



#LIBERTYSTRONG

Newsletter from your Clinical Team

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How are we doing and what would you like to see in the Clinical Newsletter?

We want to connect with you! Please let Angie Huber know what you would like to see in the newsletter. We will do our best to meet your request. Send any requests to aahuber@fcps.edu.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Teens

By: Angie Huber, Licensed Liberty School Social Worker,

International Journal of Clinical Practice (2021) study shows 28.5% of teens are experiencing moderate to high levels of PTSD, 28% anxiety, 37.6% depression

2/3 of students ages 17 and under report have had a traumatic event and feel some distress (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

PTSD can be caused by a wide range of experiences. It can occur from one traumatic event or over a period of time. Everyone is different in how experiences impact them. PTSD often occurs when a fear or distress becomes overwhelming and causes long lasting trauma to the brain and mental well being. Situations causing this type of fear could be a violent incident; abuse; medical concern; any situation with fear of death or injury; and/or feeling unloved, unsafe or helpless. Acute and chronic traumas would be included in possibly leading to PTSD symptoms. Secondary trauma can cause concern, such as hearing about traumatic events over the news or from close friends or family.

The COVID pandemic has caused PTSD for many people. The fear of the unknown continues to be a concern for many people and has persisted over time.

PTSD Symptoms in Teens

(typically lasting for more than a month and severe enough to interfere with daily functioning)

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Change in Behaviors/ Moods | 2. Nightmares |
| 3. Substance Use | 4. Racing/ Intrusive Thoughts |
| 5. Flashbacks | 6. Sleeping issues/ changes |
| 7. Difficulty in Processing/ making decisions | 8. Panic Attacks |
| 9. Irritable/ Angry | 10. Withdrawing from others |
| 11. Not enjoying typical activities | 12. Panic Attacks/ Anxious |
| 13. Depressed/ Sad/ Suicidal | 13. Avoiding places/ people |

Triggers:

Internal– thoughts, emotions, sensations

External: people, places, events, dates, smells, sounds, objects, media, music

** Flashbacks of the trauma occur when triggered in the brain and the body reacts.

Cont. pg 4



Fairfax County Resources:

Parent Support Line:

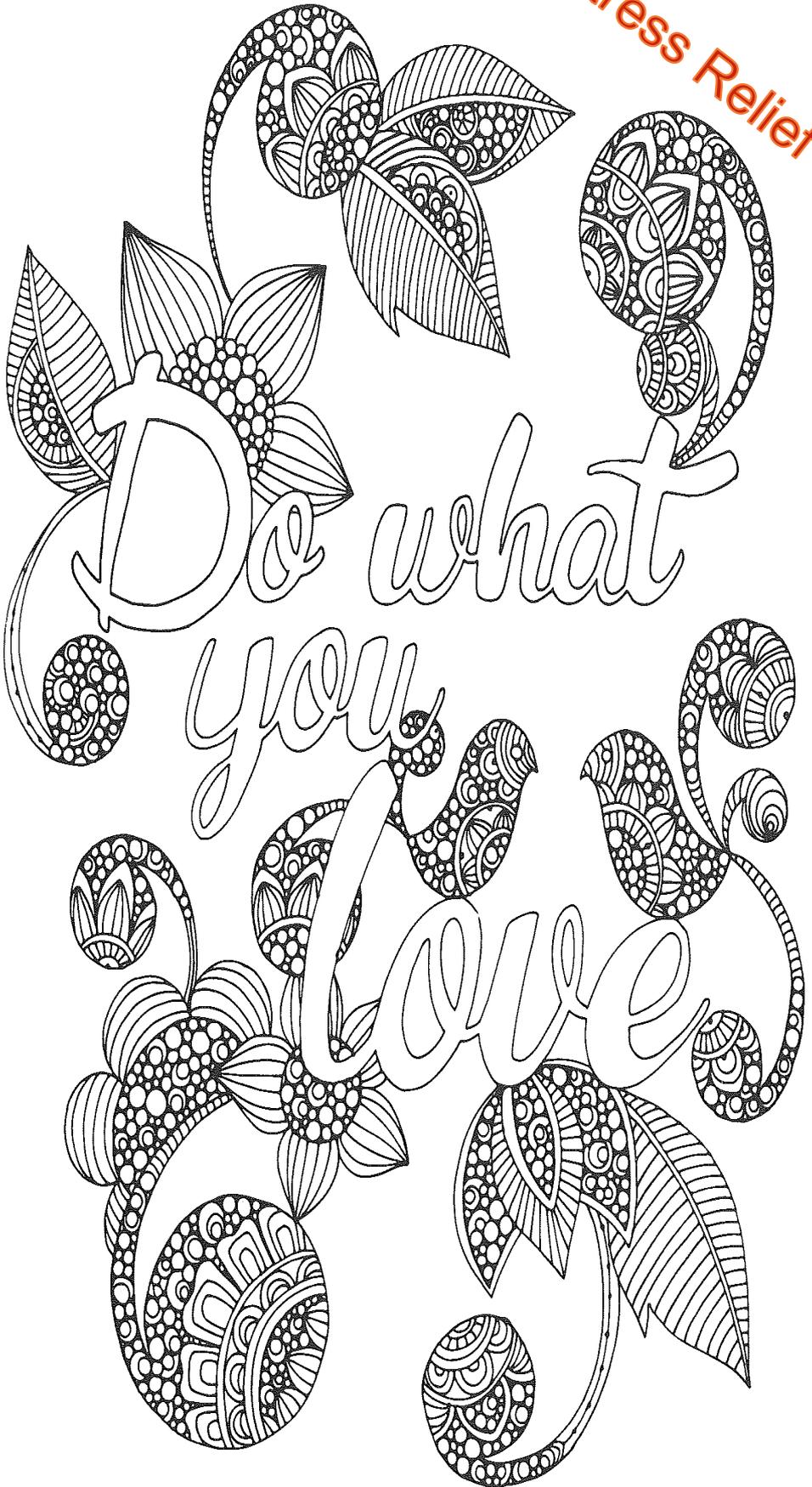
DFS parent support line, parent cafes and parenting classes ([link](#))



