



Trauma-Responsive Care for Infants and Toddlers in Child Care

Participant Activity Packet for Session 6: Leading the Way to Trauma-Responsive Care

Suggested use: This activity packet can be used to take notes on how this information relates to your work as a leader in an early childhood setting serving infants and toddlers. You can also use it to engage in the activities during this session.

Training Notes



Session 6: Activities, Reflections, and Planning for Change

Slide 2. Welcome

- ◆ When I took on a leadership role in an early childhood program, I didn't know I would learn ...

- ◆ The encouragement I would give to someone new in a leadership role in an early childhood setting would be...

Slide 6. Our Learning Environment

- ◆ Think about how you learn best.

- ◆ What support would you like from others during this session?

- ◆ List some of the shared learning agreements decided on.

Slide 8. Mindfulness Activity

- ◆ Reflect on the mindfulness activity.

- ◆ What do you want to remember from this experience?



Slide 15. Protective Factors

- ◆ When you think about how you made it through a challenging experience, what was it that helped you overcome hardship?
- ◆ What in your life has helped you come out “okay” or maybe even stronger on the other side of adversity?
- ◆ When you have faced tough obstacles and challenges and prevailed over these circumstances, what would you say is the reason you were able to overcome adversity?

Slide 21. What Is Trauma-Responsive Care?

- ◆ After reflecting on the definition of trauma-responsive care, what does it mean to you to provide a trauma-responsive child care program?
- ◆ What does trauma-responsive care mean for the infants, toddlers, and their families you serve in your program?
- ◆ What concerns or areas of confidence do you have in leading trauma-responsive care efforts?

Slide 22. Relationships Are Key

- ◆ What are you most proud of regarding how you create and value relationships as a program leader?



Slide 25. Question

- ◆ What does leadership mean to you?

Slide 26. Video: *Leader Versus Manager*

- ◆ In the video, Simon explains, “True leadership starts with distinguishing between being 'in charge' versus taking care of those 'in our charge'” (Sinek, 2019).
 - What does this mean to you?

- ◆ What was your personal story of becoming an early childhood leader? (For example, how did you become a leader? What was your journey like?)

- ◆ What are your biggest joys of being an early childhood leader?

- ◆ What are your biggest challenges of being an early childhood leader?

Source: Sinek, S. (2019). *Leader versus manager*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSUJwmPQEyg>



Slide 29. *The Whole Leadership Framework*

- ◆ What are the essentials in your life?

Slide 30. *Whole Leadership – Administrative Leadership*

- ◆ Write down words you think of when asked what essential leadership qualities and skills are for early childhood leaders.

Slide 31. *Whole Leadership – Administrative Leadership*

- ◆ Which areas of administrative leadership do you spent the most time on each day as an early childhood leader?

- ◆ Which aspects of administrative leadership are strengths for you?

- ◆ What aspects would you identify as challenges?



Slide 32. *Whole Leadership* – Pedagogical Leadership

- ◆ How do you practice instructional leadership and promote family engagement in your program?

- ◆ After hearing from other participants, what strategies do you have in common?

- ◆ What new strategies were brought to light from your conversations with other participants?

Slide 33. Leadership Self-Reflection and Assessment

- ◆ Draw a picture of your “leadership pizza.”



Slide 35. Key to the Path of Healing

- ◆ Complete the following two sentences:
 - To me, when I hear the word *healing*, I think of ...

 - When I think about what healing means to me and the opportunity children have to heal while participating in my child care program, it makes me feel _____, and think _____, and hope _____, and want to _____.

Slide 37. Safety

- ◆ What are some of the strategies and practices in my program that support emotional safety?

- ◆ What are things I want to try to do when I return to foster emotional safety?

Slide 38. Trustworthiness and Transparency

- ◆ What ideas would you add?

- ◆ What are your favorite ways to build trustworthiness and transparency in your program?



Slide 39. Peer Support

- ◆ What ideas would you add?

