

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

**A Parenting Protocol for Parents with
Children Who Have Experienced
Traumatic Events in Their Lives**

**Vickie Beck, APRN-PMH
University of Maryland Medical Center**

April, 2017

For over 23 years I have worked with parents and children in an urban population who were poor and not able to afford insurance. Sadly, with poverty often comes additional hardships and sometimes chaos, including terrible adverse events. These events are sometimes within the community itself (community or school violence) or within the family itself (domestic violence, physical or sexual abuse, loss of a caregiver figure). Additionally, the impact of traumatic events can be transmitted from generation to generation, giving us caregivers with their own trauma histories and the resulting effects. The **TIPS** protocol was designed to be used specifically for children and their families who have experienced traumatic events in their lives. It can be used with parents, but it can also be used in the foster care system to assist caregivers in understanding the minefield that is “the traumatized child.” Every intervention in this protocol was developed or adapted with trauma and its impact in mind.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

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Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 1: Understanding Misbehavior

Goal: parents will identify the complex reasons why children/teens misbehave.

- I. Introductions/Cohesion Building- Have parents introduce themselves and briefly describe their family unit (who lives in the home, partner, children, extended family, others, etc.)
- II. Discuss reasons children misbehave- child characteristics- include child goals as well as mental illness, trauma history, etc.
- III. Discuss other reasons children misbehave- parent characteristics
- IV. Discuss other reasons children misbehave- situations, stressors, traumatic events
- V. Closing- Give hand-outs

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 1: Hand-out

Understanding Misbehavior - Child Characteristics

- 1) *Attention problems - some children can't maintain their focus on a task*
- 2) *Impulsive behavior - some children act before they think*
- 3) *Temperament - are they easy going? Irritable? How do they interact with others - both adults and children? How do they respond to loud sounds, noise?*
- 4) *Physical characteristics - can affect how others treat them, which then affects their own behavior*
- 5) *Developmental abilities - how easily they learn can affect how others interact with the child; delays can affect their ability to problem solve, control their emotions, learn good habits, and follow commands*
- 6) *Learned Behavior - children model what they see*
- 7) *Lack of Skills - children may not have skills to manage their frustration*
- 8) *Fatigue - when tired, children may not manage their anger well*
- 9) *Emotional Illness - some illnesses like ADHD, Depression, PTSD interfere with anger control*

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 1: Hand-out

Understanding Misbehavior - Parent Characteristics

- 1) *Parent Fatigue - notice the difference in your ability to cope with behavior between when you are well rested and when you are tired at the end of the day*
- 2) *Mental Illness - Depression, Adult ADHD, Bipolar Disorder- all can affect your ability to handle your child's misbehavior*
- 3) *Parent Temperament - do you get angry easily? Are you easy going? Your temperament can affect your ability to parent, particularly with difficult children*
- 4) *Health Problems - Chronic health problems can be a major factor in your ability to tolerate misbehavior; you may also not have enough energy to deal with your child's behavior*
- 5) *Your Ability to Handle your Anger- can be a part of your temperament but can also be a learned skill*
- 6) *Thinking Problems - Sometimes parents mistakenly believe children can control their anger better than they really can*
- 7) *Emotional Reactions - parents can get embarrassed by their children's misbehavior in public, and that embarrassment or frustration can come out as anger towards the child*

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session 1: Hand-out
Understanding Misbehavior - Situations

- 1) *They get what they want - positive outcome or rewards - "If I ask long enough, I can change their minds."*
- 2) *To avoid doing something they don't want- parents "give up" - The Negative Loop*
- 3) *They learn that something they do works*
- 4) *They are angry and need to show someone and they don't know any better way.*
- 5) *Attention - Children need attention. Sometimes negative attention is as good as positive attention*
- 6) *Parents view parenting differently- inconsistent parenting*
- 7) *Critical Parenting - only view their child as bad, and the child begins to believe it*

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session 1: Hand-out
Understanding Misbehavior - Stressors

