



empatico

Improving Lives.

Trauma Training for Caregivers

Part 3 of 5

Foster Care EDU

2.18.10

Review of Part 2

- A child's sense of safety includes both physical and psychological safety
- Trauma reminders may cause a child to re-experience traumatic events
- Developing and maintaining a Life Book can help the child make new meaning of their trauma history and current experiences
- It is important to assess and treat the affects of trauma
- It is important to practice healthy self care on a daily basis





Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma





Objectives

- Participants will be able to identify the Essential Elements of Trauma Informed Parenting
 - Participants will be able to define and describe trauma and neglect
 - Participants will understand how to help the child make new meaning of their trauma history and current experiences
 - Participants will understand ways in which children respond to trauma
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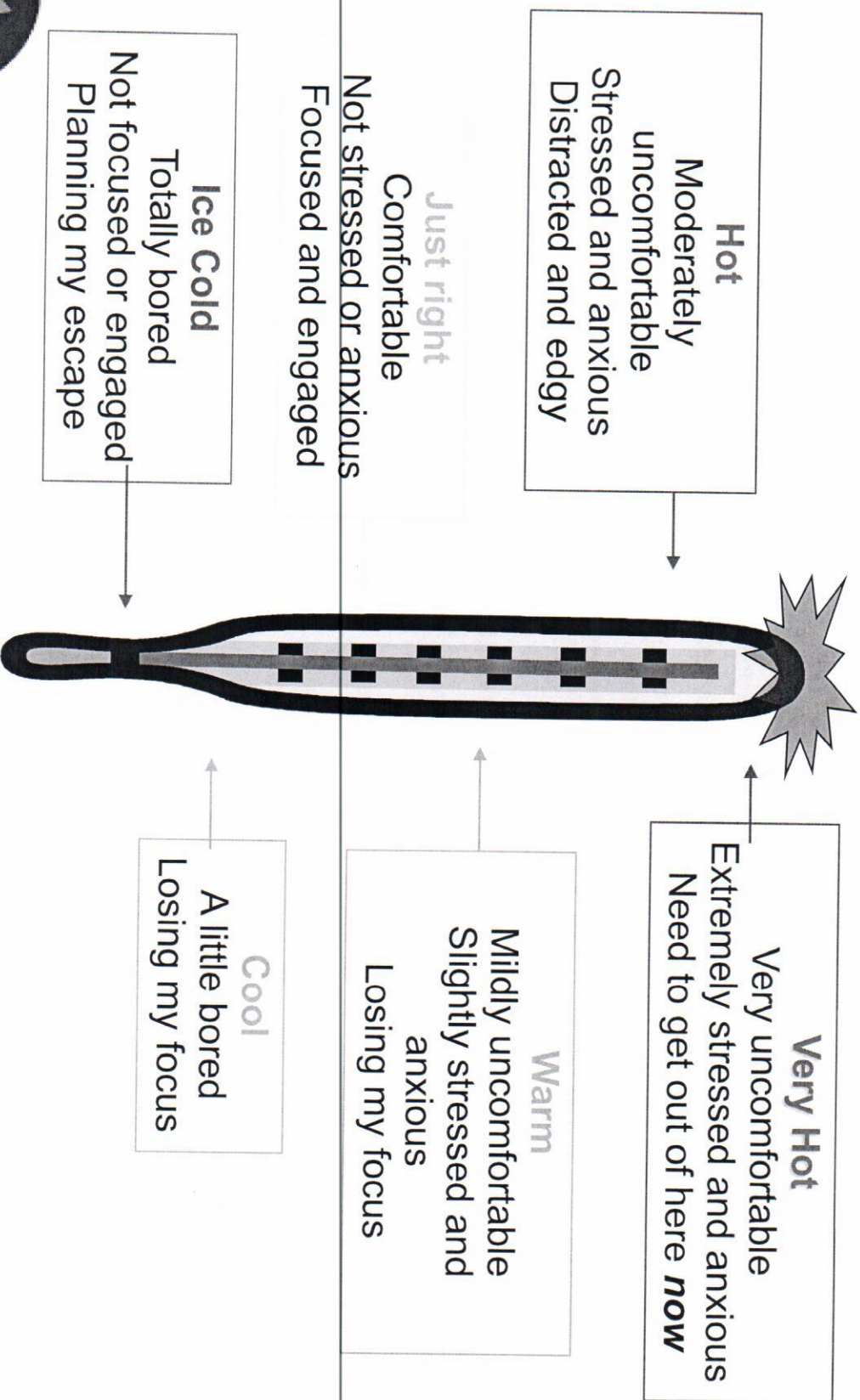


