# Integrating the Needs of Foster Care Youth in Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Programming: Trauma-Informed Approaches

April 21, 2016 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m. ET







U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children, Youth and Families Family and Youth Services Bureau Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)

# **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to do the following:

- Explain the rationale for providing trauma-informed sexual health programming for youth in foster care
- Describe key principles for trauma-informed practice with youth in foster care
- Identify three actions they can implement in their adolescent pregnancy prevention programs

## Presenters



#### Stephanie Guinosso, PhD

Project Director, CA School-Based Health Alliance Professional Development Consultant, ETR



#### Joan Singson

Program Manager, ETR

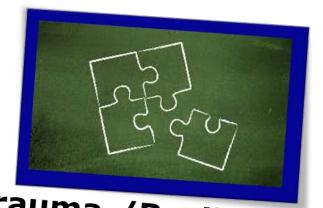


#### Janene Fluhr

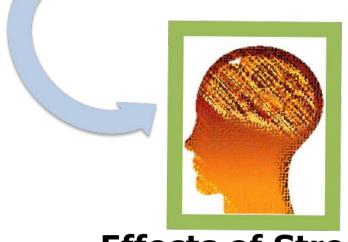
Project Director, Power Through Choices (PREIS)
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# Our Journey...



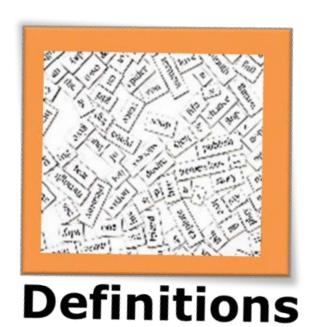


Trauma-/Resilience - Informed Strategies









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## **ABUSE**

## **NEGLECT**

## HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



**Physical** 



**Physical** 



Mental Illness



**Incarcerated Relative** 



**Emotional** 



**Emotional** 



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse



Sexual



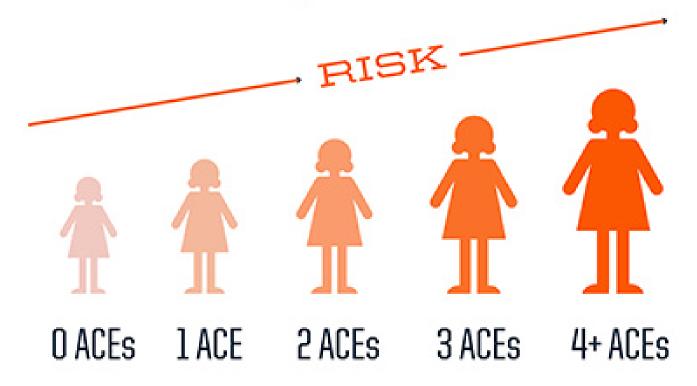
Divorce



# WHAT IMPACT DO ACEs HAVE?



As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for negative health outcomes



