

WAYS TRAUMA CAN IMPACT THE WAY CHILDREN THINK

Understanding • Supporting • Helping Children Heal

Big Feelings Make Sense

Different Experiences Shape Thinking

Healing Is Possible

Brighter Tomorrows Together

Kindness Changes Lives

Safe Brains Learn and Grow

Every Child Belongs

SAFE
SUPPORTED
VALUED
CAPABLE

A SAFER
BRIGHTER
MORE HOPEFUL
TOMORROW

Small Steps
Brighter
Futures

STRONGER MINDS
KINDER COMMUNITIES
BRIGHTER FUTURES

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Every Child Deserves Safety, Support, and Hope

WHAT IS CHILDHOOD TRAUMA?

Brighter
Futures
Are Possible

Childhood trauma is an experience that overwhelms a child's ability to cope and may have lasting emotional, psychological, or physical effects. Trauma can result from harmful events, ongoing adversity, abuse, neglect, or loss.

Healing
Happens

COMMON TYPES OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA



PHYSICAL ABUSE



NEGLECT



EMOTIONAL ABUSE



SEXUAL ABUSE



**EXTREME PARENTAL
BEHAVIOR**



LOSS OR GRIEF



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



**OTHER TRAUMATIC
EXPERIENCES**

TRAUMA IS NEVER A CHILD'S FAULT

With safety, patient support, trusted adults, and professional help, children can heal and thrive.

Kind
People
Change
Lives

Stronger
Brighter
Kinder
Tomorrow

Healing
Brighter
Futures
Together

Every Child Deserves Safety • Support • Hope

Stronger
Children
Brighter
Tomorrows

CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

CAUSES, EFFECTS & SIGNS

Safe
Supported
Heard
Belonging
Always

Every child deserves
to feel safe, valued
and cared for.

Different experiences.
Real impacts.
Brighter tomorrows are possible.

COMMON CAUSES



ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, as well as physical or emotional neglect.



VIOLENCE

Witnessing or experiencing domestic, community, or school violence.



LOSS OR SEPARATION

The sudden or violent loss of a loved one, or traumatic separation from a parent or caregiver.



DISASTERS AND MEDICAL EVENTS

Natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or severe, life-threatening medical experiences.

Children's
behaviors make sense
in the context of
their experiences.

EFFECTS AND SIGNS

Compassion
today creates
brighter tomorrows.



EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL

Ongoing anxiety, depression, intense anger, emotional numbness, or difficulty regulating emotions.



PHYSICAL

Sleep disturbances, nightmares, unexplained aches, or a heightened fight-or-flight response.



RELATIONAL

Difficulty developing trust, forming healthy relationships, or building secure attachments—sometimes continuing into adulthood.

You
Are Not
Alone

SIGNS ARE SIGNALS THAT A CHILD NEEDS SUPPORT

Brighter
Futures
Together

Respond with calmness, safety, patience, and connection.
A qualified mental-health professional can help assess concerns and guide appropriate care.

Notice • Listen • Believe • Support

KINDER PEOPLE
HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES
BRIGHTER TOMORROWS

Safe
Children
Stronger
Futures

WAYS TRAUMA CAN IMPACT THE WAY CHILDREN THINK

Brighter
Days
Are Possible

Understanding ♥ Compassion ♥ Brighter Tomorrows

DIFFICULTY TRUSTING OTHERS

Children may become cautious or suspicious—even around safe adults.



FEELINGS OF SHAME

They may blame themselves, think poorly of themselves, or experience low self-esteem.



DIFFICULTY DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

A breach of trust can make forming and maintaining relationships feel unsafe.



BEING ON HIGH ALERT

The brain may stay watchful for danger, leaving a child feeling tense or on edge.



DIFFICULTY CONTROLLING EMOTIONS

Unresolved trauma can make stress and strong emotions harder to manage.



NEEDING TO ESCAPE OR SELF-ISOLATE

Some children withdraw or use unhealthy coping behaviors to avoid painful feelings.



DIFFICULTY FOCUSING

Traumatic memories and worries can interrupt attention, learning, and development.



HELP IS AVAILABLE

Children are never to blame for what happened. With safety, patience, trusted adults, and professional support, healing is possible.