What We Will Be Learning

- Essential Elements of Trauma Informed Parenting
- Trauma 101



Feelings Thermometer





*There was a child went forth every
day, and all that he looked upon
became part of him.*

—Walt Whitman





The Challenge

Caring for children who have been through trauma can leave resource parents feeling:

- Confused
- Frustrated
- Unappreciated
- Angry
- Helpless



The Solution: Trauma-Informed Parenting

When you understand what trauma is and how it has affected your child, it becomes easier to:

- Communicate with your child
- Improve your child's behavior and attitudes
- Get your child the help he or she needs
- Reduce the risk of your own compassion fatigue or secondary traumatization
- Become a more effective and satisfied resource parent






The Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Parenting

1. Recognize the impact trauma has had on your child.
2. Help your child to feel safe.
3. Help your child to understand and manage overwhelming emotions.
4. Help your child to understand and modify problem behaviors.
5. Respect and support positive, stable, and enduring relationships in the life of your child.





The Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Parenting (cont'd)

6. Help your child to develop a strength-based understanding of his or her life story.
 7. Be an advocate for your child.
 8. Promote and support trauma-focused assessment and treatment for your child.
 9. Take care of yourself.
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Myths to Avoid

- My love should be enough to erase the effects of everything bad that happened before.
 - My child should be grateful and love me as much as I love him/her.
 - My child shouldn't love or feel loyal to an abusive parent.
 - It's better to just move on, forget, and not talk about past painful experiences.
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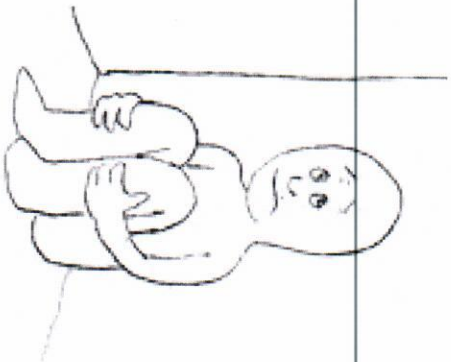
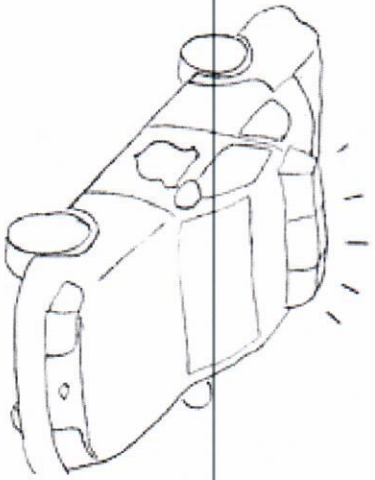
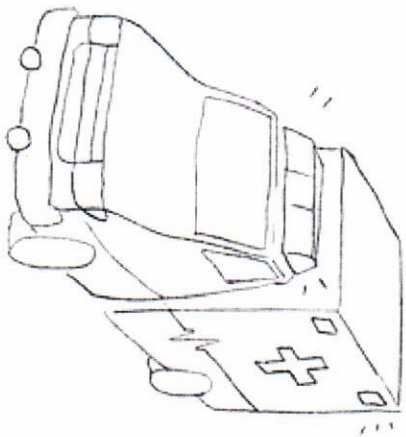
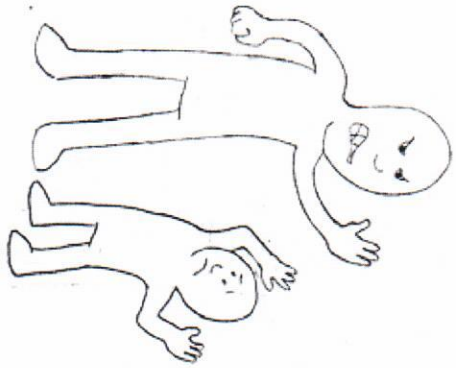