Part of the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax

[Link to great resources through the Trauma-Informed Community Network](#)

Stress Relief



Flexibility and Acceptance

By: Angie Huber, Licensed Liberty School Social Worker,

Flexibility

Cognitive flexibility is not becoming stuck and being able to bend and try a different strategy to attack problem situations and demands and a willingness and capability to adapt and change. When we can be flexible, it expands our range of choices and responses and strengthens our interactions and relationships as well as our emotional regulation. The opposite is rigidity, stress, anxiety, depression, and the unwillingness to change.

Lack of flexibility leads to:

- Strained relationships
- Constant feelings of frustration
- Jumping to conclusions before knowing the whole picture
- Refusing to learn or hear new information
- Being prone to focus on negativity or possible negative outcomes
- Mental health concerns/ Dissociating from the day/ shutting down

Four ways to improve Cognitively Flexibility (Psychology Today)

1. Do something you know how to do, but do it differently (and often).
2. Pursue new challenges and experiences.
3. Meet new people
4. Add flexible routines

Keep in mind that having too much flexibility can lead to not knowing when to say “no”. One can become indecisive or fall into the habit of pleasing others and neglecting self.

Acceptance

Acceptance is supporting someone in a way that is safe and sensitive to the person’s needs. This typically involves showing the person that they are important and that the relationship is meaningful. It is important to understand your child and to identify key triggers that could identify a struggle or trauma, suggesting a need for intervention or additional interaction and understanding to work through the situation.

Strategies to show acceptance to your child:

- ⇒ Ask Questions
- ⇒ Listen
- ⇒ Encourage journaling, counseling or time to talk about concerns
- ⇒ Recognize changes in mood or behaviors, especially distress
- ⇒ Have a check in question each day: such as– “On a scale of 1-10, what is your stress level today?”

The following questions were designed for teachers, but can easily be used at home.

Questions for Students

- What are some emotions you feel today?
- What is something you can do to calm your emotions?
- Are you hurting today? If so, what is hurting?
- Is there something you would like your teacher or someone else to know today?
- Is there something you need from your teacher today?

Questions for Teachers

- How am I feeling today? What can I do to regulate myself, so I can be prepared to teach my students?
- Have I set clear expectations for my classroom?
- What is the emotional tone of my classroom?
- Have I greeted all my students by name today?
- Have I had at least one positive interaction with each student today?
- Is there a student who needs extra attention or support today?

Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education⁵⁶

MINDFUL MOMENT

*** It is tricky to use mindfulness strategies when looking at trauma. There are when interventions will trigger something that needs to be healed within the body/brain and can be overwhelming. These strategies should be used thoughtfully when someone has known trauma.***

However, flexibility is very attainable in using mindful techniques. Mental and physical flexibility can be developed through mindful strategies. Some possible strategies are below:

Yoga (numerous videos online)

Calm App

Headspace— online site

Card Games

Guessing games and riddles

Team Sports

Trauma cont. from pg 1

Aftereffects from a traumatic event can last for weeks to years. It can challenge relationships, employment, sleep patterns, and quality of life. These struggles in turn impact the immune system, diet and physical health. Long-term trauma impacts daily functioning, relationships, risk taking behaviors, processing abilities, focusing, academic performance, and the desire to avoid situations involving fear.

One of the main overarching goals in trauma work is to help people to feel empowered from their struggles so they can live a fulfilling and healthy life.

FACTORS THAT INCREASE THE RISK OF DEVELOPING SHORT-TERM & LONG-TERM SYMPTOMS FOLLOWING THE EXPOSURE OF TRAUMA:



TRAUMA BEING UNEXPECTED



ADDITIONAL MAJOR LIFE STRESSORS



CHILDHOOD EXPOSURE TO TRAUMA



LACK OF SUPPORT & COPING RESOURCES



FEELING OF POWERLESSNESS & LOSS OF CONTROL



EXPOSURE TO MULTIPLE TRAUMATIC EVENTS IN THE PAST



REPEATED EXPOSURE TO THE TRAUMA

Your students can check out Ms. Huber's google office to see many cool things to do, learn about or to use to cope!



VIRTUAL ZEN DEN

[Sounds and Music](#)

[Meditation and Grounding Exercises](#)

[Visual Relaxation](#)

[Live Animal Cams](#)

[Yoga](#)

[Something Interesting](#)

[Pixar Short Film: La Luna](#)

[Pixar Short Film: Piper](#)

[Pixar Short Film: Day and Night](#)

[Pixar Short Film: Party Cloudy](#)

[Art and Creativity](#)

[Games and Puzzles](#)

Addressing Unhelpful Thoughts Teaching Psychological Flexibility

All or Nothing & Overgeneralization

Find the middle ground. Look for exception
Use dialectics to embrace the bad and good.

Mental Filtering

When bad things happen, remember the positive
When you are feeling bad, focus on your good qualities too

Exaggeration

Consider whether you are confusing high and low probability events or expecting the absolute worst.

Personalization

Brainstorm 3 other explanations (besides you)
for why something happened

Availability Heuristic

We remember what happened most recently.
Examine the long-term data

Jumping to Conclusions

Get all of the facts and don't assume.

Mind Reading

Communicate effectively. Don't expect people to "know" what you want or wrongly believe you know what others are thinking.

Fallacy of Control & Change

You cannot control or change other people. You can only control and change yourself and how you react to them

Emotional Reasoning

Get the facts. Just because you are afraid or feeling threatened, doesn't mean it is fearsome.

More tips on Counselor Toolbox Podcast Episode: Teaching Psychological Flexibility

Flexible mind Loose elastic

I keep an open mind.

I accept that we all have different ideas and am open to new opinions and choices.

I am patient.

I let the person finish explaining without interrupting.

I listen attentively.

I keep my mind flexible and open to new possibilities.

I am open to new things.

I give time for questions and explanations.

I allow time for the information to sink in.

Rigid mind Tight elastic

I have already decided without listening to the other person.

My opinion is the best.

I don't want to take the time to listen to others.

I'll interrupt because I'm right.

I don't need to listen to other people's opinions.

My mind is closed and rigid.

I am afraid of new things.

I know everything already and don't give the other person the chance to explain.

I make choices quickly and without giving time for the information to sink in.

The PARENT RESOURCE CENTER offers numerous webinar opportunities throughout the year.

School Students with Disabilities

Join Career and Transition Services (CTS) to learn about planning for life in and after high school!

It's never too early or too late to start preparing for your future. We want to help you start planning for a successful transition from school to life as a young adult.

Ensuring the postsecondary success of our students with disabilities is dependent on what is known as transition planning. Please join CTS and other support service personnel for a month of webinars focused on planning for the future.

Each week, webinar sessions will cover a range of topics: CTS programming and services for students with disabilities, short and long-term postsecondary supports, employment and postsecondary education considerations, Supported Decision Making, and student self-determination as an evidence-based predictor of post-school success.