Never be afraid or ashamed to ask for help.



KINDER
PEOPLE
BRIGHTER
TOMORROWS

Real Support ♥ Real Change ♥ Brighter Futures

Every Child
Matters

Seen
Supported
Valued
You Matter
♡

THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Brighter
Futures
Are
Possible
♡

Trauma can have serious, long-lasting effects on relationships, health, emotional well-being, and the ability to cope with everyday stress.
Possible consequences include:



Relationship Issues



Poor Health



Financial Difficulties



Substance Abuse



Anxiety



Depression



Suicidal Thoughts



Low Self-Worth



Self-Harm



Sexual Issues



Lack of Motivation



Extreme Fear



Lack of Trust in Others



Nightmares or Flashbacks



Physical Pain



Feelings of Hopelessness

TRAUMA CAN HAVE SERIOUS EFFECTS—BUT HEALING IS POSSIBLE

If someone may harm themselves or is thinking about suicide, take it seriously. Stay with them and seek immediate help. In the U.S. or Canada, call or text 988. If danger is immediate, call emergency services.



Safety • Support • Treatment • Hope ♡

Brighter
Days
Are
Possible

SYMPTOMS OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

You
Are Not
Alone

Depending on the type of trauma experienced, symptoms may vary. Common signs include:



Being unable to trust your own judgment



Experiencing changes in eating or sleeping patterns



Having obsessive thoughts and feelings



Experiencing constant physical pain



Feeling like you are always on edge



Experiencing an inability to cope with stress



Experiencing sudden bouts of rage or anxiety



Having an extreme reaction to triggers



Having low self-worth



Experiencing decreased sexual desire



Experiencing distrust in relationships



Experiencing decreased libido



Replaying traumatic events in your head



Experiencing a desire to self-harm or take your own life



Having nightmares or flashbacks

WARNING SIGNS DESERVE SUPPORT — NOT SHAME

If a child may hurt themselves or talks about suicide, take it seriously. Stay with them and get immediate help. In the U.S. or Canada, **call or text 988**. If danger is immediate, call emergency services.

Listen • Believe • Protect • Connect With Help

Healing Children
Builds Brighter Tomorrows

Safe
Children
Stronger
Futures

Kind
People
Change
Lives

You
Matter

HOW TO HELP A CHILD WHO HAS SUFFERED FROM TRAUMA

Build Connection • Be Gentle • Help Them Process Emotions

Brighter
Futures
Together
♡

Safe
Children
Stronger
Tomorrows
♡

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMATIC STRESS

Traumatic stress can make the body tense and may contribute to headaches or stomach discomfort. Overwhelming emotions can make it difficult for children to learn, socialize, and feel secure. Curiosity grows when the nervous system feels calm and safe—not when it is on high alert.

Calm
Bodies
Brighter
Minds
♡

2. BE GENTLE AND AVOID STARTLING THEM

A child experiencing traumatic stress may feel fragile or unsafe. Nonverbal cues—tone of voice, eye contact, facial expression, and body language—communicate emotional safety.

- Speak in a soft, gentle voice.
- Use calm, slow movements.
- Give the child space and time.
- Approach in a predictable, respectful way.

You
Belong
Here
♡



3. USE PLAY TO CREATE A SAFE CONNECTION

Play offers a healthy way to reset, connect, and calm down. Safe, child-led play can support social engagement and help the nervous system relax.

Try:

- Drawing or coloring
- Building with blocks
- Puppets or pretend play
- Simple movement games

Play
Heals
Connects
Builds
Brighter
Days
♡



Children
Matter
A Kinder
Brighter World
♡

CALM • CONNECTION • SAFETY





WAYS TO HEAL FROM CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Brighter Days Are Possible



Healing Takes Time

Healing looks different for everyone. Explore safe options, notice what helps, and remember that a combination of supports may work best.



PROCESSING YOUR FEELINGS



SELF-CARE



CONNECTING WITH OTHERS



TRAUMA-INFORMED INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAM (IOP)



HELPING OTHERS



MEDICATION MANAGEMENT



EXERCISE



BALANCED NUTRITION



HEALTHY SLEEP



COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)



EYE MOVEMENT DESENSITIZATION AND REPROCESSING (EMDR)



PSYCHOTHERAPY

HEALING IS A JOURNEY—YOU DO NOT HAVE TO DO IT ALONE

A qualified mental-health professional can help create a safe, personalized plan. Medication should only be started, changed, or stopped with guidance from a licensed prescriber.

