

..... **PRINCIPLES OF**

TRAUMA INFORMED *care*

..... **AND**

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

BREVARD
YOUTH RIVE™

PROTECTIVE & PROMOTIVE FACTORS FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

Center
for the
Study
of
Social
Policy

*Ideas
into
Action*



**Family Partnerships
of Central Florida**

BREVARD | ORANGE | OSCEOLA | SEMINOLE

In partnership with the Center for the Study of Social Policy



TRAUMA INFORMED CARE MISSION

It is the mission of Family Partnerships of Central Florida, through its Trauma Informed Care - Positive Youth Development initiative, Brevard Youth Thrive, to transform the local system of care into a trauma informed community of practice. It is our belief that positive youth development is the outcome of a trauma informed system of care.

TRAUMA INFORMED CARE VISION

Our vision is an approach to care that lessens the impact of trauma upon children and teens upon entry and while in care. We will help both those in care, and those that support them, respond to trauma in a proactive manner and develop resilience to difficult or challenging situations. Establishing meaningful, positive and lasting connections is imperative to the health and wellbeing of the children, youth and young adults entrusted to our care. We will impart hope and instill the motivation needed to succeed and achieve one's dreams, goals and ambitions.

Developing resilience, imparting hope, promoting success!

PURPOSE

Family Partnerships is committed to providing training, consultation, technical assistance and guidance in working with children and families who have experienced trauma. We will soon launch a series of training opportunities across the community in order to build a better understanding of the application and integration of trauma informed care principles. It's our belief that positive youth development is the outcome of trauma informed care (TIC) principles. To improve the quality of life for youth who are in or are aging out of foster care, the local child welfare system of care and its partners need to develop an understanding of the empirical evidence supporting TIC and the proven strategies to mitigate risk and prevent re-traumatization.

WHAT IS A TRAUMA INFORMED CARE SYSTEM?

A trauma informed system of care refers to how a program, agency, organization or community thinks about and responds to those who have experienced or may be at risk for experiencing trauma; it refers to a change in the organizational culture. In this approach, all members of the organization develop a thorough understanding of the prevalence and impact of trauma, the role that trauma plays, and the complex and varied paths in which people recover and heal from trauma. A trauma informed approach is designed to avoid re-traumatizing those who seek assistance, focus on “safety first,” commit to “do no harm” and facilitate participation and meaningful involvement of consumers, families, and trauma survivors in the planning of services and programs. It also requires, to the extent possible, closely knit collaborative relationships with other public sector service systems (Harris and Fallot, 2001).

The definition of a trauma informed approach incorporates three key elements:

- 1) Realizing the prevalence of trauma;
- 2) Recognizing how trauma affects all individuals involved with the program, organization or system, including its own workforce; and
- 3) Responding by putting this knowledge into practice

A program, organization or system that is trauma informed realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for healing. It also recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in staff, clients and others involved with the system and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices and settings.

 **Trauma informed care is an evidenced-based approach and a paradigm shift from a system that asks, “What’s wrong with you?” to one that asks, “What has happened to you?”**

A trauma informed system also understands the impact working with victims of trauma has on responders and service providers.

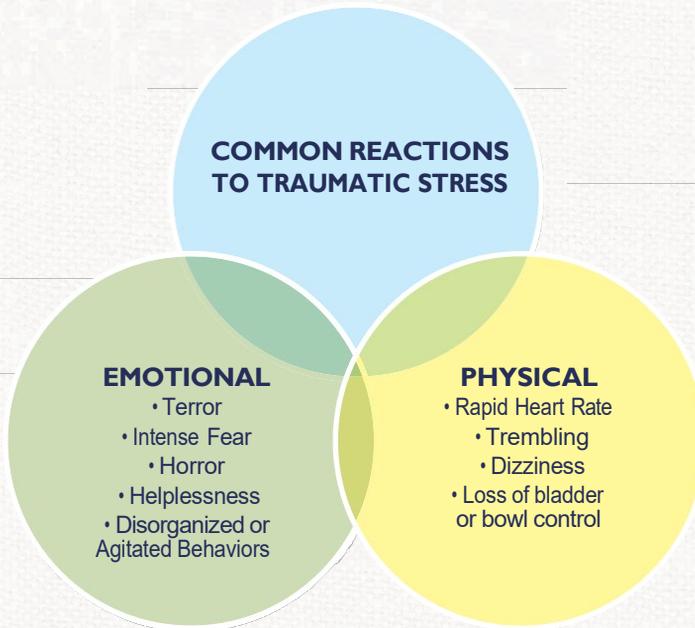
No one organization can function alone. In a trauma informed community of practice all must coordinate, educate and provide direction with others so they too can view and operate through a trauma informed lens. Partnerships with all systems is essential for success. Teaming with law enforcement, mental health providers, educators, community leaders, courts, attorneys and all other members of the youth’s team will assure a greater likelihood of successful outcomes.