#### **BEHAVIOR**



Lack of physical activity



Smoking



Alcoholism



Drug use



Missed work

#### PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH



Severe obesity



Diabetes



Depression



Suicide attempts



STDs



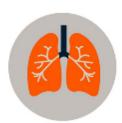
Heart disease



Cancer



Stroke



COPD



Broken bones

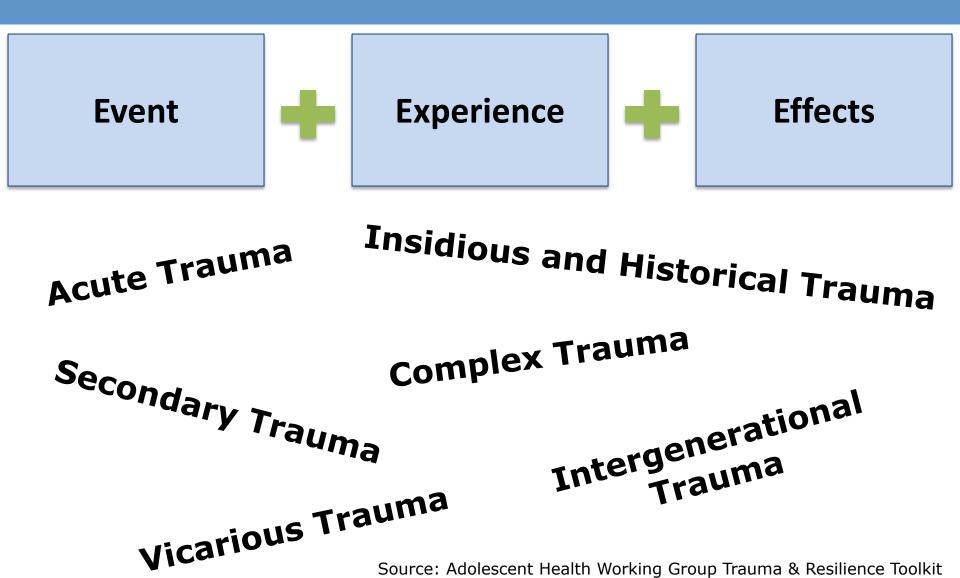
Positive Stress

Mild/moderate and short-lived stress response necessary for healthy development; brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in stress hormones

Tolerable Stress More severe stress response but limited in duration which allows for recovery; buffered by supportive relationships

Chronic or Toxic Stress Extreme, frequent or extended activation of the body's stress response without the buffering presence of a supportive adult

