

COMMUNICATION & CHILDHOOD TRAUMA:

Childhood trauma refers to an emotional response to a scary, dangerous, violent, or life threatening event that happens to a child before age 18.
(Maroney, 2020)

How to recognize the effects of trauma on children:

- Mental or physical issues
 - Anxiety, depression, aggression, learning impairments, decreased immune function, adult onset diseases
- Problems with trust
- Self-destructive or risky behaviors
 - Self harm

(Douglass et al., 2021; Felix et al., 2020; Manna, et al., 2022; Maroney, 2020)

Why learning about childhood trauma is important:

- Experiencing trauma overwhelms one's coping mechanisms
- Experiencing trauma can have a significant effect on physical and mental health
- It teaches the proper way to interact with children who have been affected by trauma and can help stronger bonds be established
- Help understand and learn how to prevent self-harm

(Douglass et al., 2021; Felix et al., 2020; Manna, et al., 2022; Maroney, 2020)

COMMUNICATION MATTERS

Celebrate resiliency by validating experiences and providing new opportunities for positive experiences
(Douglass, et al., 2021)

Focus on problem solving
(Douglass, et al., 2021)



Refrain from constant talk about negative emotions, avoidance, and secret keeping
(Felix, et al., 2020)

Practice empathy and empowerment
(Maroney, 2020)

Communication within the family matters because it affects relationships, both within the family and outside of the family.

HOW YOU, AS A CASA, CAN HELP

(Douglass et al., 2021; Manna, et al., 2022; Maroney, 2020)

An illustration of an adult woman sitting on the floor with a young boy, both focused on building with colorful blocks.

Be a consistent mentor

it's okay to feel

Three stars with faces: a blue star with a happy expression, a light blue star with a neutral expression, and a red star with a sad expression.

your feelings

Guide social and emotional learning practices

An illustration of a woman with long dark hair hugging a young girl from behind.

Establish Trust

An illustration of a young boy with dark skin jumping rope.

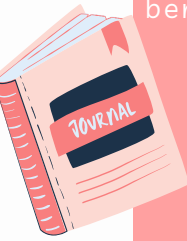
Allow them to be kids/teens

An illustration of a man and a woman sitting and talking, with the man holding a small object.

Prioritize fostering one-on-one relationships

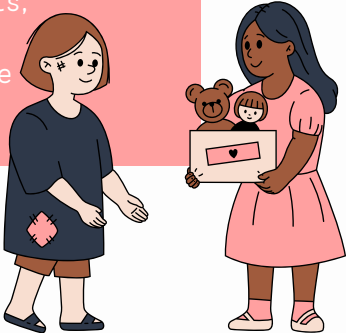
An illustration of a child sitting inside a small tent, reading a book.

Teach calming strategies



Use The Imagine Project Journal for Children K-12 as a free resource. The Imagine Project is a simple and free expressive writing tool that can help families to help their child cope with their challenging life circumstances, benefitting their short- and long-term health through 7 distinct steps:

- 1.Celebrate: Write 3 things you love about your life;
- 2.Reflect: Write 1-3 things that have been challenging in your life now or in the past;
- 3.Imagine: Write an Imagine story about something that has been challenging in your life; begin your sentence with the word "Imagine...";
- 4.Possibilities: Write a new story you would like to create in your life using the word "Imagine...";
- 5.I am, I can, I will: Transform your Imagine dreams into I statements;
- 6.Do: Write 3 things you need to do to make your dreams happen;
- 7.A 30-day Imagine Challenge: Every day for the next 30 days, write down 3 things you are grateful for, 3 things you want to imagine in your life, and do one act of kindness each day.



Citations

- Douglass, A., Chickerella, R., & Maroney, M. (2021). Becoming trauma-informed: a case study of early educator professional development and organizational change. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 42(2), 182–202. <https://doi-org.sncidm.oclc.org/10.1080/10901027.2021.1918296>
- Felix, E. D., Affi, T. D., Horan, S. M., Meskunas, H., & Garber, A. (2020). Why Family Communication Matters: the Role of Co-rumination and Topic Avoidance in Understanding Post-Disaster Mental Health. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 48(11), 1511–1524. <https://doi-org.sncidm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10802-020-00688-7>
- Manna, G., Falgares, G., Costanzo, G., La Sala, M. C., Lamis, D. A., & Musso, P. (2022). Cumulative Childhood Maltreatment and Non-Suicidal Self-Injury: the Mediating and Moderating Role of Perceived Social Support in a Sample of University Students. *Journal of Family Violence*, 37(4), 657–669. <https://doi-org.sncidm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10896-021-00312-2>
- Maroney, D. I. (2020). The Imagine Project™: Using Expressive Writing to Help Children Overcome Stress and Trauma. *Pediatric Nursing*, 46(6), 300–311.