- ◆ What are your favorite ways to ensure there is peer support in your program?

Slide 40. Collaboration and Mutuality

- ◆ What ideas would you add?

- ◆ What are your favorite ways to support collaboration and mutuality in your program?

- ◆ What community agencies do you partner with to support children and families in your program?

Slide 41. Empowerment, Voice, and Choice

- ◆ What ideas would you add?

- ◆ What are your favorite ways to empower and honor voice and choice in your program?



Slide 45. Video

- ◆ What stood out to you from this clip?

- ◆ What do you think about writing a vision statement after watching this video?

- ◆ Next, take some time to complete **Handout 6.8. [Developing a Personal Vision Statement.](#)**
- ◆ After completing this, reflect on the following:
 - What was this experience like for you?

 - What surprised you about your statement?

 - What stood out to you as something that was affirmed from what you know about yourself?

 - What other thoughts do you have?

Developing a Personal Vision Statement

What are the ten things you most enjoy doing? Be honest. These are ten things without which your weeks, months, and years would feel incomplete.

1. _____ 6. _____
 2. _____ 7. _____
 3. _____ 8. _____
 4. _____ 9. _____
 5. _____ 10. _____

What three things must you do every single day to feel fulfilled?

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

What are your five or six most important values?

Value Examples: Accomplishment, Accountability, Learning, Ambition, Challenge, Collaboration, Competence, Change, Creativity, Dedication, Dependability, Dignity, Diversity, Efficiency, Equality, Engagement, Empowerment, Quality, Excellence, Flexibility, Honesty, Improvement, Independence, Integrity, Innovation, Integrity, Loyalty, Optimism, Persistence, Quality, Respect, Responsibility, Security, Service, Sincerity, Tenacity, Wisdom.

1. _____ 4. _____
 2. _____ 5. _____
 3. _____ 6. _____

Your life has six important dimensions, all of which deserve some attention in your personal vision statement. Write one important goal for each category:

Education/Work/Life _____
 Family/Home _____
 Health/Physical _____
 Social/Cultural _____
 Spiritual/Religious _____

Slide 46. Program Vision Statement

- ◆ Take a few minutes and draft a one- or two-sentence statement—a “trauma-responsive child care vision statement.”

- ◆ Next reflect on the following:
 - What was this like for you?



- How did it compare to writing your personal vision statement? (Was it easier? Was it harder?)

- How do you think you might use your statement moving forward?

Slide 47. Supporting Infant/Toddler Caregivers

- ◆ Finish the following sentences:
 - One thing I can do to support infant/toddler caregivers in coping with trauma and stress is ...

 - One thing I can do to support infant/toddler caregivers in providing trauma-responsive care is ...

Slide 48. Effective Leadership Skills

- ◆ What is one thing I can do to support my leadership skills?

- ◆ Complete the following in relation to your answer above:
 - The resources I have are ...

 - The resources I need are ...

 - I feel most confident about ...

 - The steps I will take are ...



Slide 49. Connecting to Resources and Supports

- ◆ What is one thing I can do to connect to resources in my community to best offer trauma-responsive programming?

- ◆ The resources I have are ...

- ◆ The resources I need are ...

- ◆ I feel most confident about ...

- ◆ The steps I will take are ...

Slide 50. Leadership Wellness

- ◆ What does wellness look like to you?

- ◆ What does it sound like?

- ◆ What does it feel like?



- ◆ Take some time and think about what you need moving forward for your wellness. With those images in mind, complete the following phrases:
 - To support my leadership wellness, I will ...

 - The resources I have are ...

 - The resources I need are ...

 - I feel most confident about ...

 - The steps I will take are ...

Slide 51. Putting the Pieces Together

- ◆ What are the strategies you are most excited about trying when you return to cultivate the Six Key Principles for Leading Trauma-Responsive Care in Child Care Programs? List the strategies below:
 - Build safety for children, caregivers, and families

 - Foster trustworthiness and transparency

 - Create peer support

 - Model collaboration and mutuality

 - Cultivate empowerment, voice, and choice



- Prioritize equity and culturally responsive practices

- ◆ Which area do you feel most confident about?