# Trauma

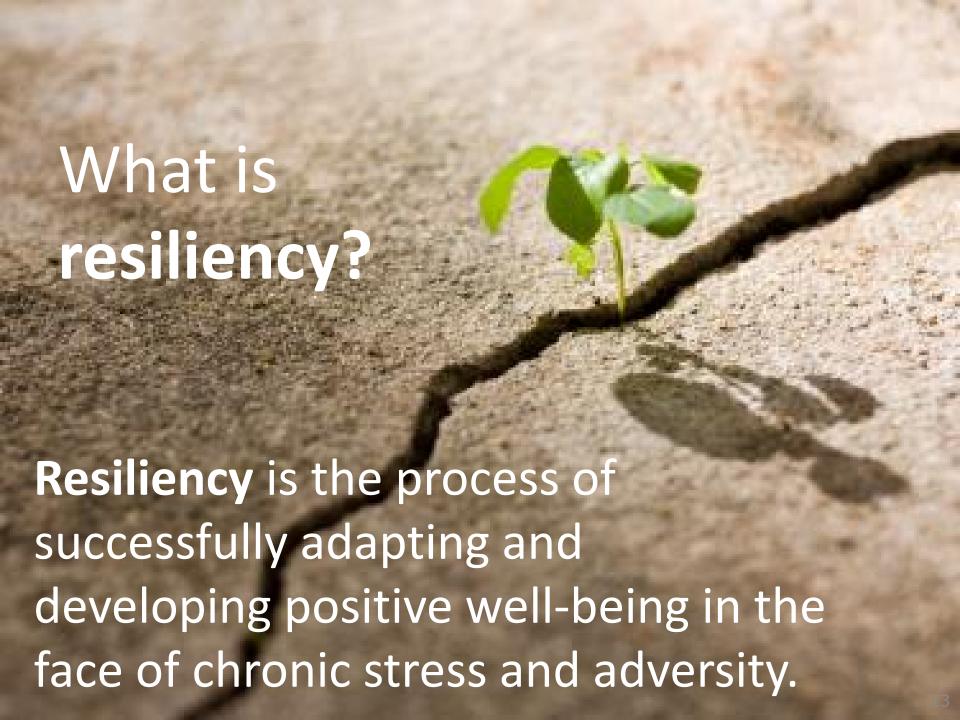


Source: Adolescent Health Working Group Trauma & Resilience Toolkit

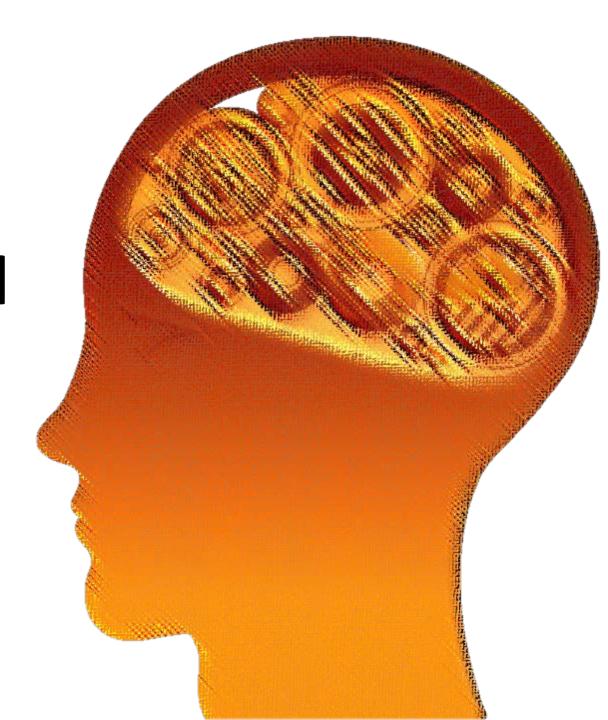
## Foster Care & Trauma

The great majority of young people in the foster care system have experienced trauma in some form as a result of the following:

- Maltreatment (child abuse and neglect) often with other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Separation from family and community as a result of foster care placement
- Moves and other adverse experiences while in foster care placement



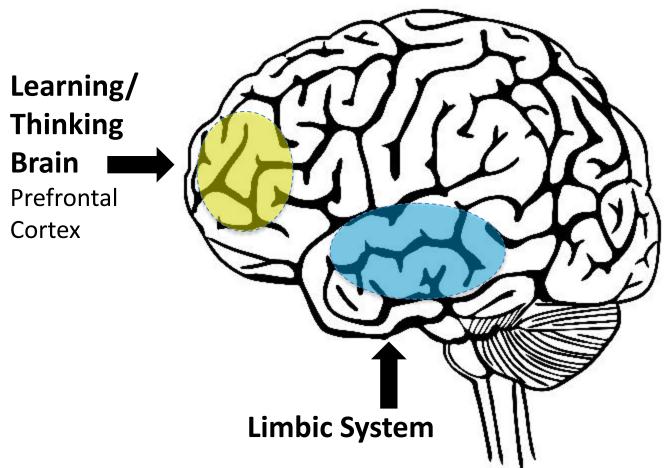
Effects of Stress and Trauma





# **Survive Mode: Flight/Fight/Freeze**

Frontal lobe (Prefrontal cortex) goes offline Limbic system / mind and lower brain functions take over



Source: Community Resilience Cookbook

#### The Window of Tolerance

#### **Hyperarousal Zone**

Sympathetic "Fight or Flight Response" (too much arousal)

- Emotional reactivity
- Defensiveness
- Feeling unsafe
- Feeling overwhelm
- Hyper-vigilance
- Impulsivity
- Anger/rage

#### **Optimal Arousal Zone**

"Window of Tolerance"



- Feeling safe
- Feel and think simultaneously
- Present moment awareness
- Awareness of boundaries
- Optimal learning/integration

#### **Hypoarousal Zone**

Parasympathetic "Immobilization Response" (too little arousal)

- No energy
- Numbing of emotions
- No feelings
- Passive, shut down
- Reduced physical movement

# From Biology to Behavior

- Behavioral & Self-Regulation: often identified as acting out, defiant or disruptive behavior, lack of motivation or interest in school
- Cognition: memory problems, inability to pay attention, academic difficulties
- Attachment: inability to form trusting relationships, over-clinging behavior/dependent
- Self-Concept: impacts self-image, self-esteem, and self-value



Two co-facilitators are preparing to do a condom demonstration with a group of young females in a group home. They have placed a penis model and condoms on a table for display. Several students are giggling and making jokes. One student, Jasmine, is quiet, looking down at the floor, and shaking. The facilitators are aware that many of these young women experience complex trauma and have a history of sexual abuse.