"My Child" Worksheet

Imagine a real child—a child in your home, a child from your neighborhood, or even a child from the past.

- Fill in the basic information about your child—first name, age, gender—on the "My Child" worksheet.
- Write down what you know about this child's life before he or she came into your home.
- Make a note of anything about this child that you would like to understand better.





Trauma 101

Illustrations by Erich Ippen, Jr.
Used with permission.



A traumatic experience . . .

- Threatens the life or physical integrity of a child or of someone important to that child (parent, grandparent, sibling)
- Causes an overwhelming sense of terror, helplessness, and horror
- Produces intense physical effects such as pounding heart, rapid breathing, trembling, dizziness, or loss of bladder or bowel control



What About Neglect?

- Failure to provide for a child's basic needs
- Perceived as trauma by an infant or young child completely dependent on adults for care
- Opens the door to other traumatic events
- May reduce a child's ability to recover from trauma



How Children Respond to Trauma

Long-term trauma can interfere with healthy development and affect a child's:

- Ability to trust others
- Sense of personal safety
- Ability to manage emotions
- Ability to navigate and adjust to life's changes
- Physical and emotional responses to stress



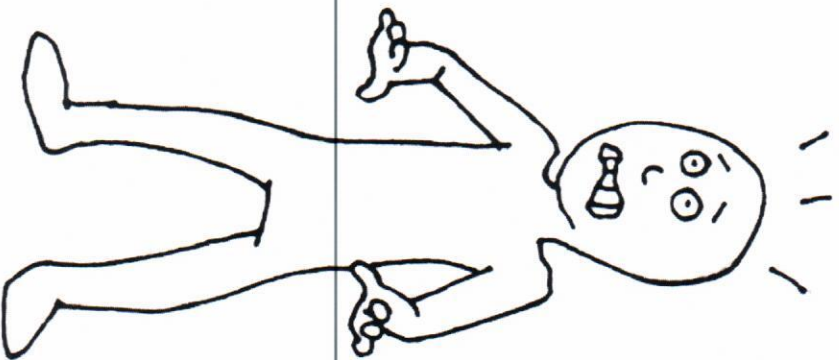
How Children Respond to Trauma

A child's reactions to trauma will vary depending on:

- Age and developmental stage
- Temperament
- Perception of the danger faced
- Trauma history (cumulative effects)
- Adversities faced following the trauma
- Availability of adults who can offer help, reassurance, and protection