- 1) *Family Health Problems*
- 2) *Losses in the Family - deaths, separation, divorce*
- 3) *Traumas in the Family - physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, etc.*
- 4) *Behavior Problems with other Children in the Family*
- 5) *Financial Problems*
- 6) *Employment Problems*
- 7) *Problems with Friends- anything that affects any person in the family can affect the other people in the family*
- 8) *Community Violence*
- 9) *School Bullying*
- 10) *Other Sources of Stress- drug or alcohol use*

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session #2:
**Understanding the Impact of Emotional Problems
on Children**

Goals: Parents will identify how a child's emotional problems can affect their behavior

- I. Introductions/Cohesion Building- Have new parents introduce themselves and talk briefly about their family unit. Parents already in the group- introduce and talk briefly about last's session

- II. Encourage a discussion about any emotional problems they have noticed in their children and how think think it may be impacting on their child's behavior

- III. Educate on any of the identified emotional problems that the parents bring up.

- IV. Talk about trauma and what it is. Discuss how it can affect a child's behavior depending on the age of the child.

- V. Closing- give hand-outs

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session #2: Hand-out

Understanding the Impact of Emotional Problems on Children: When TRAUMA Happens Early

When something bad happens early in life in children, the effects can be many and varied. This is because the brain is still in a period of rapid development. Many parts are still growing. Many chemicals in the body are trying to determine how much they will be needed. If bad things happen a lot to young children, like physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, witnessing others fighting a lot, or being neglected, the brain may think that the body is constantly in danger and the body makes more of some types of chemicals than others. This can then affect how the brain grows and matures.

The child can be affected in two main ways. The brain may think it is in danger when it is not, or else, sometimes, since the brain thinks it is in constant danger as an infant, it becomes numb and quits responding to danger at all. Some children even start looking for dangerous things because they feel “comfortable” with the way the brain responds to danger.

That can affect the child in many ways:

May be numb

May over react to danger

May think they are in danger when they are not

May not develop healthy ways of coping with others

May not attach well to parent figures because of lack of trust

May become angry easily

May not show emotions easily

May be slow to show love and happiness

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session #2: Hand-out

Understanding The Impact of Emotional Problems on Children: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is an illness that can only occur when a child experiences something terrible that threatens their life (including their sense of self) or the life of someone else. With children, it is not necessary for them to experience the bad thing happening to themselves, or to witness the bad thing. They can be told or overhear about the bad thing.

Symptoms can occur in 4 areas:

- 1) Re-experiencing the bad thing
 - a) through bad dreams which may or may not be directly related to the event
 - b) acting out the event in their play
 - c) thoughts, images, or sounds about the event
 - d) acting out the event in other ways
- 2) Avoiding
 - a) avoiding talking about the event
 - b) avoiding people, places, or things that remind them of the event
- 3) Changing thoughts or feelings
 - a) thinking that the bad thing thing is their fault
 - b) difficulty feeling positive feelings like love or happy
 - c) difficulty feeling negative feelings like anger or sadness
 - d) thinking that they will not live a long time
 - e) feeling numb
 - f) believing they are a bad person
 - g) difficulty remembering all or part of the event
- 4) Arousal symptoms
 - a) irritability or anger
 - b) difficulty going to sleep or staying asleep
 - c) difficulty concentrating
 - d) startling easily
 - e) looking out for danger even when there is nothing there

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session #3:

Your Own Emotional Experiences

Goals: Parents will identify how their own childhood experiences may affect the way they parent

- I. Introductions/Cohesion - All members of the group introduce themselves, remind members about the names and ages of their children, then pick a card from Bright Spots and answer it. Let them know that if they pick a question that they don't feel comfortable answering, simply have them pick another question.
- II. Engage parents in a discussion of why they think that they parent their children the way they do.
 - A. Emphasize "learned behavior"
 - B. Emphasize the possibility of having their own traumas (the previous hand-out on Impact of Traumas and Early Traumas can be used again).
 - C. Have them talk about what they like about their parenting style versus what they don't like.
 - D. Have them identify what they would like to do differently.
- III. Closing - Give hand-out

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session #3: Hand-out
**Your Own Emotional Experiences - Facts About
Spanking and Corporal Punishment**

90% of parents nationally stated that they have used corporal punishment on their children

70% of parents condone the use corporal punishment
In Baltimore, the vast majority of parents have used or use corporal punishment, and will tell you that nothing else works. They believe it is the best way to manage child behavior

Parents who experienced corporal punishment as children are more likely to believe it is OK to hit, and their children are more likely to believe it too.