# Trauma/Resilience-Informed Care/Approaches

Trauma Specific Interventions/Treatments

Resilience & Recovery

Understanding
Stress &
Trauma





Compassionate & Dependable Relationships Cultural
Humility &
Responsiveness

Safety & Stability

Empowerment

Collaboration &

Source: Trauma-Transformed

#### Understand the effects of stress and trauma

- ✓ Train all staff on the effects of stress & trauma including self care
- ✓ Assess current practices and policies
- ✓ Shift from "What is wrong?" to "What is happening?"
- ✓ Other questions to ask:
  - ✓ What is happening here?
  - ✓ What is the underlying need?
  - ✓ How can we best meet this need?

# **Ensure cultural humility** and responsiveness



- ✓ Self-reflection of cultural biases
- ✓ Respect culture and diversity within the community
- ✓ Recognize power imbalances
- ✓ Avoid judgment, shame, and blame



#### **Establish safe and stable environments**

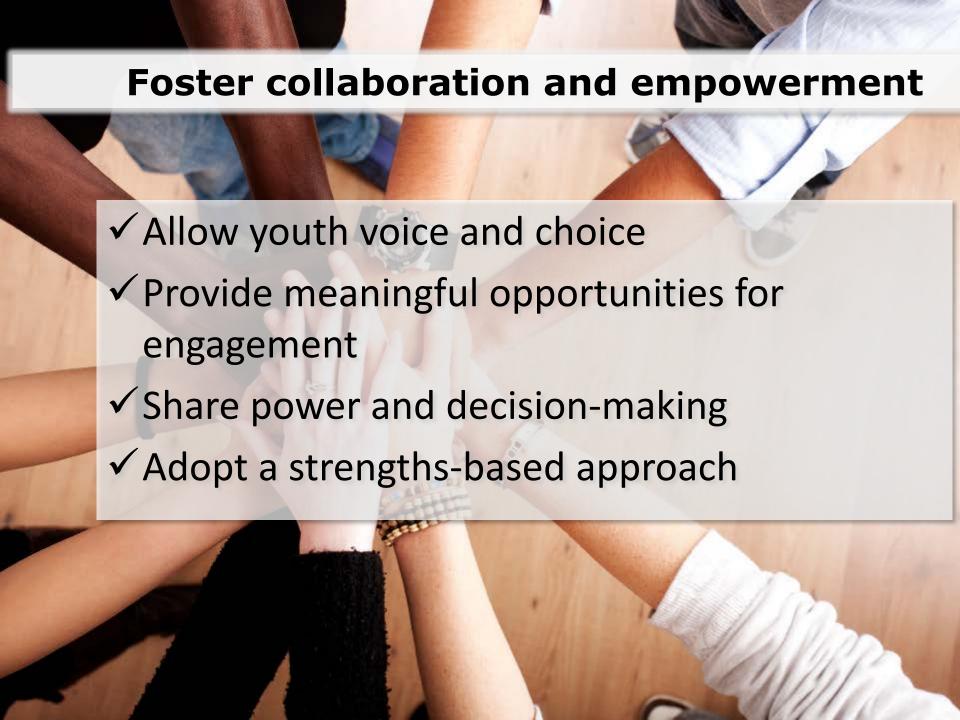
- ✓ Maintain a warm, calm presence
- ✓ Attune to students' needs
- ✓ Physical environment is warm and inviting
- ✓ Set and adhere to clear group expectations
- ✓ Refer to group expectations frequently
- ✓ Be prepared and organized
- ✓ Establish seating arrangements
- ✓ Plan for potential triggers

#### Establish safe and stable environments

- ✓ Identify and respond to potential triggers
- ✓ Use de-escalation strategies
  - Notice signs of distress
  - Connect with the young person
  - Re-direct behavior with reasonable choices/alternatives
  - After youth is calm, discuss if needed
- ✓ Integrate calming exercises
- ✓ Establish calm zones or safe places
- ✓ Use restorative or positive discipline practices

