



PA

Pre-Service

Part 3

WHAT TRAUMA INFORMED PARENTING CAN DO

When we protect them from harm...

...children learn that the world is safe.

When we support, nurture and respond to them...

...children learn that they are capable.

When we give them affection and love...

...children learn that they are lovable.



The Story of Javier (15 years old)

Summary: Javier's case illustrates how trauma-informed parenting can modify impulsive and aggressive behavior in adolescents who have experienced trauma, help them to make better choices, and assist them in channeling their energy and talents in constructive ways. (This case is used in Modules 1, 2, and 4; see sidebars for specifics. It can also be used in Module 5 to illustrate techniques for dealing with problem behaviors.)

Javier is 15 years old, and has been in foster care for a little under a year. He has gotten into trouble for not paying attention and joking around in class. Now he's skipping classes to drink or smoke pot in a nearby park.

At a party, Javier saw a friend verbally abusing a girl. When his friend pushed the girl, Javier beat up his friend.

When his caseworker asked what had happened, Javier said, "I don't know. I just went into kill mode."

Background

Javier grew up watching his parents battle. One night when Javier was six he awoke to his mother's screams and the sound of his father throwing furniture. Every time his mother screamed, he imagined her lying on the floor but was too afraid to get up from his bed. He lay trembling, feeling too weak and small to do anything.

During one fight, the neighbors called the police, but the officers "didn't do anything to help her, they just left."

Unable to convince his mother to leave his father, Javier tries to divert his mother by making jokes, and takes great joy when he can make her laugh.

A year ago, Javier witnessed a drive-by shooting. He was standing right next to a friend who was shot. He still has nightmares about the shooting and wakes up with his heart pounding. Shortly after the shooting, Javier tried to intervene in one of his parents' arguments and was severely beaten by his father. His father was arrested and Javier was taken into care.

See Facilitator Notes for:
Module 2, slides 24–25

Key Teaching Points

- Javier's early traumatic experiences have prevented him from accomplishing some of the developmental tasks of childhood, such as learning to control his impulses, to think before acting, or to analyze the reasons behind his behavior.

Javier will not be allowed to return home until his father completes anger management and parenting classes, but his father refuses. "It's my right to put my boy in his place," he said. Javier's mother comes for supervised visits with Javier at the child welfare offices. Javier worries about his mother's safety.

Javier and the iPod®

Ever since seeing his friend get shot, Javier gets nervous in crowds. He doesn't like loud noises and startles easily.

One day in math class, the door opened suddenly and another boy came into class late. As he passed Javier's desk, he abruptly reached into his pocket. Javier instinctively ducked under his desk, knocking his books to the floor.

The other boy looked at him in confusion, holding the iPod® he had just pulled from his pocket, and everyone laughed at Javier, including a girl who sits in front of him whom he really likes.

Furious, Javier jumped back up, grabbed the kid's iPod®, and threw it across the room.

Javier's Foster Parents Respond

Javier's foster parents were called in to meet with the vice principal. During the meeting, Javier's foster parents discussed Javier's traumatic past and persuaded the vice principal to give Javier a week's detention rather than expulsion, as long as he apologized and paid for the other boy's iPod®.

At home, Javier's foster parents asked him to explain what happened in the classroom. Javier admitted that when he saw the boy's sudden move, he thought "Gun!" and ducked under the desk. For the first time, he told his foster parents about seeing his friend get shot. He said his classmates' laughter made him feel like "some sort of weak fool."

See Facilitator Notes for:

Module 4, slide 27

Key Teaching Points

- Children and adolescents who have experienced trauma may be exposed to many trauma reminders over the course of a day.
- Feelings—such as Javier's humiliation about his classmates' mocking laughter—can also be trauma reminders.

See Facilitator Notes for: Module 4, slide 32

Key Teaching Points

Javier's foster parents:

- Helped Javier to recognize the connection between his reaction and his past experience
- Acknowledged the validity of some of Javier's reaction given his past experience
- Helped Javier to see that he has other options when faced with a reminder of past trauma

Javier's foster parents heard him out, and acknowledged that his reaction made sense given what he'd experienced. But they also pointed out that once he realized there was no threat, he had a choice of how to respond. He had chosen to throw the iPod® because he felt angry and humiliated.

They reviewed with him the risks and benefits of other actions he could have taken instead: he could have informed his classmates that he was reacting to something that reminded him of a very bad event he'd witnessed; he could have said nothing and simply told his teacher later. Javier realized that he could have just made a joke of the situation, since his classmates were used to him goofing around. His foster parents then helped him to plan what he would say in apologizing to the boy for breaking his iPod®.

