

Trauma-Informed Kinship Training: How to Help Children and Kinship Caregivers

For more information, visit: u.osu.edu/empoweringcommunities/

Adapted from: The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, and other various trauma resources.



Welcome, thank you for
joining us. Please
complete the following
forms:

Consent

Pre-training survey with
demographics

Participant ID example: 501-JS-06-82

Ice Breaker

What do you hope to learn from this course?

Confidentially,

1. Please be mindful of each participant, their experience, and story.
2. Do not share our discussions with others.



Break



1. Due to the time restrictions of this training, we will not have a formal break.
2. Please care for yourself as needed (use the restroom, grab a snack or drink, or stand to stretch etc.)

Participation

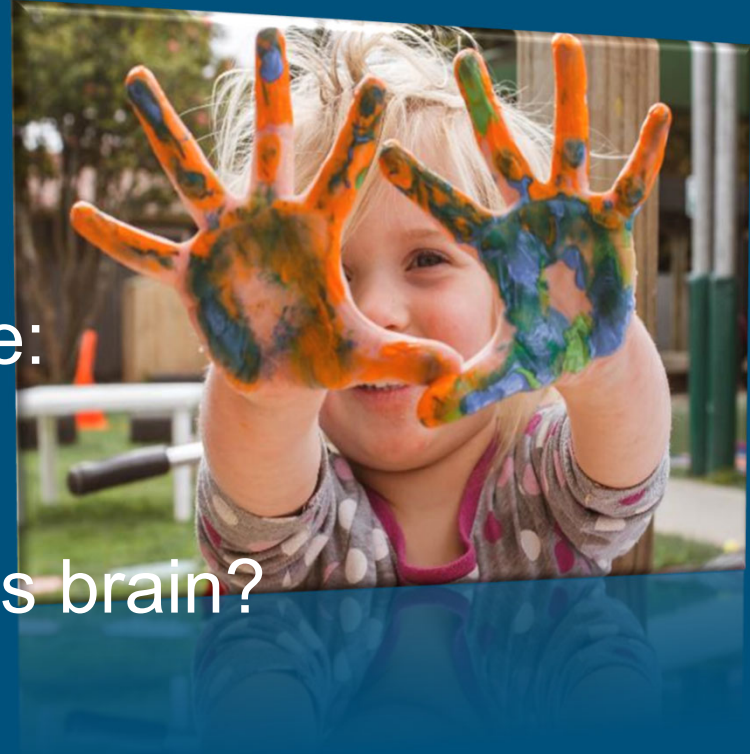


- You may share answers to questions if you choose
 - You do not have to share

Topics of this course

Child focused sections include:

- What is trauma
- How does it impact a child's brain?
- Identify triggers for trauma
- Difficult behaviors and trauma
- Coping with difficult behaviors



Topics of this course

Kinship focused sections include:

- Understand burnout/compassion fatigue
 - Learn self care tips
 - Building support
 - Understand my feelings
- Setting boundaries with biological parents



What is trauma?

Defined as: a result from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury; or an emotional upset





Trauma Statistics and Normalization

- **26%** of children in the United States will witness or experience a traumatic event before they turn four- <http://recognizetrauma.org/>
- People who have experienced trauma are:
 - **15 times** more likely to attempt suicide
 - **4 times** more likely to become an alcoholic
 - **3 times** more likely to experience depression
- Almost half the nation's children have experienced at least one or more types of serious childhood trauma - <https://acetoohigh.com/>