What we know from research:

There is a causal relationship between the use of corporal punishment and both ODD and Conduct Disorder in both middle school and high school children. What that means is - **when parents use corporal punishment, we see an increase in children in both middle school and high school**

who have symptoms of either oppositional behavior or serious conduct problems.

Anything more than occasional mild spanking (less than one time per month) is unhealthy for the child on all kinds of levels - developmental delays, psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression, increased behavior problems such as aggression, and even physical disorders. Researchers believe that there is a cumulative effect as well. **The more you spank, the more likely the child will have problems.**

Using objects, like belts, sticks, brooms, electrical wires, etc. also has the potential for additional physical harm to the child. Research shows that hitting a child is not as effective in the long run as using positive reinforcement and/or behavior plans. In fact, **the research shows that even if the parent increases the physical punishment, the behavior returns!**

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Session #3: Hand-out

Your Own Emotional Experiences- Alternatives to Hitting and Yelling

1. Say good things. Praise your children for **behaviors** you like. No child is bad all the time. Notice the good.
2. When you compliment your child on the behavior you like, don't tack on any reminder about their bad behaviors.
3. Work together to decide on the family rules. Make an activity out of it. Make a poster, color it, and put it where everyone can see. (You can make it into a sticker chart and give a sticker to a child you notice following the rules).
4. Practice what you preach. If you decide as a family that you are a "NO HITTING HOUSEHOLD," then you must follow the same rules.
5. Sometimes children act out to get attention. Ignore the behavior (unless the child could get hurt or hurt someone else). Make sure you notice the positive things they do though so they are still getting attention for the good stuff!
6. If your child breaks a toy by playing roughly or misuse, **do not replace it**. He will learn for the next time.

7. When you need to address something that the child has done wrong, **make sure to keep it about the behavior and not the child. Don't label your child as bad!** Children hear us and they begin to believe it and act that way.
8. If you give a consequence, keep it short enough to make your point, then talk with your child about the behavior you want, and allow the child new opportunities to show you he can do it. Then **PRAISE! PRAISE! PRAISE!**
9. Give choices you can live with. Don't threaten and then not follow through. **You must be consistent!!!**

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 4

Becoming a Positive Parent

Goal: to help parents identify the characteristics of positive parenting and to understand the tasks of different stages in a child's life

- I. Introductions/Cohesion Building - Have parents introduce themselves, name their children and say one positive statement about each child.
- II. Have each parent think about the worst teacher or boss they had during their lifetime and what it was they did not like (Therapist will write their comments on one side of a dry erase board, summarizing what they say to a word or phrase).
- III. Now have each parent think about the best teacher or boss they had during their lifetime and what it was they liked about them. (Therapist will write those comments on the other side of the board. Remember that the therapist can also contribute from their own experiences).
- IV. Encourage a discussion about how being a parent is about slowly allowing a child to take on more responsibilities throughout their development, and how best to do that while still having a positive relationship with their child. (Give hand-out on Helping Our Children Grow).
- V. Closing

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 4: Hand-out

Becoming a Positive Parent - Helping Our Children Grow

Infants depend upon their parents for all their needs- food shelter, protection. They cannot walk or communicate. They have no responsibilities in their life. (WOW - what a life!)

As they get older, we as parents slowly watch as they take over simple things like crawling and walking, holding their own bottle, and being able to explore their little world. It is their first steps towards being independent, but they still depend on us as parents to do most things for them and for us to keep them safe.

As toddlers, they may begin feeding themselves, but we have to be careful about making sure they eat healthy safe foods, because we know that their ability to make safe decisions has not developed. The same is true for where and how they play. We as parents are responsible for keeping them safe. We also start the process of them being responsible for their actions. We do this by showing them how to pick up their toys and put them away. Usually we start by doing it for them, then with them and eventually they take over this responsibility.