Javier's foster parents also told him that even though they would front the money for the new iPod®, Javier would have to work off the cost by spending several Saturdays working with his foster mom at their church food bank. His foster mom noted that the many older ladies who worked at the bank could "really use a set of strong arms" to load boxes.

Concerned about Javier's violent outbursts, Javier's foster parents pressed the caseworker to arrange therapy so that Javier could get help in dealing with his grief, anger, and impulse control. They also consulted with the school counselor about finding ways to channel Javier's energy, particularly his "class clown" tendencies, in a more positive direction. She noted that the school drama club was going to be doing a comedy that year and suggested that Javier audition.

Javier Finds New Strengths

Javier continued to see a therapist. After some initial grumbling about having to spend Saturdays at the food bank, Javier discovered that he enjoyed the work, particularly handing out boxes of food to families in need and making them laugh. He also got a part in the school play and between rehearsals and the food bank has no time to hang out at the park.

See Facilitator Notes for:

Module 5, slide 30

Key Teaching Points

Javier's foster parents:

- Helped him to see that he made a choice and that he had the power to make other choices
- Helped him to see the negative consequences of his choice
- Set clear consequences for Javier's behavior
- Redirected Javier's energies to positive activities that fostered his interests and talents
- Advocated for trauma-informed therapy

NCTSN

The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

“My Child” Worksheet

"My Child" Worksheet, Module 1: Introductions

Name

Age

What I know about my child's life before coming into my home

What I'd like to know

"My Child" Worksheet, Module 2: Trauma 101

My child's traumas and losses (see "Trauma and Loss Inventory," on back, for help)

My child's reaction to trauma

My child's strengths to build on

Trauma and Loss Inventory

Below are some of the most common types of traumas and losses that children in the foster care system have experienced or been exposed to. Review the list and check off all the experiences that apply to your child, and the child's age (or age range) at the time the trauma occurred.

Experience	Yes/No	Age At Time
Natural disaster		
Serious accident		
Serious personal injury (physical assault, rape)		
Serious illness		
Death of a parent or other important adult		
Serious injury or illness of a parent or other important adult		
Death of a sibling		
Serious injury or illness of a sibling		
Death of a friend		
Serious injury or illness of a friend		
Witnessing serious injury or death of another person		
Separation/divorce of parents		
Witnessing interpersonal violence (domestic violence, community violence, etc.)		
Psychiatric illness in parent, caregiver, or close family member		
Alcohol or drug abuse in parent, caregiver, or close family member		
Physical abuse		
Exposure to sexual activities of others		
Sexual abuse		

"My Child" Worksheet, Module 3: Understanding Trauma's Effects

My child's "Invisible Suitcase"

Beliefs about self

Beliefs about caregivers

Beliefs about the world

Repacking the Suitcase: things I can do to help my child feel safe, capable, and loved

"My Child" Worksheet, Module 4: Building a Safe Place

My trauma-informed safety message to my child

My child's trauma reminders and reactions

"My Child" Worksheet, Module 5: Dealing with Feelings and Behaviors

My child's cognitive triangle (complete for a problem behavior you would like to change)

The diagram shows a triangle with three vertices. At the top left is the word "Thoughts", at the top right is "Behavior", and at the bottom center is "Feelings". Double-headed arrows connect "Thoughts" to "Behavior", "Thoughts" to "Feelings", and "Behavior" to "Feelings".

Below "Thoughts" are four horizontal lines for writing.

Below "Behavior" are four horizontal lines for writing.

Below "Feelings" are three horizontal lines for writing.

How I can help to change my child's triangle

A large empty rectangular box for writing.

"My Child" Worksheet, Module 6: Connections and Healing

My child's connections

Name	Role in my child's life	Relationship with my child

Steps I can take to help my child . . .