This event also includes two evenings of student/parent panels where members describe their firsthand experiences as they navigated Fairfax County Public Schools and planning for their child's future.

Everything You Need to Know About Marijuana in 1 hour: A Webinar for Families

"Everyone's doing it" is what most teenagers will say about marijuana, but truly only about 20% of teens have used marijuana in the last 30 days. During our session, we'll talk about a myriad of topics relating to marijuana to include: THC vs CBD, legalization vs decriminalization, the various ways marijuana can be consumed, and more.

Discussion Highlights:

- Legalization vs. decriminalization Drug use and the pandemic
- THC's various forms of use THC through the years

THC vs. CBD

Join Tiffany J. Jones, FCPS Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist for this important webinar.

Friday, January 28, 2022, 10-11 a.m.

[Register online for Everything You Need to Know About Marijuana in 1 hour: A Webinar for Families](#)

February 2

6:30 – 6:45 Session 1A Event/Workshop Overview

6:45 – 7:35 Session 1B

I'm Determined: K-12: Learn why it's important for students with disabilities to understand and possess self-determination skills from elementary school to adulthood.

7:35 – 8:30 Session 2

CTS Special Education Programs and Services Available in FCPS

Career and Transition Services (CTS) Overview: Learn about the different course offerings, programs, and services available from CTS. Opportunity to ask questions and interact with teacher and staff representatives.

February 9

6:30 – 7:30 Session 1

The Arc of Northern Virginia: Transition Planning and Supported Decision-Making: Learn how to successfully plan for the move from school to the adult world, including how to empower your child or student to maximize independence and rights protection by using a chosen team of supporters.

7:30 – 8:30 Session 2

Supporting Students Accessing Adult Services: Learn about how the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the Community Services Board (CSB), and Career and Transition Services (CTS) work together to support students accessing adult service providers upon

For more social-emotional resources and lessons please visit the LS Clinical Team's website (see the link below works best in Google Chrome):

<https://sites.google.com/view/liberty-ms-clinical-team/mental-wellness-topics>

some new videos added*

More Parent Resource Center Offerings

February 23

6:30 – 7:15 Session 1

Middle School Support: This session will provide an overview of planning for your future within the IEP and a discussion about why it's important to start that planning early.

7:15 – 8:30 Session 2

My Journey - Part II: An FCPS Graduate Student and Parent Panel: Opportunity to hear from students and parents who navigated the transition process in FCPS.

The panel for Part II will consist of individuals with disabilities who are pursuing supported employment, group supported employment, or day support opportunities, and working with the Community Services Board (CSB) for on-going support after exiting FCPS.

[Register for What should I do before my child grows up? Future Planning for Elementary and Middle School Students with Disabilities](#)

A blueprint for a different kind of back-to-school

Strategies for taking care of your body, your mind, and others...



Try these activities for your student!

⇒ Liberty Middle School Afterschool Program

<https://libertyms.fcps.edu/activities/after-school-program>

⇒ Fairfax County Park Authority Programs

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes>

Resources:

If you or someone you care about is in crisis, please call [911](tel:911) or access one of the mental health resources below:

⇒ *Reach out to a trusted adult (parent, counselor, teacher, coach, etc.); <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk>*

⇒ *Text NEEDHELP to 85511 for the [Crisis Link](#) Hotline at or call them at 703-527-4077*

⇒ *Chat online with a specialist at [CrisisChat.org](#) or [ImAlive.org](#)*

⇒ *Call an emergency mental health center at 703 573-5679 (Merrifield Center), 703-536-2000 (Dominion Hospital), or 703-289-7560 (INOVA emergency services)*

⇒ *CR2 – 844-627-4747*

⇒ *Go to the nearest emergency room at your local hospital*

Call 911

“What do I do?”

Trauma-Informed Support for Children

1 Create safety

If the child is overwhelmed, perhaps guide them to a quiet corner or allow them to decompress by visiting the restroom. If you are in a classroom, maybe you have a peace corner that you've outfitted with blankets or a screen so that it feels like a safe place.

2 Regulate the nervous system

Stress brings a predictable pattern of physiological responses and anyone who has suffered toxic stress or trauma is going to be quickly stressed into hyperarousal (explosive, jittery, irritable) or hypoarousal (depressed, withdrawn, zombie-like). No matter how ingenious our regulation strategies, how artsy-crafty we get with tools, the child has to find what works for them.