Throughout pre-K, kindergarten, and elementary school, they learn to master skills that they will need to be independent- something as simple as learning to tie their shoes to learning math skills so they can live in their world. Throughout this time of learning, parents still make the majority of decisions- where it is safe to play, who they play with, what time they should be in, etc.

By the time they are in their teens, they have most of the tools to begin functioning independently. Throughout their teen years, parents try to allow teens to make more and more of their decisions (with guidance, of course) so that they can be independent. For some teen-agers, this process is relatively smooth; for others, it is a constant struggle. It takes lots of practice and patience for both the parents and the teens, because often the teens think they are ready to take on more than the parent believes they are ready for. The goal is to keep talking to each other as this process happens.

Remember - the goal is a healthy functioning young adult!

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 5:

Core Parenting Skills of TIPS

Goal: to identify core parenting skills needed for parenting the difficult child

I. Introduction/ Cohesion Building: Have parents introduce themselves, give each a piece of paper and have them write their name and 2 questions on the paper. Then have them make a paper airplane. The therapist says go and then fly the paper airplanes around the room until the group leader says stop. You then have to find the owner of your airplane and both of you answer the 2 questions on the sheet. You then introduce the person whose airplane you got. The therapist then talks about why he/she chose this activity for introductions (concept of playing with your children).

II. Introduce the Parenting Pyramid Hand-out. Explore what each component means in real parenting and discuss as a group how well they are doing with finding balance in their parenting.

III. Ask about any specific problems they have encountered with their child over the past week, and begin to talk specifics about techniques parents can use. Teach parent how to follow child's play.

IV. Closing

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 5: Hand-out

Core Parenting Skills of TIPS

Attention and Involvement - Children need attention and involvement by parents in their lives. This attention gives them a base for learning to trust the world and begins the process of developing self esteem in themselves.

Listening - Listening to your child lets them know that they are valued and can be heard.

Talking - When a parent talks respectfully to a child the message they send is that they are considered important.

Playing - Playing with your child helps them develop mastery of their environment. It also can develop creativity and enhance their imagination. Playing also teaches cooperation.

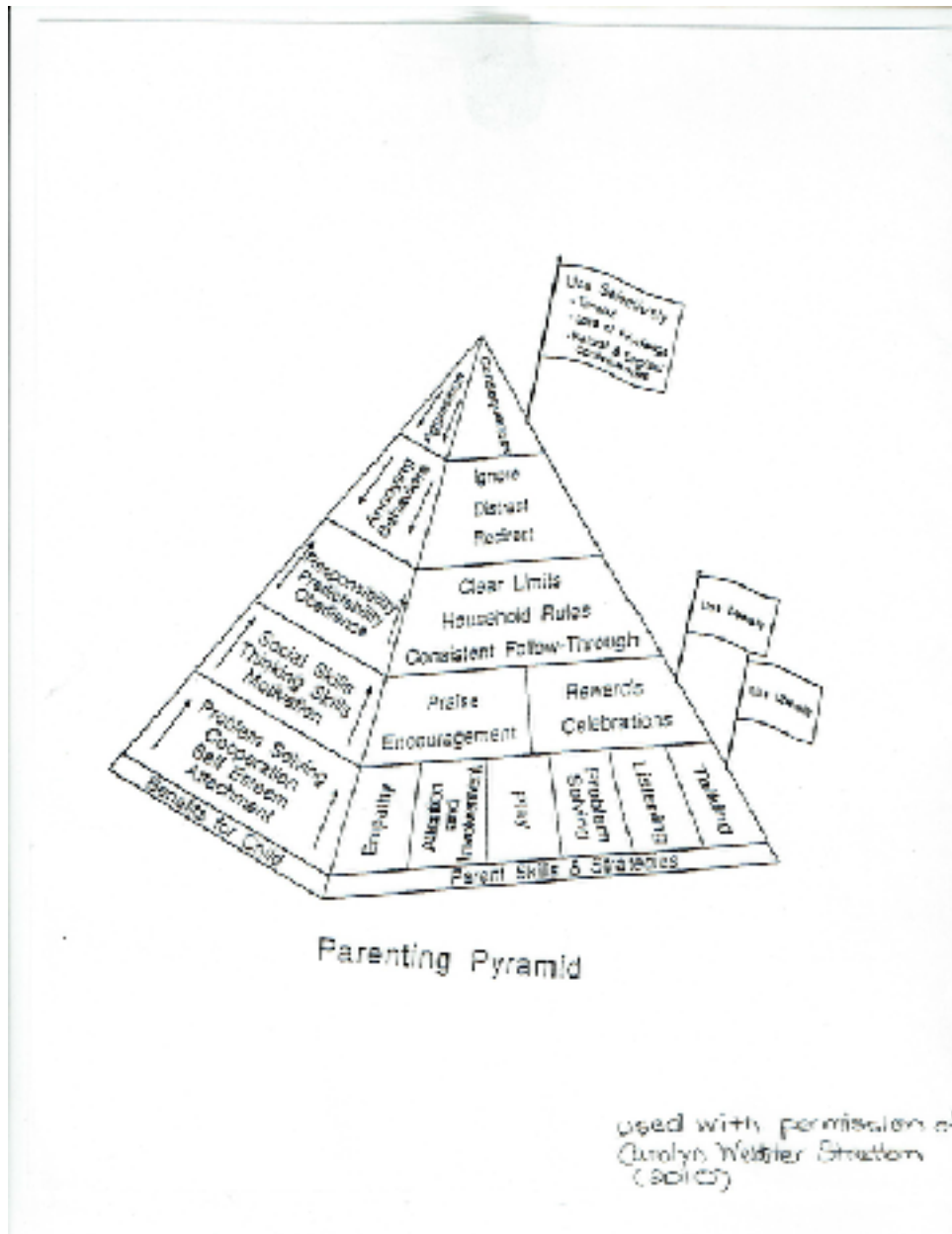
Problem Solving - Problem solving with your child helps your child begin to develop their ability to master their environment.