Different Paths
Brighter Futures

Safety • Connection • Support • Hope

You Belong Here

KINDER PEOPLE

STRONGER TOMORROWS

BRIGHTER TOGETHER



Safe
Children
Stronger
Futures ♥

HELPING A CHILD HEAL – PAGE 2

Connection • Expression • Reassurance



Brighter
Tomorrow
Together



4.

HELP THEM NAME AND EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS

Children may not know how to explain what they feel. Make expression easier with:

- Emotion-face cards
- Drawing or coloring
- Puppets and pretend play
- Gentle games and conversation

Watch the child's cues. Calmness, relief, or a desire to continue may show the activity is helping. More tension, sadness, or anger may mean it is time to pause or try something different.



5.

OFFER SAFE, WANTED AFFECTION

Comfort may include a hug, rocking, holding a hand, or sitting nearby—but always respect the child's boundaries.

- Ask before touching.
- Notice the child's body language.
- Stop if the child pulls away or stiffens.
- Continue only when the child welcomes it and begins to relax.



6.

REASSURE AND EXPLAIN

Use truthful, simple words:

- "You are safe with me."
- "This is not your fault."
- "You will not feel this way forever."

Explain what happened in an age-appropriate way and share what trusted adults are doing to help.



RESTORE SAFETY AND SECURITY

Children thrive in calm, predictable environments.

Patient adults, consistent routines, emotional-learning tools, and qualified professional support can help children heal.

There is always more we can do—in our families, schools, and communities—to reduce stress and nurture emotional well-being.



Together
We Make
a Kinder
World ♥



LISTEN • RESPECT • REASSURE • SUPPORT



People
Help Children
Heal ♥

WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

Small steps can open the door to healing. ♥

1.

ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT HAPPENED

Recognizing that you experienced trauma can be difficult—but it is an important first step.



Courage
Opens
Doors ♥

You
Belong
You
Matter
You
Can Heal ♥

2.

REMEMBER: IT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT

You are not responsible for the harm or trauma you experienced. Shame and guilt do not belong to you.



You Are
Not Alone ♥

3.

CONNECT WITH SAFE SUPPORT

Talk with a trusted person or qualified mental-health professional. You do not have to carry this alone.



Stronger
Together ♥

4.

EXPLORE HEALTHY WAYS TO COPE

Try safe options such as journaling, movement, rest, creative activities, support groups, or therapy. Notice what helps you feel grounded.



5.

GIVE YOURSELF TIME

Healing is not a race. Be patient and gentle with yourself as you build safety, confidence, and hope.



Growth
Takes Time
and
That's Okay ♥

A NEW WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES CAN BEGIN

By acknowledging the trauma and opening yourself to support, you can begin to heal, release shame and guilt, and move toward a healthier, happier life.



♥ You Are Worthy of Safety • Support • Healing • Hope ♥

Brighter
Days
Ahead

CONCLUSION

Healing
People
Stronger
Communities

The sooner you acknowledge that you have experienced trauma and begin exploring healthy ways to cope, the sooner your healing journey can begin.

KINDER
TO YOURSELF

SMALL
STEPS
MATTER

YOU
BELONG

THERE IS NO TIME LIMIT ON HEALING

Healing from childhood trauma may take time. Every journey is different, and progress does not always happen in a straight line. What matters is taking the first step, asking for support, and continuing—even when the path feels difficult.

START NOW • BE PATIENT • DO NOT GIVE UP

Different
Journeys
Same
Humanity

Healing
Creates
a Brighter
Tomorrow

There is hope. You are stronger than what happened to you, and you do not have to face healing alone.

HEALING
PEOPLE
BRIGHTER
FUTURES

HEAL

LEARN

GROW

CONNECT

BELONG

STRONGER
TOGETHER

A BRIGHTER

TOMORROW

IS AHEAD

YOU
ARE
ENOUGH

YOU CAN GET THROUGH THIS

One Step at a Time • One Day at a Time • Hope Is Always Possible