- ◆ Which area do you think will be the biggest opportunity to strengthen your program in a trauma-responsive way?

Slide 52. Video

- ◆ What are your reflections from the video?

- ◆ What did you hear that you want to remember?

Slide 54. Major Take-Home Messages

- ◆ What are your major take-home messages from today?



- ◆ Handout 6.9. [The Six Dimensions of Wellness Model](#)
- ◆ Handout 6.10. [Getting Started with Mindfulness: A Toolkit for Early Childhood Organizations](#)
- ◆ Handout 6.11. [Services for Families of Infants and Toddlers Experiencing Trauma](#)



Trauma-Responsive Care for Infants and Toddlers in Child Care: Training Series Terms and Definitions

The following information is intended to help infant/toddler caregivers strengthen their understanding of terms and definitions discussed in the *Trauma-Responsive Care for Infants and Toddlers in Child Care Series*. The terms and definitions listed offer information from a variety of sources.

Trauma Terms and Definitions

Trauma Type	Definition and Description
Acute Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “Results from exposure to a single overwhelming event” (Crisis Prevention Institute [CPI], 2020, p. 4). ◆ “These events undermine a child’s sense of physical and/or emotional safety” (Sorrels, 2015, p. 13).
Complex Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “Results from extended exposure to traumatizing situations” (CPI, 2020, p. 4). ◆ “Complex trauma describes both children’s exposure to multiple traumatic events—often of an invasive, interpersonal nature—and the wide-ranging, long-term effects of this exposure. These events are severe and pervasive, such as abuse or profound neglect. They usually occur early in life and can disrupt many aspects of the child’s development and the formation of a sense of self.” (National Child Traumatic Stress Network [NCTSN], n.d.-a, para. 1)
Early Childhood Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “The experience of an event by a child that is emotionally painful or distressful, which often results in lasting mental and physical effects” (National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.). ◆ Trauma is “an exceptional experience in which powerful and dangerous stimuli overwhelm the child’s capacity to regulate emotions” (Early Trauma Treatment Network, n.d.).
Historical Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “Historical trauma is multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural, racial or ethnic group” (Administration for Children and Families, n.d., para. 1).



Trauma Type	Definition and Description
<p>Intergenerational Trauma</p>	<p>“ ... a phenomenon in which the descendants of a person who has experienced a terrifying event show adverse emotional and behavioral reactions to the event that are like those of the person himself or herself. These reactions vary by generation but often include shame, increased anxiety and guilt, a heightened sense of vulnerability and helplessness, low self-esteem, depression, suicidality, substance abuse, dissociation, hypervigilance, intrusive thoughts, difficulty with relationships and attachment to others, difficulty in regulating aggression, and extreme reactivity to stress. The exact mechanisms of the phenomenon remain unknown but are believed to involve effects on relationship skills, personal behavior, and attitudes and beliefs that affect subsequent generations.” (American Psychological Association, n.d.)</p>
<p>Racial Trauma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “Traumatic events that occur as a result of witnessing or experiencing racism, discrimination, or structural prejudice (also known as institutional racism) can have a profound impact on the mental health of individuals exposed to these events. Racial trauma (also known as race-based traumatic stress) refers to the stressful impact or emotional pain of one’s experience with racism and discrimination.” (Carter, 2007, p.15)
<p>Secondary or Vicarious Trauma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “ ... refers to the behavioral and emotional experience of those people who care for, or are involved with, those who have been directly traumatized. Those who work with traumatized people may experience intrusive thoughts, nightmares, feeling withdrawn and isolated, feel depressed, have difficulty concentrating, and feel helpless. For this reason, those who work with children and families impacted by trauma need an ongoing support system to deal with the intensity of their reactions in their relationship with the victim, or perpetrator.” (Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, n.d.) ◆ “ ... the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another. Its symptoms mimic those of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).” (NCTSN, 2011, p. 2)
<p>Trauma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration describes individual trauma as resulting from “an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being” (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, n.d., para. 2). ◆ Trauma is “the unique individual experience of an event or enduring conditions in which the individual’s ability to integrate his or her emotional experience is overwhelmed and the individual experiences (either objectively or subjectively) a threat to his or her life, bodily integrity, or that of a caregiver or family” (Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, n.d.; Saakvitne et al., 2000). ◆ “Witnessing or experiencing an event that poses a real or perceived threat” (Harden, 2015, p. 1).