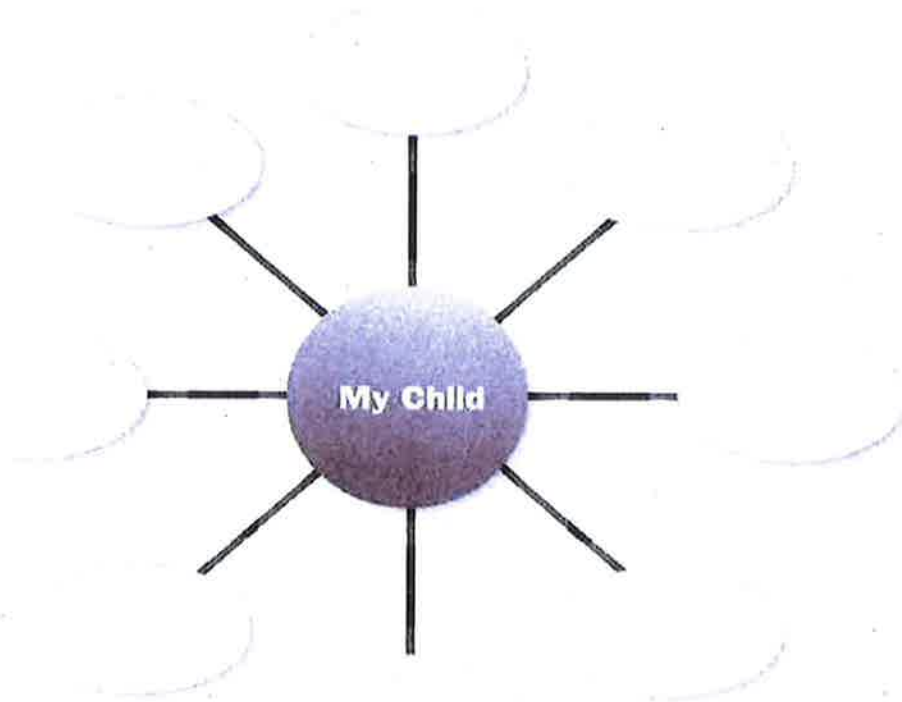
Feel safe when talking about trauma

Build connections across the disruptions in his or her life

Look positively toward the future

"My Child" Worksheet, Module 7: Becoming an Advocate

My child's team (expand as needed)