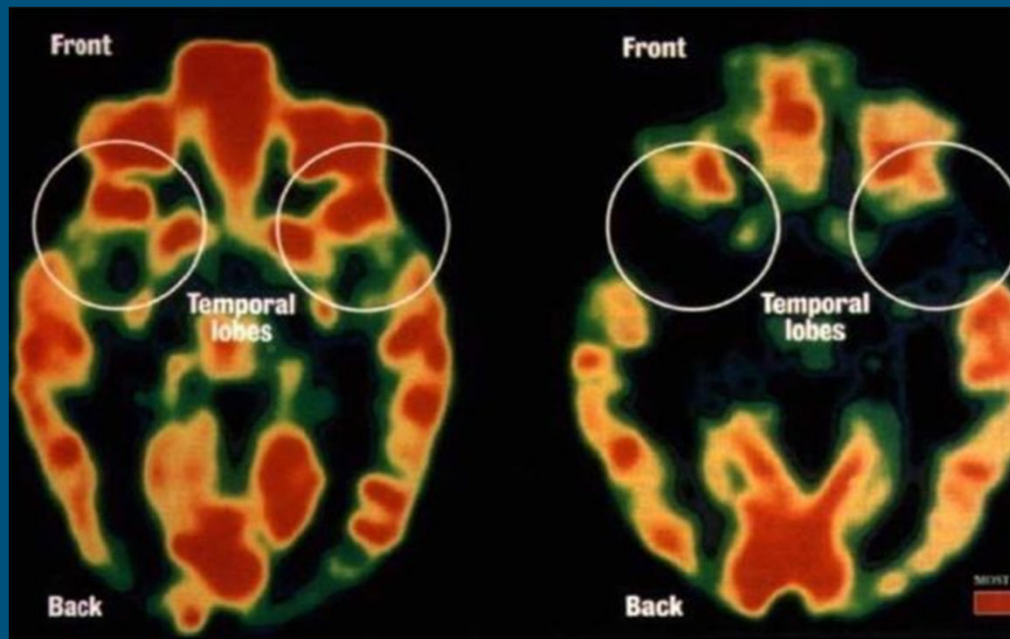


Examples of trauma:

- Witnessing a parental overdose
- Parental Substance misuse
- Living in a home with domestic violence
- Being removed from their home



Trauma in the brain



The left brain is a child who has not experienced trauma

The right brain is a child who has experienced neglect and trauma

So what happens when we're experiencing trauma?



1. Fight
2. Flight
3. Freeze

Logical Thinking



Importance of positive relationships

- Traumatized children may believe:

- Unlovable
- Unworthy
- Cannot be trusted
- Adults can't be trusted
- The world is dangerous



How can we help children who've experienced trauma?



Developmental age and trauma

“Why are they not “acting their age?”

- Trauma or neglect
- Developmental disability
- Death or loss of primary caregiver
- Change in family structure
- Parent with illness or substance use



Developmental age and trauma

Ask yourself the following questions:



1. Is the child able to meet the demands?
2. Has the child been properly taught?
3. Did something prevent the child from being able to learn this skill?
4. Does the child have a trauma trigger that is unresolved and prevents the skill from being accomplished?

Stages of behavior for a child that's been triggered

1

Child has been triggered



2

Child is re-experiencing the traumatic event



3

Child is calming down from re-experiencing

Note. Adapted from "Trauma Systems Therapy for Foster Care" by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Copyright 2017.

1. Child has been triggered

The child has become worked up. The body is getting ready for fight, flight, or freeze



Emotions are getting intense. The child may be scared, angry, or isolate from others



If the child cannot calm down, they may re-experience the traumatic event

So how can I help a child during the stages of being triggered?

1a. The child has been triggered

**Recognize
the signs**

**Help the
child
regulate
their
emotions**

**Reassure
the child
that you are
a safe adult
and there
to help**

**Stay
calm
yourself**

2. Child is re-experiencing event

The child is re-experiencing fight, flight, or freeze from the original traumatic event



The child may be unaware of what they are doing, as they are in survival-in-the-moment mode

2a. Helping a child who is re-experiencing

**Remove all
other
children from
the area and
reduce other
noise and
stimulation**



**Use short,
calm
sentences**



**Acknowledge
the child's
emotions and
describe
what you see**

3. The child is calming down

**The child is
beginning to
calm down and
manage their
emotions again**



**The child is
starting to
re-engage and
come back to the
present moment**

3a. Helping a child who is calming down

**Continue to
reassure the
child that
they are safe**



**Avoid asking
the child to
talk about
what just
happened
too quickly**



**Avoid
punishing the
child for re-
experiencing**

Coping with difficult behavior

“Don’t take it personally. It’s nothing you’re lacking, It’s who they are missing.”