DEFINITION OF TRAUMA AND CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS

Child traumatic stress refers to the physical and emotional responses of a child to events that threaten the life or physical integrity of the child or someone critically important to the child (e.g., a parent or sibling). Exposure to a single traumatic event that is limited in time (e.g., an auto accident, a gang shooting, or a natural disaster) is called an **acute trauma**.

Chronic trauma refers to repeated assaults on the child's body and mind (e.g., chronic sexual or physical abuse, exposure to ongoing domestic violence, emotional or physical neglect).

Complex trauma is a term used by some trauma experts to describe both exposure to chronic trauma, often inflicted by parents or others who are supposed to care for and protect the child, and their mediate and long-term impact of such exposure on the child (Cook et al., 2005).



POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

An approach that engages youth with their communities, schools and organizations in a manner that is productive and constructive, recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youth's strengths. It promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships and furnishing support needed for success. All youth have the capacity for positive growth and development.

Key Environmental Factors and Experiences that Promote Positive Youth Development:

- ✓ Physical and Psychological Safety
- ✓ Appropriate Structure
- ✓ Supportive Relationships
- ✓ Opportunities to Belong
- ✓ Positive Social Norms
- ✓ Opportunities to Make a Difference
- ✓ Opportunities for Skill Development
- ✓ Integration of Family, School and Community Efforts

All youth are developing; all youth have strengths; all youth have needs; all youth can contribute to their communities; and all youth are valued.

Confident, connected, civic-minded youth are not at all rare. The process of engaging youth in a manner that is positive and worthwhile is still an emergent concept. Family Partnerships is committed to supporting and encouraging youth to take ownership of their future, helping them to build character and leadership skills as well engaging in their community.



RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING A TRAUMA INFORMED SYSTEM

Provide forums for training all child welfare staff on types of trauma, reactions to traumatic events and short and long-term impact of trauma at the most basic level since a child's reactions to a traumatic event are varied and complex. This is beneficial in helping caseworkers and supervisors understand that any child in the child welfare system has been affected by trauma.

Consider the full trauma history of the child and family since this is a critical step in developing effective, tailored interventions unique to each child and family. Although many child welfare agencies focus on the investigation of one allegation of abuse; there are a number of ways in which to gather full trauma information.

Recommend and/or provide interventions that comprehensively address the child's needs beyond the initial abuse investigation. Services that are tailored to meet the specific needs of the child and his/her family will be more effective and therefore more likely to help achieve positive outcomes. Social workers, through their active involvement and support, can play a critical role in mitigating the impact of trauma.

Attempt to minimize caregiver-child separations whenever safe and possible and consider alternate strategies for monitoring child safety.

Minimize separation-related distress by developing systems that allow for liberal visitation when the caregiver is not thought to present an active danger to the child.