Advocating for my child

Team Member	Actions we can take to work in more effective/trauma-informed ways

Trauma 101 Notes

Trauma 101 Notes

Understanding Trauma's Effects Notes

Understanding Trauma's Effects Notes

Building a Safe Place Notes

Building a Safe Place Notes

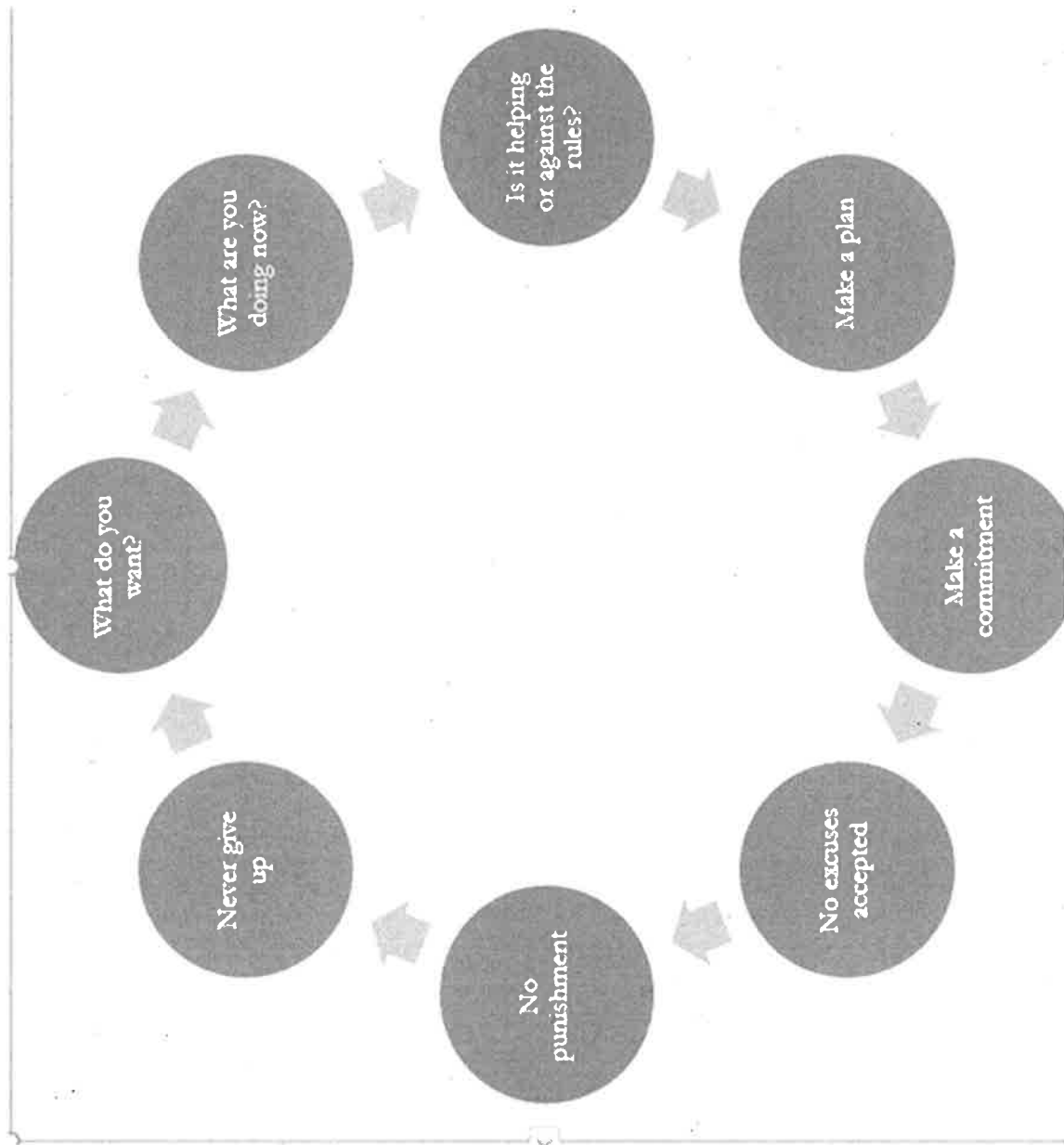
Dealing with Feelings and Behaviors

Notes

Dealing with Feelings and Behaviors

Notes

The Eight Steps of Reality Therapy



Choice Theory and Reality Therapy Notes

Choice Theory and Reality Therapy Notes

TEN QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU RUN AWAY

Directions: Review the questions below. Can you think of any other questions to ask yourself before running away?

- What else can I do to improve my home situation before I leave?
- What would make me stay at home?
- How will I survive on my own?
- What makes running away unsafe?
- Who can I count on to help me?
- Am I being realistic?
- Do I have a plan that is well thought out?
- What are my other options?
- If I end up in trouble, whom will I call?
- If I return home, what may happen?

1-800-RUNAWAY 1800RUNAWAY.org 66008

Copyright © 2015 National Runaway Safeline

31



Teens + Stress + Resources = Crisis Averted

Teens run away for a variety of reasons

Think about whether resources could help you avoid a crisis

Directions:

Step 1: Under the Teen category, list events/feelings all teenagers experience

Step 2: Under the Stress category, list stresses some teenagers experience

Step 3: Under Crisis, list what can happen when teens are overwhelmed.

Step 4: Under the Resources/Support category, list resources a teenager might rely on for help

Step 5: Discuss the question: Can resources help teens avert a crisis? How?