**Give the
child
boundaries**

**Give the
child
options**

**Explain
your
reasoning**

**Make “no”
a positive
statement**

Note. Adapted from “Trauma Systems Therapy for Foster Care” by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Copyright 2017.

Coping with difficult behavior: Setting Boundaries



- **Review the house rules or expectations with the child so they know what to expect**
- **Involve the child as much as you can in the creation of boundaries**
- **Remember, children who've experienced trauma need boundaries to feel safe and secure. Boundaries are good!**

- Ex: One boundary could be that the child has to be in bed every night by 8:30 pm. This keeps their routine predictable.

Coping with difficult behavior: Giving Options



- **Children may associate being told “no” with a time they weren’t in control, like a traumatic event**
- **Instead of saying “no”, try offering choices instead**

- Instead of: “No, you can’t have French fries tonight for dinner. You must eat vegetables.”
- Try: “What vegetables would you like tonight for dinner? You can have broccoli or peas.”

Coping with difficult behavior: Explain



- **Sometimes we forgot it's important for kids to know the "why"**
- **This type of discipline will take time for both you and the child**

- Instead of saying: "You can't go to the movies tonight because I said so."
- Try: "I would like for you to go to the movies tonight, but there were a few days this week when your behavior was not the best. We need to behave better throughout the week so you can do these fun things." Let's try again next week.

Coping with difficult behavior: Make “no” positive



- **Praise the child**
- **Validate their disappointment in your decision**
- **If possible, offer another solution**

- Instead of: “No, we can't have fast food for dinner tonight. And that's the end of it.”
- Try: “I really appreciate you asking so nicely if we could get fast food for dinner tonight. Maybe next week. Thank you for your understanding. I’m sorry you’re disappointed. Would you like to cook dinner with me instead?”

What do I do if the techniques aren't working?

**Give the
child a brief
cooling off
period**

**Enforce the
consequences**

What if they aren't working: Cooling off period

- **When the child is really worked up -> not the time to give consequences**
- **Cooling off may look different at depending on age and developmental level**
- **Get the child into a place where they can focus, listen, think, and feel safe**



Possible activities:

- Deep breathing
- Writing
- Coloring
- Pacing
- Walking
- Running
- Listening to music

What if they aren't working: enforce the consequences

- You and the child should be calm before enforcing the consequences
- If the child still isn't cooperating, be prepared to enforce the consequences.
- Use consequences that make sense in that situation
- Don't give consequences out of retribution
- Try to give restorative consequences
- Make the consequences as predictable as possible



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Reinforcement through praise



Good Job!

Thank you!

Shared Expectations

In order for our children to behave how we expect, we must tell them our expectations.

What is the hardest part of your day?



- Ex: is getting the child to school the hardest part of your day?
- Prepare the night before (make lunches, lay out clothes, etc.)

Talking to your child about difficult topics

(Parental opioid use, overdose, or even reunification)

- Be honest but age appropriate
- Speak factual
- Remind the child that it's not their fault
- Encourage communication
- Listen



<https://stjosephinstitute.com/talking-to-kids-about-a-parents-addiction/>

10 and younger

- Self-focused
- “Where do I fit in?”
- Be sensitive
- “This is my fault.”



Tweens



- Ages 10, 11, 12
- Learning fact from myth
- Factual information
- Value feelings
- Answer questions
- Remind them you are there to talk to

Teenagers

- High feelings
 - Angry
 - Resentful
 - Sad
- Compares self to peers
- Help them recognize every family has struggles
- Tell them how and why you appreciate them
- Show respect





Self-Care

How do you take care of yourself?

- What works?
- What isn't working?
- What barriers do you feel you have to practice self-care?



