

Trauma Resilience Principles for Working with African Canadian youth

An Outline for Action

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Principles	Why It's Important?	Some Options
Positive Relationships	Black youth who have experienced trauma may have difficulty with forming healthy relationships Consistent, supportive adults can support healing and growth	Staff are consistent, reliable, empathetic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities to recognize youth's strengths ▪ Building trusting relationships with family
Understanding Trauma and its impact on marginalized youth	Trauma related to anti-Black racism, homophobia and gender violence is widespread and can influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of youth who are impacted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding trauma and its connection to oppressive practices and how it affects individuals and communities is the first step to putting knowledge into action 	Staff and management attend on-line or in person trainings on ABR and anti oppression, trauma and community engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trained staff and management share information and analysis on racist and oppressive trauma with other staff, management, youth and communities ▪ • Considering role of trauma in individual interactions
Culture of Self Care	Working with traumatized youth can cause secondary or vicarious trauma for providers • Working with traumatized youth can remind us of our own trauma • Vicarious trauma harms staff and can limit effectiveness of programming • Culture of self care in the work place helps to minimize secondary trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seeking out supervision support when possible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice mindfulness (checking in with own feelings, deep breathing, taking a break) ▪ •Staff have self-care plans ▪ Promote positive diet, healthy life style choices for youth Use visualization techniques
Critical Thinking	Working with Black youth to understand the various social forces that impact on them- negative and positive Support their analysis of the way trauma can affect them individually- physically and emotionally	Pose provocative questions Discuss current events Explore feelings and thoughts Centre strength and assets Remind of critical achievement Promote critical self reflection Stay solution-focused Be honest

<p>Grounding in Culture</p>	<p>Healing and healthy development is rooted in cultural identity, it is important to recognize resilience and foster cultural pride and community connectedness • Programs are more effective when providers are knowledgeable of participants cultural background (beliefs, history, language, social customs) and their own assumptions/biases</p>	<p>Activities that affirm positive cultural identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff education on participant cultural background and culturally-appropriate resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials in multiple languages ▪ Use community based values ▪ Connect to history and culturally affirming backgrounds and references ▪ Use stories, proverbs, idioms, expressions that are culturally grounded ▪ Access community expertise ▪ Reaffirm through visual images in your space
<p>Promoting Safety</p>	<p>Traumatized youth often have experienced chaos and unpredictability. • They may expect bad things will happen to them and that others cannot be trusted • Trauma causes the brain to be overly sensitive to signals of danger. Reminders of trauma trigger automatic “survival brain” reactions. • Creating safety—routines, rituals, consistency, predictability, minimizing trauma reminders--allows youth to relax and shift their energy from survival to healthy learning/development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having predictable, structured activities ▪ Having secure entries, exits and restrooms ▪ Staff interactions are consistent, have clear expectations and boundaries ▪ Keep your word ▪ Follow through ▪ Be mindful of power, gender and racial dynamics at play
<p>Youth agency- Voice and Choice</p>	<p>Trauma often involves a loss of control and feelings of helplessness. •Youth may believe they are powerless or may constantly challenge limits and authority • Creating a space for youth to be heard and have meaningful choice helps them regain a sense of control and feel empowered.</p>	<p>Build a respectful and collaborative relationship, not one of paternalism or “helping” poor youth Consistently demonstrate value for youth’s lived experience, intelligence and knowledge</p>

<p>Access to Resources</p>	<p>Young people will have multiple, interrelated needs (physical, emotional, spiritual) that are beyond the resources of one organization or program • Staff can work together with families and service providers to suggest options and support ongoing, “wrap-around” services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offering caregivers a “menu” of options so they can determine what works best for them ▪ Building relationships with service providers and making “warm referrals” ▪ Culturally appropriate food, cultural activities ▪ Promote creativity and innovative activities
<p>Culturally safe and appropriate clinical support to manage triggering and trauma management</p>	<p>Focused therapy interventions and ongoing support that are culturally grounded and appropriate can be transformative for young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief Therapy ▪ DBT ▪ African centred CBT ▪ Drum, dance therapy ▪ Narrative/Storytelling ▪ Video voice therapy
<p>Social/ Emotional learning and Positive identity development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traumatized youth may have a hard time identifying how they feel and coping with their feelings in a positive way ▪ They may have difficulty forming healthy relationships (not trusting or too trusting) Adults can help youth to learn to identify their feelings and find healthier ways to manage them ▪ They can also help them understand social cues, set healthy boundaries, and communicate more effectively Recognizes youth’s strengths and assets with the understanding that trauma can prevent them from recognizing their own strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help youth learn to name how they’re feeling ▪ Help them use healthy coping skills for managing strong emotions ▪ Help youth learn healthy ways to resolve conflict ▪ Model appropriate boundaries ▪ • Providing opportunities for leadership • Celebrating strengths and accomplishments