How Children Respond to Trauma

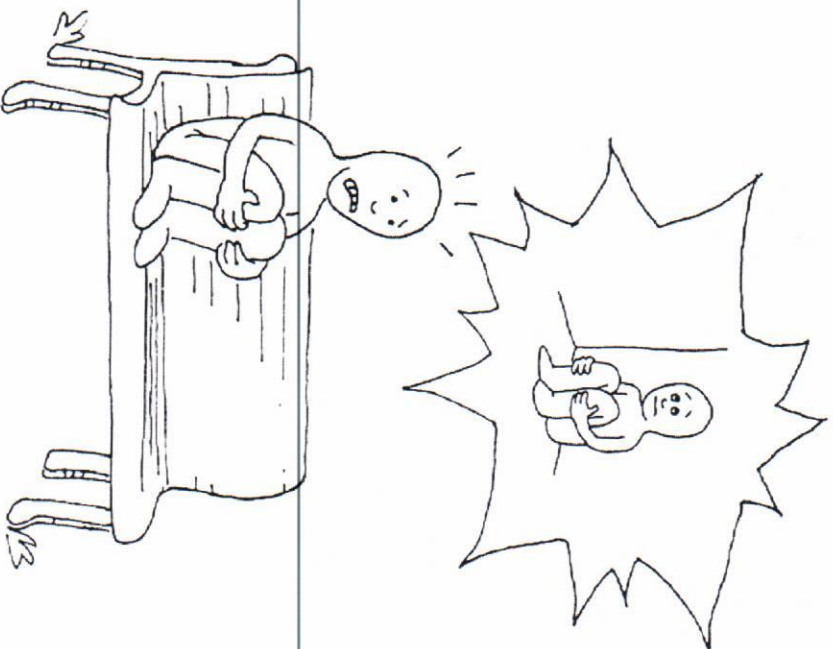


Hyperarousal:

- Nervousness
- Jumpiness
- Quickness to startle



How Children Respond to Trauma



Reexperiencing:

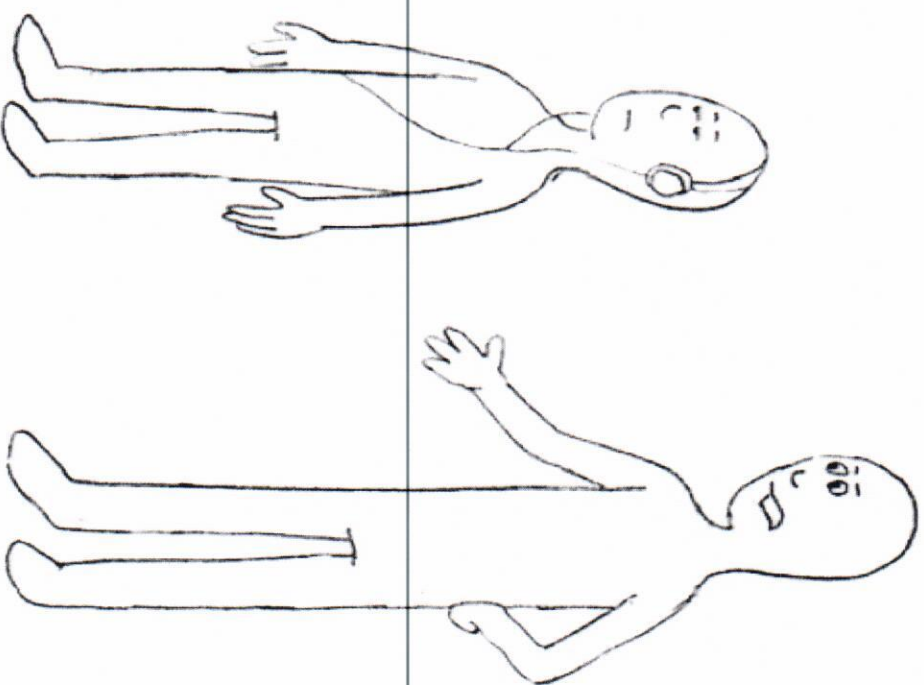
- Intrusive images, sensations, dreams
- Intrusive memories of the traumatic event or events