Caring for yourself



You must take care of yourself in order to take care of someone else.

There are different ways to take care of yourself. All of them are essential cogs in the machine to have a happy and healthy life.

Making time for yourself

“Self-Care is not indulgent, it is essential”

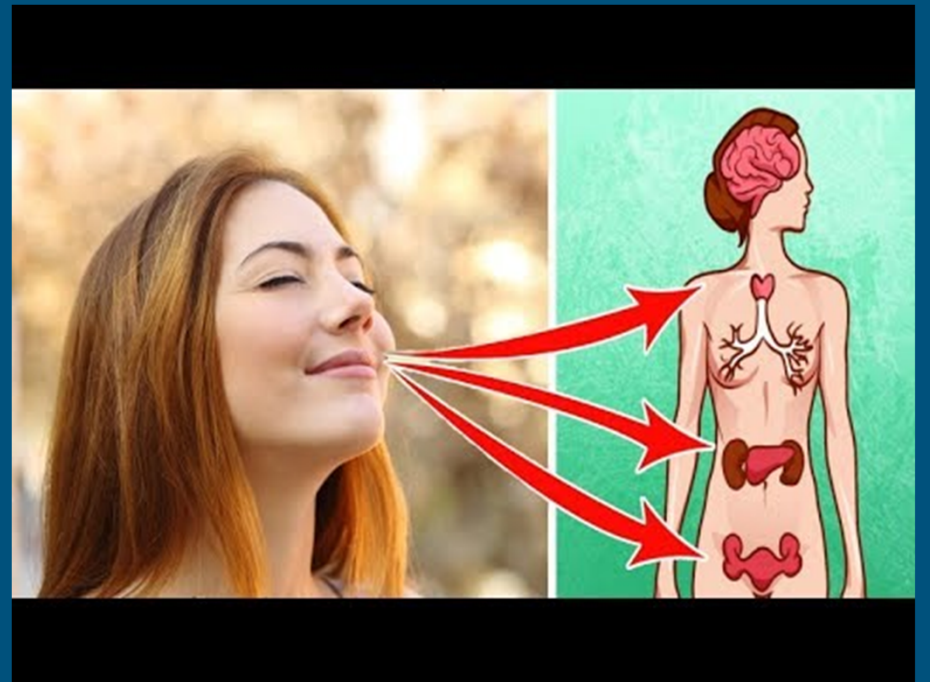
1. Daily
2. Weekly or Monthly
3. As needed

What are some stress-busters you can add to your list?