Additional Trauma-Related Terms

Trauma-Related Term	Definition and Description
Adverse Childhood Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being. These experiences range from physical, emotional, or sexual abuse to parental divorce or the incarceration of a parent or guardian.” (Sacks et al., 2014, para. 1).
Burnout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “ ... a special type of work-related stress—a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity” (NCH Healthcare Systems, 2020, para. 1). ◆ “ ... The experience of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion connected with long exposure to emotionally demanding situations, such as caring for those who have experienced trauma. Signs of burn-out may include physical symptoms of fatigue, sleep problems, somatic problems; emotional symptoms of irritability, anxiety, depression, guilt, helplessness; behavioral symptoms of anger, aggression, substance abuse; work related symptoms such as decreased effectiveness at work, being late or missing work; or interpersonal problems of trouble communicating, trouble concentrating, avoiding others, or lack of empathy.” (Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, n.d.)
Compassion Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “[A] broadly defined concept that can include emotional, physical, and spiritual distress in those providing care to another” (Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project, n.d., para. 1).
Cortisol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “ ... A steroid hormone produced by the adrenal gland in response to stress; sometimes referred to as the ‘stress hormone’ (Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, n.d.).
Positive Stress Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “ ... is a normal and essential part of healthy development, characterized by brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in hormone levels. Some situations that might trigger a positive stress response are the first day with a new caregiver or receiving an injected immunization.” (Center on the Developing Child, n.d.-a, para. 3)
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “ ... is a disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event. It is natural to feel afraid during and after a traumatic situation. Fear triggers many split-second changes in the body to help defend against danger or to avoid it. This ‘fight-or-flight’ response is a typical reaction meant to protect a person from harm. Nearly everyone will experience a range of reactions after trauma, yet most people recover from initial symptoms naturally. Those who continue to experience problems may be diagnosed with PTSD. People who have PTSD may feel stressed or frightened, even when they are not in danger.” (National Institute of Mental Health, n.d., para. 1–2)



Trauma-Related Term	Definition and Description
<p>Protective Factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “ ... Individual qualities, capacities, coping strategies, or other environmental features [such as] family, school, community and other affiliations that make a positive contribution to an individual’s resilience” (Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, n.d.). ◆ “ ... characteristics, conditions, or events that promote healthy development and minimize the risk or likelihood a person will experience a particular illness or event, or its related negative outcomes” (Bartlett & Steber, 2019, para. 16; Smart, 2017). ◆ “ ... characteristics, people and supports that help a person get through tough times. They are our ‘umbrellas in a rainstorm.’ Protective factors can be built and strengthened over time.” (Devereux Center for Resilient Children, n.d., para. 1)
<p>Resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The Center for the Developing Child defines resilience as the “ability to overcome serious hardship” (Center on the Developing Child, n.d.-b, para. 1). ◆ “Reducing the effects of significant adversity on children’s healthy development is essential to the progress and prosperity of any society. ... Understanding why some children do well despite adverse early experiences is crucial, because it can inform more effective policies and programs that help more children reach their full potential.” (Center on the Developing Child, n.d.-b, para. 1) ◆ “ ... a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (Luthar et al., 2000, p. 1). ◆ “ ... capacity of a system to adapt successfully to challenges that threaten the function, survival, or future development of the system” (Masten, 2014, p. 10).
<p>Risk Factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “ ... A term to describe those individual aspects or circumstances that may be associated with potentially negative effects on healthy growth, development, and adaptation or resilience, such as premature birth, health problems, poverty, etc.” (Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, n.d.). ◆ “Circumstances, characteristics, conditions, events, or traits at the individual, family, community, or cultural level that may increase the likelihood a person will experience adversity” (Bartlett & Steber, 2019, para. 14; Smart, 2017).
<p>Tolerable Stress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “Serious, temporary stress response, buffered by supportive relationships” (Center on the Developing Child, n.d.-a, para. 3.).
<p>Tolerable Stress Response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “ ... activates the body’s alert systems to a greater degree as a result of more severe, longer-lasting difficulties, such as the loss of a loved one, a natural disaster, or a frightening injury. If the activation is time-limited and buffered by relationships with adults who help the child adapt, the brain and other organs recover from what might otherwise be damaging effects.” (Center on the Developing Child, n.d.-a, para. 3.)
<p>Toxic Stress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships” (Center for the Developing Child, n.d.-a, para. 3).



