit to NAMI of Wake County’s parent support group)

- Acknowledge and validate caregivers’ grief that their lives and their child’s lives look (and may continue to look) very different from what they expected/hoped for at this point in their lives.
- This can be a conversation, a series of conversations, or an activity where caregivers illustrate what they thought life would/should look like and what it actually looks like now, after the trauma.
- Eventually a clinician might help caregivers identify positive aspects of taking the road less travelled after assisting with grieving the “lost” future and accepting their alternate life path.

“I Noticed” Journal (based on Dr. Bailey’s *Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline*)

- Uses noticing/observing as a way to provide kids with encouragement and acceptance without an emphasis on extrinsic rewards or praise; also helps them become more conscious of their actions and develop self-awareness and self-acceptance.
- *Step 1* - Start statements with: “Ruben (i.e. child’s name)...” or “You...” or “I noticed...” or “Look at you...” or “You did it...”
- *Step 2* - describe what you observed without judgement...describe just the facts, like what a camera would have recorded
- *Step 3* - end with a “tag” that describes attributes of the child’s actions or admirable values (if desired, but not necessary) - ex: helpful, thoughtful, kind, caring, brave, determined, etc.
- Ex: Ruben, you picked up all the toys from the living room floor. That was helpful.
- Ex: I noticed that you unloaded the dishwasher. That was thoughtful.
- Ex: You did it! You came down the slide by yourself!
- Ex: Ruben helped Dad change the oil in the car, which took determination.
- Ex: I noticed Ruben calmed the dog when she was scared during the storm. That was kind.
- Comments can be made verbally or recorded in a journal/log. A journal/log could be placed on the fridge or a location central for the family so that everyone can contribute. For example, kids could add, “Mom made sure I got to soccer practice on time” or “Dad did the dishes tonight because I had so much homework, even though it was my job. That was helpful.” Reading the comments can become part of a nightly routine, weekly family meetings, dinner conversation, etc.