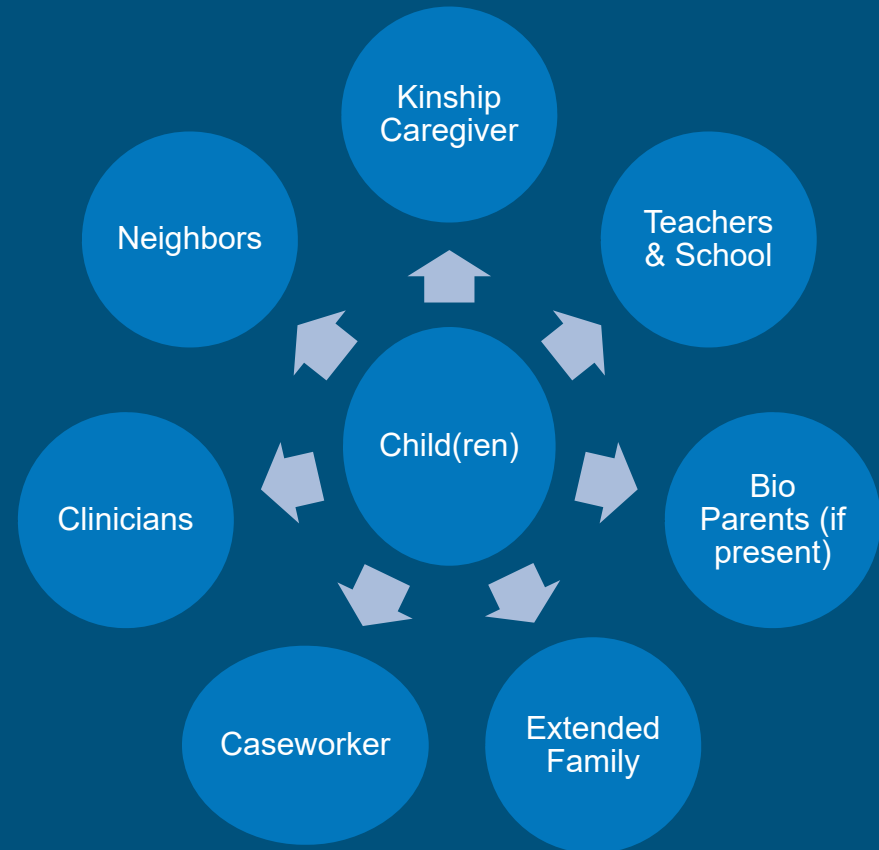
BREATHE

Deep breathing,
guided meditation,
and mindfulness.



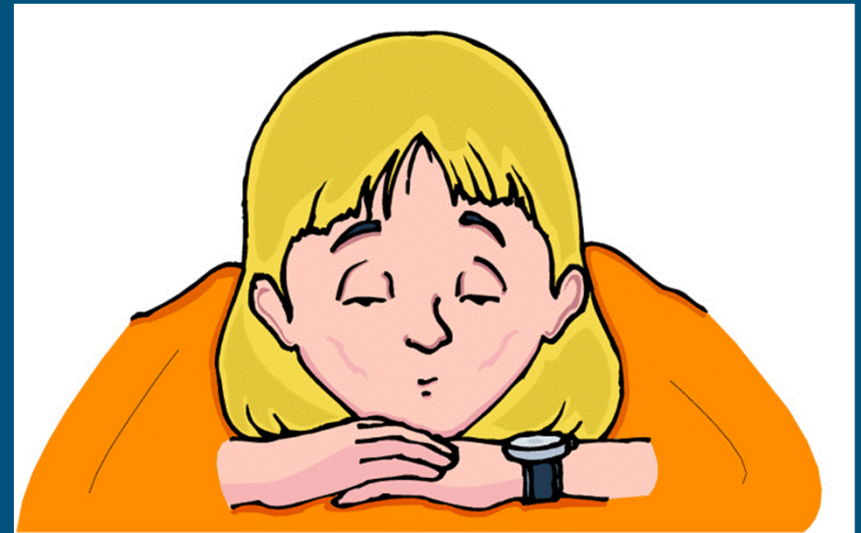
Support systems

“Today, promise yourself a moment to breathe.”



Understanding compassion fatigue

What is it?



Setting boundaries with biological parents



Showing up high

Needing a place to stay

Asking for money

Asking for food

Blaming you for not letting them see their child(ren)

Threats

Setting boundaries with biological parents



- Find ways for biological parents to remain parents even though you may be the primary caregiver
- Monitor positive and effective interactions with your adult child or relative
- Be aware of manipulative behaviors
- Be assertive and firm, set clear expectations, be truthful

Child-centered: boundaries about biological parents

Things you should not do:

- Put down the parent around the child
- Lie to the child about what is going on
- Tell the child every detail about the situation



Ohio Kinship Statistics



Nearly 100,000 grandparents are raising grandchildren

Healing is Possible

Wanda's Story



Resources and Questions

Please complete the post-training survey prior to leaving

Participant ID example: 501-JS-06-82

References

- The Annie E. Casey Foundation
 - <https://www.aecf.org/>
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network
 - <https://www.nctsn.org/>
- Child Mind Institute
 - <https://childmind.org/>
- St. Joseph Institute for Addiction
 - <https://stjosephinstitute.com/talking-to-kids-about-a-parents-addiction/>
- PCSAO
 - <http://www.pcsao.org/programs/kinship>