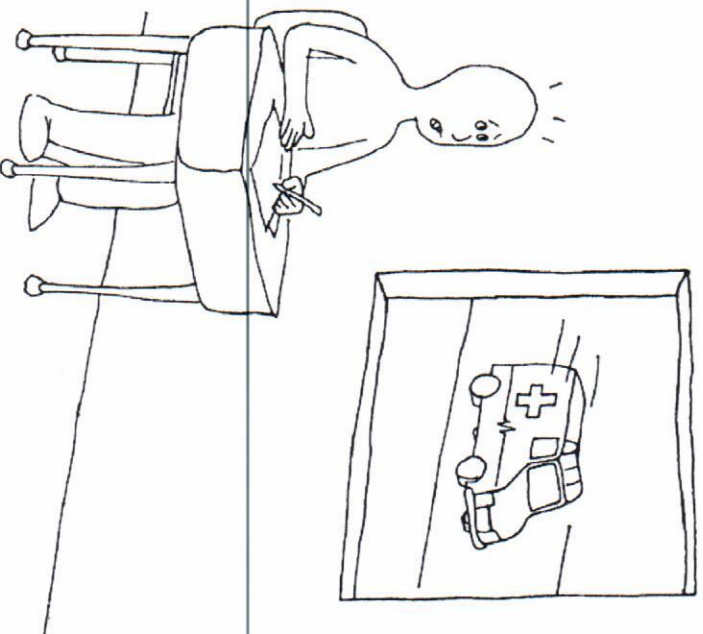
How Children Respond to Trauma

Avoidance and withdrawal:

- Feeling numb, shut down, or separated from normal life
- Pulling away from activities and relationships
- Avoiding things that prompt memories of the trauma



What You Might See: Reactions to Trauma Reminders



Trauma reminders:

Things, events, situations, places, sensations, and even people that a child connects with a traumatic event



What about Posttraumatic Stress Disorder?

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is diagnosed
when:

- A person displays severe traumatic stress reactions,
- The reactions persist for a long period of time, and
- The reactions get in the way of living a normal life.



What You Might See: Traumatic Stress Reactions

- Problems concentrating, learning, or taking in new information
- Difficulty going to sleep or staying asleep, nightmares
- Emotional instability; moody, sad, or angry and aggressive, etc.
- Age-inappropriate behaviors; reacting like a much younger child



What You Might See: Traumatic Play

When playing, young children who have been through traumatic events may:

- Repeat all or part of the traumatic event
- Take on the role of the abuser
- Try out different outcomes
- Get “stuck” on a particular moment or event



What You Might See: Traumatic Play

Seek professional help if your child:

- Centers most play activities around traumatic events
- Becomes very upset during traumatic play
- Repeatedly plays the role of the abuser with dolls or stuffed animals or acts out abuse with other children
- Plays in a way that interferes with relationships with other children





What You Might See: Talking About Trauma

- Talking about certain events all the time
- Bringing up the topic seemingly “out of the blue”
- Being confused or mistaken about details
- Remembering only fragments of what happened
- Avoiding talk about anything remotely related to the traumatic events






Recovering from Trauma: The Role of Resilience

- Resilience is the ability to recover from traumatic events.
- Children who are resilient see themselves as:
 - Safe
 - Capable
 - Lovable





*Just as despair can come to one only
from other human beings, hope, too, can
be given to one only by other human
beings.*

—Elie Wiesel
Author, activist,
and Holocaust survivor



Growing Resilience

Factors that can increase resilience include:

- A strong relationship with at least one competent, caring adult
- Feeling connected to a positive role model/mentor
- Having talents/abilities nurtured and appreciated
- Feeling some control over one's own life
- Having a sense of belonging to a community, group, or cause larger than oneself





What Trauma-Informed Parenting Can Do

When we protect them from harm...

... children learn that the world is safe.

When we support, nurture, and respond to them...

... children learn that they are capable.

When we give them affection and love...

... children learn that they are lovable.





Summary

- There are nine Essential Elements of Trauma Informed Parenting
 - Trauma Informed Parenting helps in communicating with children and improving their behaviors and attitude
 - It is important to help the child make new meaning of their trauma history and current experiences
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Summary

- Children's responses may vary depending upon their background, temperament, and trauma history
- PTSD is diagnosed based upon stress reactions, duration of those reactions, and ability to live a normal life
- Children who are resilient see themselves as Safe, Capable, and Lovable



Thank You!

This training material is based on the “Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma – A Workshop for Resource Parents” written by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network at <http://www.nctsn.org>.

