

Ohio McKinney-Vento Community of Practice

Providing Trauma Informed Care to Youth Experiencing
Homelessness

Session 8

11/15/2023

Welcome!

Please say hello in the chat box and share

- Your name & pronouns
- Name of your District
- Your role
- One word description of how you are doing today



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Zoom Logistics



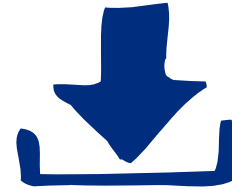
**All participants
can unmute**



**You can share
your camera**



**Questions can be
asked
throughout the
training**



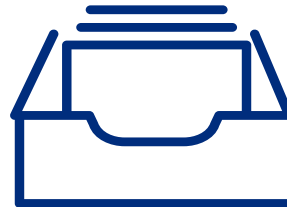
**The powerPoint
will be sent out
after each
training**



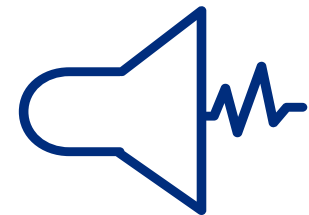
Breakout rooms



**Polls/
quizzes**



**Handouts/
Materials**



**Audio/video
issues**

Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Trauma Among Homeless Youth
- Practical Practices
- Resources
- Q&A
- Closing

COHHIO Course to HOME Team



Amanda Wilson she/her
Youth Housing
Initiative Director



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Initiative Specialist



Evelyn Garon she/her
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Initiative Specialist

Guest Presenters

**Amy Hawthorne. MA, OCPSA
Mental Health Administrator
OMHAS**



Mike DeWine, Governor

Lori Criss, Director, OhioMHAS

Trauma Among Homeless Youth

Serving Our Most Vulnerable Students

Amy Hawthorne, MA, OCPSA
Mental Health Administrator

Cultural and Trauma Brief

- Homeless youth have significant mental health problems, including depression, anxiety disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal ideation, and substance use disorders (Cochran, Stewart, Ginzler & Cauce, 2002).
- Most of these youth experienced potentially traumatic events before they left home, and many of them are retraumatized once they arrive on the street (Stewart, Steiman, Cauce, Cochran, Whitbeck, & Hoyt, 2004).
- These youth struggle to recover from both previous and new traumatic experiences while trying to survive unstable housing and hostile street environments.



Cultural and Trauma Brief

Family Breakdown

Parental substance abuse or mental health problems
Child abuse and neglect
Familial conflict
Family homelessness
Youth rejected by their families due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or lifestyle

System Breakdown

Failure of child welfare
Failure of juvenile justice and/or mental health systems
Failure of foster care system
Youth arrested for status offenses (curfew violations, running away, etc.)



Common Traumatic Events Include:

- Child physical and sexual abuse and neglect
- Witnessing violence at home between parents or caregivers
- Removal from home by child protective services
- Incapacitation of parents due to mental illness, substance misuse, or incarceration
- Witnessing community violence
- Experience violence in their own relationships
- Harassment or violence due to homelessness, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity
- Physical and sexual assault on the street
- Incarceration
- Human Trafficking



Responses to Complex Trauma

Expressions of Trauma

Difficulties sleeping and/or eating
Inability to concentrate or complete everyday tasks
Feelings of inadequacy and guilt
Stomach aches, headaches, and other health complaints

Expressions of Trauma

Acting out or impulsive behaviors
Behaving as if they were younger than they are
Heightened moodiness and irritability
Pushing away caregivers
Impulsive or aggressive behaviors

Expressions of Trauma

Some of those common responses to trauma can look like laziness, apathy, arrogance, or excessive anger. Staff need to be mindful that attitudes and behaviors that look like non-compliance may be responses to trauma.