# Connect youth to compassionate and dependable relationships

- ✓ Express genuine and consistent concern and support
- ✓ Manage stress so that you can be attuned to youth
- ✓ Provide trauma trainings for foster parents and other staff who interact with youth
- ✓ Know and refer youth to community resources
- ✓ Make sure all youth are connected to a caring adult



#### Promote resilience and recovery



- ✓ Develop an attitude of resilience
- ✓ Connect young people to appropriate care and supports
- ✓ Maintain high expectations
- ✓ Enhance life skills (e.g., self-regulation, problem-solving)

Resilience & Recovery

Understanding
Stress &
Trauma





Collaboration & Empowerment

Compassionate & Dependable Relationships Cultural
Humility &
Responsiveness

Safety & Stability

Source: Trauma-Transformed

LESSONS



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A PROJECT OF THE OKLAHOMA INSTITUTE FOR CHILD ADVOCACY



# PTC Research Study

Test the efficacy of the *Power Through Choices (PTC)* curriculum in reducing the incidence of unprotected sex, STIs and teen pregnancy among youth, ages 13 to 18, living in out-of-home placements.



Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

Planned Parenthood of Maryland



Kern County Superintendent of Schools (CA)

# 1,038 youth study participants

Ages 13 to 18

Living in Child Welfare (foster care) or Juvenile Justice group homes



Establish a positive environment

Provide consistency

**Authentic adults** 

Preparation for anticipated and unanticipated events



# Case Example

Prepare for the unexpected

Provide permission to opt-out

Arrange for support services in advance



Offer a range of participation options

Accept that you may never understand the "why?"

# Any Questions

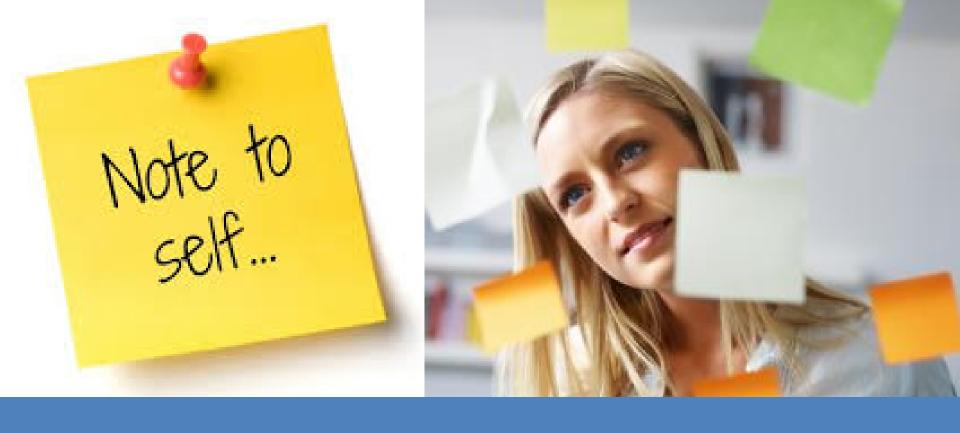






## Resources

- Organizational Assessments
  - Trauma-Informed Organizational Toolkit
  - Trauma Sensitive School Checklist
- Toolkits
  - A Trauma-Informed Approach for Adolescent Sexual Health
  - The Heart of Learning and Teaching: Compassion, Resiliency, and Academic Success
  - Helping Traumatized Students Learn: Creating and Advocating for Trauma Sensitive Schools
  - Trauma-Informed Child Serving Systems
- Training Models
  - The Sanctuary Model by Dr. Sandra L. Bloom



One important point from today's Webinar that I want to remember is...

# Let's Hear from You!

 Please complete the following evaluation related to your training needs and interests.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BKML3PF

 If you attended the Webinar with other team members, please share the link and complete the evaluation separately.