TEENS	STRESS	CRISIS

↑

↑

↑

RE-SOURCES/SUPPORT

Teens + Stress + Resources = Crisis Averted

1-800-RUNAWAY 1800RUNAWAY.org 66008

Copyright © 2015 National Runaway Safeline



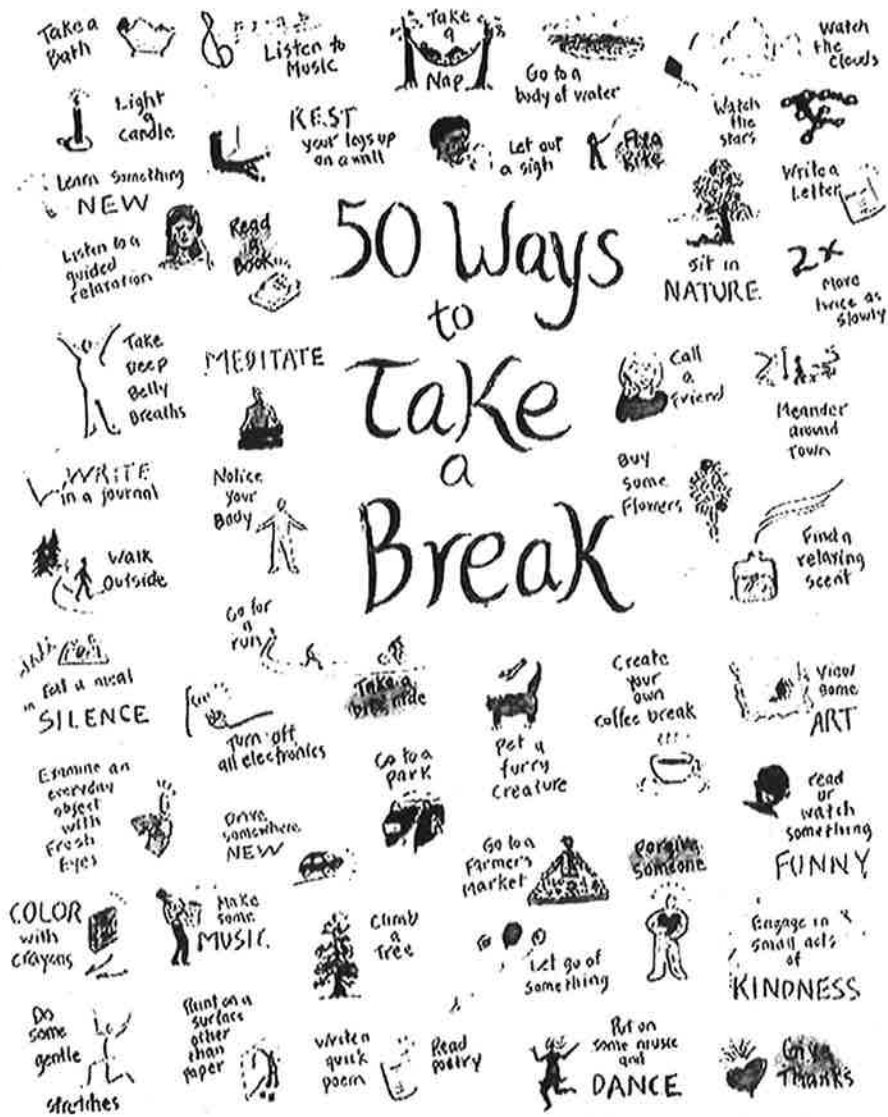
Runaways Notes

Runaways Notes

SUPPORT GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS YOU CAN TURN TO

- **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)**
www.dbsalliance.org
800-826-3632
- **Mental Health America (MHA)**
www.nmha.org
800-969-6642
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**
www.nami.org
800-950-NAMI (6264)
- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)**
www.nimh.nih.gov
866-615-NIMH (6464)
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
800-273-TALK (8255)
- **The Jed Foundation**
www.jedfoundation.org
212-647-7544

Additional Information



Self-Care Assessment

Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (1996). *Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization*. Norton.

The following worksheet for assessing self-care is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself these days.

When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, "I would never do that"? Listen to your inner responses, your internal dialogue about self-care and making yourself a priority. Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

- 3 = I do this well (e.g., frequently)
- 2 = I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)
- 1 = I barely or rarely do this
- 0 = I never do this
- ? = This never occurred to me

Physical Self-Care

- ___ Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- ___ Eat healthily
- ___ Exercise
- ___ Get regular medical care for prevention
- ___ Get medical care when needed
- ___ Take time off when sick
- ___ Get massages
- ___ Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other fun physical activity
- ___ Take time to be sexual - with myself, with a partner
- ___ Get enough sleep
- ___ Wear clothes I like
- ___ Take vacations
- ___ Other:

Psychological Self-Care

- ___ Take day trips or mini-vacations
- ___ Make time away from telephones, email, and the Internet
- ___ Make time for self-reflection
- ___ Notice my inner experience - listen to my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings
- ___ Have my own personal psychotherapy
- ___ Write in a journal
- ___ Read literature that is unrelated to work
- ___ Do something at which I am not expert or in charge
- ___ Attend to minimizing stress in my life
- ___ Engage my intelligence in a new area, e.g., go to an art show, sports event, theatre
- ___ Be curious

Workplace or Professional Self-Care

- ☐ Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
- ☐ Take time to chat with co-workers
- ☐ Make quiet time to complete tasks
- ☐ Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- ☐ Set limits with clients and colleagues
- ☐ Balance my caseload so that no one day or part of a day is "too much"
- ☐ Arrange work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- ☐ Get regular supervision or consultation
- ☐ Negotiate for my needs (benefits, pay raise)
- ☐ Have a peer support group
- ☐ (If relevant) Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest

Overall Balance

- ☐ Strive for balance within my work-life and work day
- ☐ Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play, and rest

Other Areas of Self-Care that are Relevant to You

(Retrieved 8/6/2010 from
http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/student/sds/self_care_assess.shtml and adapted by Lisa D.
Butler, Ph.D.)

Anger Notes

Anger Notes

Self-Injurious Behaviors Notes

Self-Injurious Behaviors Notes