Practical Strategies

To help youth feel safe, welcome, important and worthy:

- Make the first contact warm, respectful, and non-threatening
- Introduce yourself and describe your role in relation to them
- Allow time to learn about the young person and their needs and wants
- Explain rules and provide structure in a matter-of-fact way and explain why rules are in place
- Explain resources that are available
- Be prepared to repeat information many times
- Be prepared for them to challenge you
- Assess immediate needs



Practical Strategies

Wrong Way:

Hi. What's your name? How old are you? Why are you homeless? Do you have a social worker or are you on probation? Please fill out these forms and return them to me.

What can we say instead?



Homeless Youth Reported that they Wanted Their Mental Health Providers to:

- Be non-judgmental
- Have a good sense of humor
- Empower rather than enable
- Offer choices instead of advice
- Build trust by being honest regarding confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality
- Be patient and not give up on them
- Be aware of their own personal problems
- Consider their behavior in the content of their life experiences including their traumatic life experiences
- Prioritize their immediate needs – youth with unmet primary needs may have difficulty focusing on forming a trusting relationship



Safety & Comfort

Many homeless youth come to school to find respite from being homeless. The more successful we are in helping them feel safe and comfortable the more likely they are to stay in school.

- Safety can mean different things to different people – a safe environment is one where people are treated with respect
- Recognize that many homeless youth are hyper-alert and vigilant – these are survival skills
- Youth can be re-traumatized and reminded by traumatic events by sounds, smells, and interactions.



Calm & Orient

Enlist help from friends

Friends can provide a sense of familiarity and social support. Be aware that some youth are socially isolated and do not have any friends or peers they trust.

Invite youth to move to a different space

Make sure the space is not isolated but respect a young person's privacy and give them a few moments to orient and calm before asking questions. Try taking a walk or going outside if possible.

Share concerns and offer help

Calmly tell the youth your concerns and say that you are here to help. If they don't want help in the moment, say you'll check back later. Remember to follow up and make a commitment to do so.

Remain calm, quiet and present

Naturally, staff can get angry, upset, nervous, or frustrated, but it is important that you stay calm. When a young person is agitated or excited, don't try to engage. Let the person know that you're close by if they need you.

Practical Assistance

Based on information gathered, reflect on the needs the young person has identified and prioritized, and available services. **Homeless youth may have difficulty asking for help** or being clear about what help they want from you. **They may be unaware of the resources available** to them or may feel powerless to take steps toward meeting their needs.



Harm Reduction

- It is imperative to implement social and emotional learning programs to educate homeless youth and all students on mental health
- Once educated with social and emotional skills homeless youth are better equipped to ask for help
- Give homeless youth access to mental health professionals who can teach them how to cope with their trauma
- Offer mental health first-aid training for all staff working with homeless youth



Harm Reduction

Identify

- Offering social emotional education increases environmental support and helps homeless students recognize their feelings and understand their trauma

Increase Access

- Know the available resources and provide warm hand off's
- Increase education for all staff

Next Best Options

- Offer space for rhythmic exercise, mindfulness, and finding support systems
- Create inclusive spaces



Harm Reduction

- All research suggests that prevention is the most effective measure in eradicating trauma, but it is a far more difficult feat. Prevention starts with treating the existing trauma within homeless populations, which helps people rise out of homeless situations, so their children can have better futures without trauma.



Scenario One:

Joe is a 17-year-old who has been in your school for 3 months. Joe and his caregivers have had difficulty bringing his vaccination records and other important documents to the office. Often Joe comes to school in the same clothing as the day before and without his bookbag. You're trying to determine if Joe and his caregivers are experience homelessness – what are your first steps and how can you make your approach trauma-informed.





Scenario Two

Charley's family has experienced homelessness in the past; however, they have recently moved in with extended family. You thought the situation would improve Charley's demeanor and mental health but you're noticing her acting out and being more aggressive with peers while also isolating and becoming quieter. You and Charley have a great relationship and you feel that she trusts you. How might you approach Charley in a trauma-informed way?