3 Build a connected relationship

This is the number one way to regulate the nervous system. When we are around people we care about, our bodies produce oxytocin, which is the hormone responsible for calming our nervous system after stress. If we stay connected, then eventually the calm discussion of each person's feelings and needs can take place.

4 Support development of coherent narrative

Creating predictability through structure, routines and the presence of reliable adults helps reduce the chaos a child may feel and allows them to start creating the kind of logical sequential connections that not only help them understand their own narrative, but are also the fundamental requirement of many types of learning.

5 Practice 'power-with' strategies

One of the hallmarks of trauma is a loss of power and control. When someone is wielding power over you with no regard to your thoughts or feelings, the toxic shame of the original trauma may come flooding back. As adults, we should use our power well. If we model a 'power-with' relationship with children it's our best chance of creating adults who will treat others with dignity and respect.

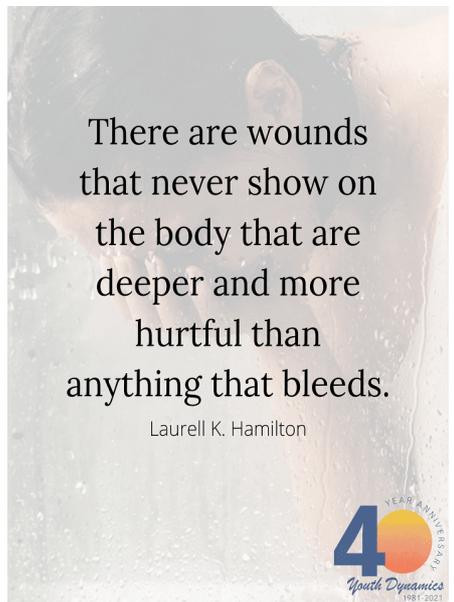
6 Build social emotional and resiliency skills

Trauma robs us of time spent developing social and emotional skills. The brain is too occupied with survival to devote much of its energy to learning how to build relationships and it's a good chance we didn't see those skills modeled for us. Learning to care for one another is the most important job we have growing up.

7 Foster post-traumatic growth

We know that there are qualities and skills that allow people to overcome the most devastating trauma and not just survive but find new purpose and meaning in their lives. Problem solving, planning, maintaining focus despite discomfort, self-control and seeking support are all known to lead to post-traumatic growth and are skills we can foster in children.

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Laurell K. Hamilton



what is acceptance?



IT'S RAINING

i don't like rain.
i wish it wasn't raining.
my day would be better
if it wasn't raining. my day is
ruined. every day is like this.
it's always like this. why does
it always rain when all i want is
for it to be sunny?



IT'S RAINING

yup.

Counseling is often a good approach to help people to work through struggles that they are having in their life. Many feel comfortable with the idea of counseling and many do not feel comfortable. One of the benefits of counseling is that it can help you to find solutions or to problem solve more quickly than without it. However, some still may not be comfortable and to add to the challenges of becoming comfortable with the idea of counseling, during COVID, it is difficult to find counselors who are meeting in person and some do not feel comfortable with meeting virtually. A good alternative is to use journaling. Here are some journal prompts for January.



JOURNAL PROMPTS FOR JANUARY

7 Writing Prompts for Processing Trauma

A 7-day challenge

1. Write about a negative cognition you hold that you know is not true, and talk about why it isn't.
2. Write about your safe space (e.g. how you created it, what it means to you, what it represents).
3. List 5 positive impacts the pandemic has had on your life or your community.
4. Write about your take on forgiveness.
5. Write a letter to yourself (older, younger, or current - you decide).
6. What does happiness mean to you?
7. Write about a trauma response you are working on and the cost vs. benefit of it on your life.

WWW.SURVIVINGCHILDHOODTRAUMA.COM

Prompts for Daily Trauma Recovery Journaling

- A Brief Summary of your day
- What Challenges did you face?
 - How did you handle them?
- What is something you don't want to forget about today?
- Share a quote or words of wisdom that spoke to you today

MENTAL HEALTH CHECK

- Rate your day 1-10 (10 being amazing)
- What mental health symptoms presented?
 - Do you know the trigger?
 - How did you manage them?
- Therapy Dump (on days you have a session)
 - What did you discuss?
 - What observations/awarenesses did you make?

www.survivingchildhoodtrauma.com

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