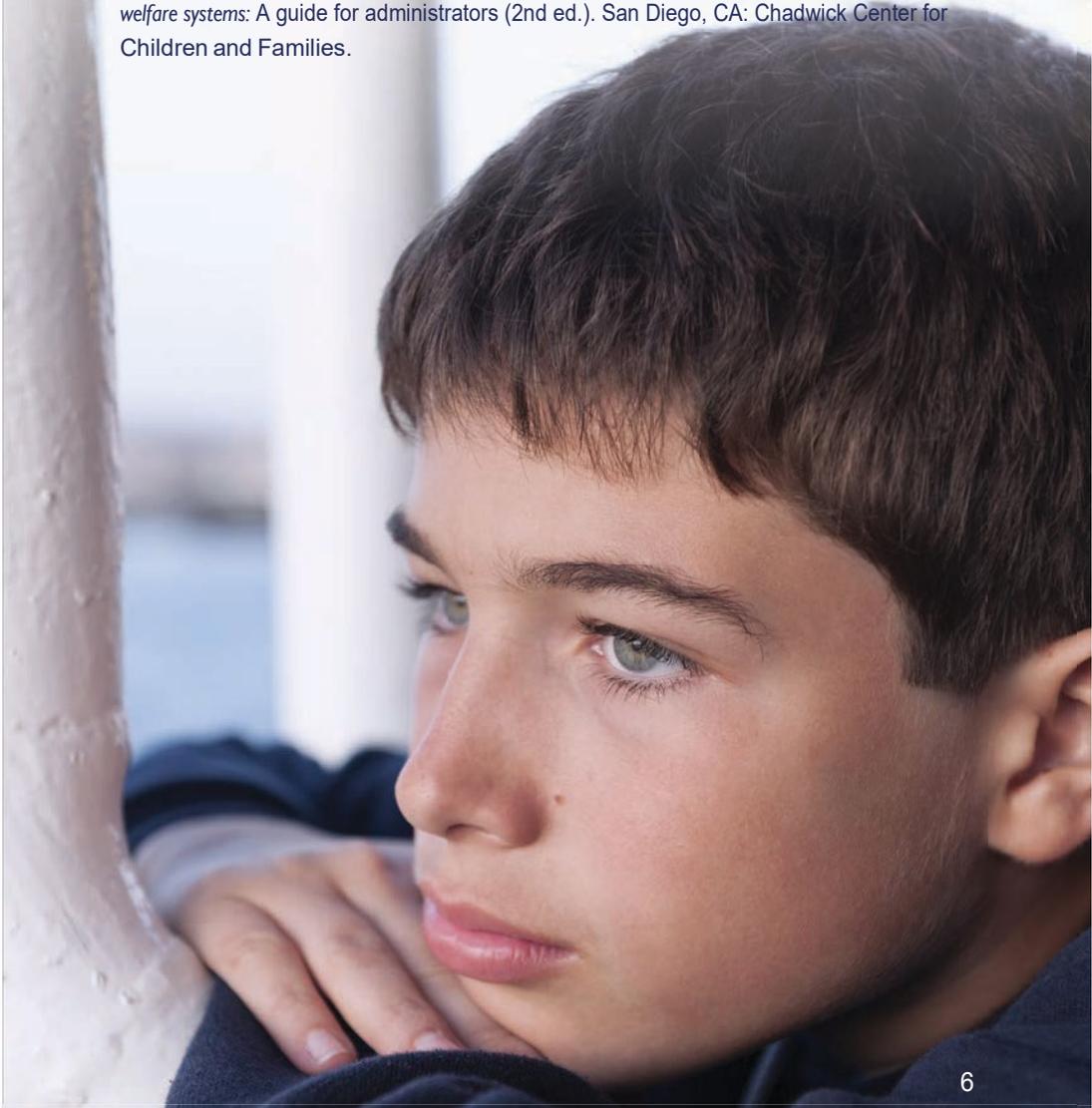
Integrate trauma informed child welfare into the fabric of existing child welfare practice approaches to avoid the *initiative fatigue* that workers may begin to experience due to child welfare agencies often integrating new and innovative initiatives into their daily practice. Many of the common initiatives associated with good child welfare practice (such as Wraparound Family Team Conferences) are consistent with a trauma informed framework. Dialogues and discussions related to how trauma intersects with current initiatives can be helpful in identifying existing practices that could be considered to be trauma informed and adopting new practices that are consistent with the agency's mission and values.

Identify staff who can serve as *champions* within the System of Care to provide the *voice of trauma* throughout supervision, family meetings and group meetings. For example, when a caseworker presents a case during supervision or during a team meeting, it is helpful to have one individual designated to provide the trauma perspective and invite the rest of the team to view the case through a trauma lens.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A TRAUMA INFORMED SYSTEM



Chadwick Trauma Informed Systems Project. (2013). *Creating trauma informed child welfare systems: A guide for administrators* (2nd ed.). San Diego, CA: Chadwick Center for Children and Families.



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BREVARD YOUTH THRIVE PHASES OF INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Phase I: Year 1: 2013

- ✓ Establish a cross-system committee of champions to lead, guide and direct the initiative
- ✓ Conduct a community scan and assessment
- ✓ Engage key community leaders
- ✓ Secure technical assistance and consultation from national leadership and successful former foster youth
- ✓ Identify youth and young adults to serve on a Youth Advisory Board
- ✓ Devise a mission, vision and brand to market the transformation to identified stakeholders and audiences.
- ✓ Convene community-wide summits to introduce the framework and conduct an assessment of need and recommendations. These will feature two large kick-off conversations: the first with youth who are in or who have aged out of foster care and the second with key community leaders and stakeholders. The keynote speakers and facilitators are successful young adults who have experienced trauma and were in the foster care system as children and/or youth.

