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on Pediatric Health Care**


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**Unseen wounds: Effective strategies to  
address challenging trauma symptoms  
and behaviors for youth in foster care**

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Experts in pediatrics, Advocates for children.

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**Speaker Disclosure**






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**Learning Objectives**

				
Review the impact of early childhood trauma on the physical, developmental, and behavioral health of youth in foster care.	Identify evidence-based trauma screening practices available in the primary care setting.	Discuss the physiological and psychological symptoms of trauma exposure in infants, toddlers, school-age, and adolescent youth in foster care.	Summarize the multidisciplinary, trauma-informed therapeutic services available for youth in foster care or who have experienced childhood trauma.	Develop evidence-based trauma-informed anticipatory guidance and practical age-appropriate strategies to address challenging trauma symptoms and behaviors that may be encountered in their practice.



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## Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs)

### What are ACEs?

- ☐ Community
- ☐ Abuse
- ☐ Household dysfunction

### ACEs in Foster Care

- ☐ Experience at least one
- ☐ Higher on average
- ☐ 42% experience four or more



(Clarkson et al, 2014; Duffee et al, 2021; Goddard, 2021; Hornor et al, 2019)

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## Impact of Trauma and ACEs



Neuroendocrine abnormalities

Altered brain structure

Linked to chronic mental AND  
physical comorbidities

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## Video

- [https://youtu.be/LtyiI7\\_sNCA](https://youtu.be/LtyiI7_sNCA)

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## Trauma in Foster Care

(American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), 2021; Espelato et al., 2020; Greiner & Beal, 2018; Lamminen et al., 2020; Schagyl et al., 2019)

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Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs)

Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children or Young Children (TSCC/TSCYC)

Child PTSD Symptom Scale (CPSS)

UCLA Brief Screen for Trauma and PTSD

The Pediatric Traumatic Stress Screening Tool

The Pediatric Symptom Checklist

Child Trauma Screen

Keeshin et al (2020); Forkey et al (2021)

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### Video

- <https://youtu.be/iRDampHW3Oo>

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**Common Trauma Symptoms**

**Impact of Childhood Trauma**

- Cognition**
  - Impaired readiness to learn
  - Difficulty problem solving
  - Language delays
  - Problems with concentration
  - Poor academic achievement
- Brain development**
  - Smaller brain size
  - Less efficient processing
  - Impaired stress response
  - Changes in gene expression
- Physical health**
  - Sleep disorders
  - Eating disorders
  - Poor immune system
  - Functioning
  - Cardiovascular disease
  - Shorter life span
- Emotions**
  - Difficulty controlling emotions
  - Heightened reactivity
  - Increased coping skills
  - Increased sensitivity to stress
  - Shame and guilt
  - Excessive worry
  - Hypertension
  - Heightened vigilance
  - Heightened lack of self efficacy
- Relationships**
  - Attachment problems/ disorders
  - Poor understanding of social interactions
  - Difficulty forming relationships with peers
  - Problems in romantic relationships
  - Intergenerational cycles of abuse and neglect
- Mental health**
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Negative self image/low self-esteem
  - Posttraumatic stress
  - Disorder (PTSD)
  - Suicidity
- Behavior**
  - Poor self-regulation
  - Social withdrawal
  - Aggression
  - Poor impulse control
  - Risk taking/illegal activity
  - Sexual acting out
  - Adolescent pregnancy
  - Drug and alcohol misuse

(Bartlett & Steber, 2019)

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### Behaviors by age

Age	Behaviors
Infant/Toddler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hypervigilance (exaggerated startle response, persistent fear, and anxiety in the absence of true threat)</li> <li>Excessive fear of strangers or separation anxiety</li> <li>Arousal (extreme temper tantrums, excessive crying or especially fussy, difficulty being soothed or self-regulating)</li> <li>Aggressive with other children</li> <li>Easily frustrated, difficulty with transitions</li> <li>Trouble eating and sleeping (nightmares)</li> <li>Show regression after reaching developmental milestones (e.g., sleeping through night, toilet training)</li> </ul>
School Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance (dissociation, emotional numbing, social withdrawal)</li> <li>Difficulty with school skill acquisition, loss of ability to concentrate, organizational difficulties</li> <li>Lying</li> <li>Fighting and disrupting at school with peers, aggressive behavior, anger</li> <li>Repetitious traumatic play (re-enacting traumatic event through play)</li> <li>Sleep disturbances (frequent nightmares)</li> </ul>
Adolescent/Young Adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental health disorders (anxiety, depression, social withdrawal, persistent thoughts about suicide or seeking revenge)</li> <li>Impulsive actions that can threaten health and well-being, including intense anger or aggression toward others</li> <li>Risk-taking or self-destructive behavior (substance abuse, dangerous driving, sexual promiscuity, unprotected sex, self-harm, illegal activity)</li> <li>Learning difficulties</li> <li>Difficulty functioning in the workforce</li> <li>Sleep and eating disturbances</li> </ul>

(AAP, 2014; Bartlett & Smith, 2019; Bartlett & Steber, 2019)

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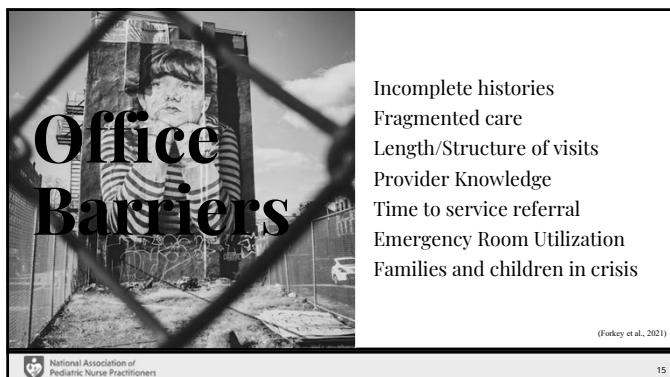
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## Video

- <https://youtu.be/AvpEVJzk4sM>

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## Positive Interactions

Consider

Connect

Collaborate



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## Video

- <https://youtu.be/vWpLT5rfKIU>

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Consequences




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# Video

- [https://youtu.be/\\_M9HF3Apf0A](https://youtu.be/_M9HF3Apf0A)

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# Evidence-based interventions

- Young Children:**
  - Early intervention services
  - Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT)
  - Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)
- Older Children:**
  - Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
  - Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in School (High School Youth)
- Any Child**
  - Attachment, self-regulation, and competency (ARC)

(Szilagyi, 2015)

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# Video

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## Promoting Resilience

### Anticipatory guidance

- strategies to address behaviors & challenges

### Trauma-informed therapy

- patient AND caregiver

### Individualized care

- what works for one child may not work for another

### Teach coping skills

- support self-regulation and self-efficacy

### Support



(AAP, 2014; AAP, 2016; Forkey et al., 2021)

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## Building a Resilient Home



- Downtime
- Practice
- Healthy Habits
- Family Time
- Expectations

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## Key Points to Remember

Behavior is communication	Ask before touching
Consider your visit structure	Give controlled choices
Take a deep breath	Be predictable
Set Boundaries	Consider Safety
Give yourself grace	Make a plan
Co-regulate first	Trauma-informed therapy
Individualized care	Know your resources
Multidisciplinary care	Provider training
Wrap around support	

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