Scenario Three

Open dialogue to share experiences we have had with homeless youth.

- Remember confidentiality



Resources:



National Center for Homeless Education - <https://nche.ed.gov/resources/>



The National Child Traumatic Stress Network - <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/psychological-first-aid-pfa-youth-experiencing-homelessness>



Creating, Supporting, and Sustaining Trauma Informed Schools - chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//creating_supporting_sustaining_trauma_informed_schools_a_systems_framework.pdf



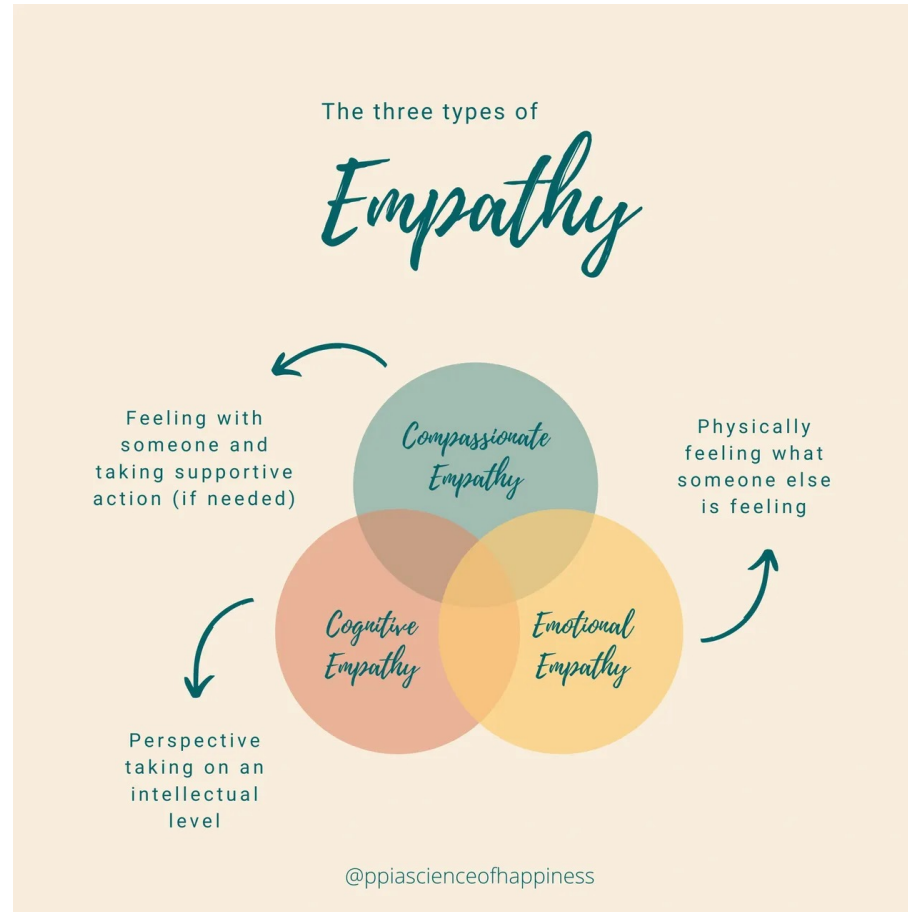
Culture and Trauma Brief: Trauma Among Homeless Youth - <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/dbhis/culture-trauma-brief-trauma-among-homeless-youth>



Youth Who Experience Homelessness - <https://www.nctsn.org/what-child-trauma-populations-risk/youth-who-experience-homelessness>



Take Away



Questions



Join the Mailing List

Sign up to Stay in Touch!

Sign up for the COHIO Course to HOME mailing list and stay up to speed.

* Email

Your **email** here 😊

* First Name

* Last Name

Sign Up



[Sign Up](#)

Feedback

We invite you to provide feedback about todays here:
<https://forms.gle/cdaEBnQPPeNW9UzaA>



Contact Information



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