Phase II: Year 2: 2014

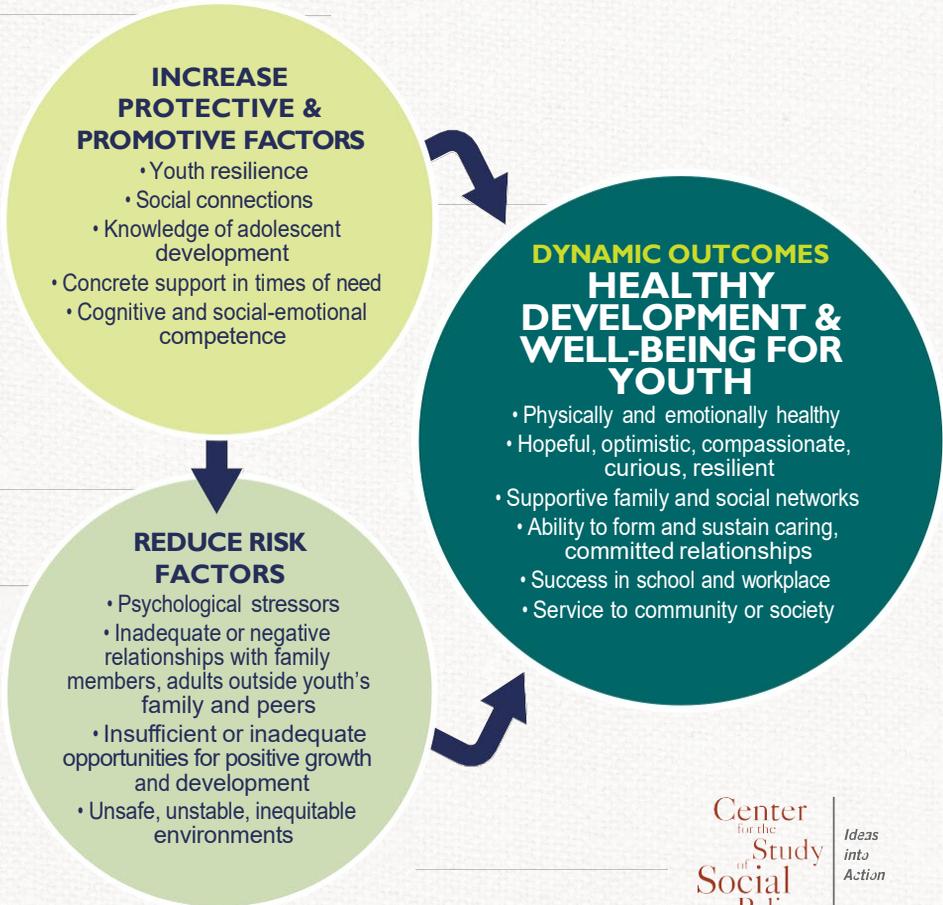
- ✓ Establish and execute an awareness campaign
- ✓ Design and launch a web portal to serve as an information clearinghouse
- ✓ Facilitate “knowledge exchange” opportunities
- ✓ Identify and develop curriculum
- ✓ Launch introductory training sessions across identified sectors
- ✓ Recruit former IL youth to serve on the Board of Directors

Phase III: Year 3: 2015

- ✓ Develop the Brevard Youth Collaborative Initiative
- ✓ Establish annual training itinerary to provide continuous professional development opportunities
- ✓ Increase public engagement through multiple media platforms

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In 2013 the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) selected Family Partnerships as a pilot site for its Youth Thrive Initiative; Brevard is the second pilot site in the nation, following the state of New Jersey. In partnership with the CSSP, Brevard will work with its community organizations to create a trauma informed care system that will lead to, "dynamic outcomes, and healthy development and wellbeing for our youth."

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BREVARD YOUTH THRIVE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

With input from former foster youth, partners, providers and staff, Brevard Youth Thrive has identified two primary, desired outcomes in the first phase of this initiative.

**YOUTH WHO AGE OUT OF CARE WILL BE
PREPARED FOR INDEPENDENCE**

**YOUTH WILL FEEL SUPPORTED, VALUED,
NURTURED AND PROTECTED**



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Brevard C.A.R.E.S.
- Brevard Public Schools
- Center for the Study of Social Policy
- Crosswinds Youth Services
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Early Learning Coalition
- Family Counseling Center
- Guardian Ad Litem
- IMPOWER
- LEAD Brevard
- Life Advancement Group
- State of Florida Department of Children and Families
- The National Center for Innovation & Excellence
- Value Options

RESOURCES AND LINKS

- <http://www.cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/youth-thrive>
- <https://childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/trauma/caseworkers/>
- <http://pacwcbt.pitt.edu/>
- <https://www.childwelfare.gov/management/training/curricula/caseworkers/topical/youth.cfm>
- <http://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/>
- http://www.thenationalcouncil.org/cs/traumainformed_care_a_call_to_arms
- http://nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/CWT3_CompGuide.pdf
- http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/CWT3_TrainersGuide.pdf
- <http://www.nctsn.org>



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