Trauma-Related Term	Definition and Description
<p>Toxic Stress Response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “... can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity—such as physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship—without adequate adult support. This kind of prolonged activation of the stress response systems can disrupt the development of brain architecture and other organ systems and increase the risk for stress-related disease and cognitive impairment, well into the adult years.” (Center on the Developing Child, n.d.-a, para. 3)
<p>Trauma-Informed Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “... means that caregivers and teachers understand how trauma changes the brain and affects relationships, self-regulation, sensory processing, learning, and behavior. Informed adults recognize the behavioral signs of trauma and know how to create environments that provide a sense of emotional safety and healing.” (Sorrels, 2015, p. 9) ◆ “A framework of thinking and interventions that are directed by a thorough understanding of the profound neurological, biological, psychological, and social effects trauma has on an individual—recognizing that person’s constant interdependent needs for safety, connections, and ways to manage emotions/impulses” (CPI, 2020, p. 3).
<p>Trauma-Responsive Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “... looking at every aspect of an organization’s programming, environment, language, and values and involving all staff in better serving children who have experienced trauma” (Covington & Bloom, 2018, para. 1). ◆ Providing trauma-responsive care means moving beyond just being informed and offering the most effective and compassionate care to those effected by trauma. ◆ A trauma-responsive approach recognizes and responds to the impact of traumatic stress on children, caregivers, and service providers. It does so by increasing trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills and incorporating this into programs’ policies and practices. This approach also involves collaboration that helps maximize physical and psychological safety and supports the ability of children and families to thrive.
<p>Trauma-Responsive System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The National Child Traumatic Stress Network defines trauma-informed child and family service systems as those “in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system, including children, caregivers, staff, and service providers.” (NCTSN, n.d.-b) ◆ “Programs and agencies within such a system infuse and sustain trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their organizational cultures, practices, and policies” (NCTSN, n.d.-b) ◆ “They act in collaboration with all those who are involved with the child, using the best available science, to maximize physical and psychological safety, facilitate the recovery or adjustment of the child and family, and support their ability to thrive” (NCTSN, n.d.-b)



Trauma-Related Term	Definition and Description
Triggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ “Signals that act as signs of possible danger, based on historical traumatic experiences and which lead to a set of emotional, physiological, and behavioral responses that arise in the service of survival and safety (e.g., sights, sounds, smells, touch). Triggers are all about one’s perceptions experienced as reality. The mind/body connection sets in motion a fight, flight, or freeze response. A triggered individual experiences fear, panic, upset, and agitation.” (CPI, 2020, p. 3) ◆ “... An experience that, for an individual, represents a troubling reminder of a traumatic event. The trigger need not be frightening or traumatic, but can prompt emotional or physical symptoms associated with the original trauma. The trigger can take many forms, such as a person, place, noise, image, smell, taste, scene, body sensation, etc. Also known as trauma reminders.” (Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, n.d.)

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