Empathy - Using empathy when interacting with your child shows children that they can connect to their environment. They feel more attached to others.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 5: Hand-out

Core Parenting Skills of TIPS- the Parenting Pyramid



Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 6

Giving Praise to Your Child/Teen - Using Positive Reinforcement

Goals: 1) to understand and identify positive reinforcement techniques; 2) to be able to give praise/compliments effectively

- I. Introductions/Cohesion Building - Have parents introduce themselves and tell of any way they played with their child or did something enjoyable with them this past week.
- II. Introduce the concept of positive reinforcement. Make a list of types of positive reinforcement they have seen or experienced.
- III. Introduce compliments as a no cost positive reinforcer. Teach the steps and practice with the group.
- IV. Closing

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 6: Hand-out

Giving Compliments

The Do's

1. Use basic "I" language (Start your praise with the words "I really like").
2. Be specific. (Tell your child exactly what it is that you like).
3. Use self disclosure to make your message clearer and to connect to your child.

The Don'ts

1. Don't give a double message (ex. "I really like the way you cleaned your room today. I wish you would do that everyday.").
2. Don't use sarcasm.
3. Don't be vague.

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Session 6: Handout

Positive Reinforcers

Positive Reinforcers are types of rewards given for a positive action you wish to see in your child. They don't need to cost a lot of money. In fact, you already give positive reinforcement if you smile at your child when they do something you like. Here are some ideas you can use:

Smiling

High 5's

Compliment the positive behavior

Playing a special game with your child

Doing a special activity with your child

Going to the park

Having a friend over to play

An extended bedtime (15-30 minutes)

A special snack

Movie night

As children get older, sometimes an allowance can be used as a positive reinforcer. Your expectations for the behavior should always be clearly spelled out. And once the behavior is spelled out, if the child performs the behavior, you should give the positive reinforcer as soon as possible. Don't change the rules midstream! Complete the agreement before spelling out a different behavior.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 7

How and When to Ignore Your Child

Goals: 1) to understand and use ignoring with your child, and 2) to pair it with positive reinforcement

I. Introductions/Building Cohesion - Have your parents introduce themselves and then have them pretend that the next parent is their child and give them a compliment. (If they cannot come up with something positive their child has done recently, have them take something they wish they would do, pretend that they did it and they are complimenting them).

II. Discuss ignoring and how it works. Discuss what often happens when you reinforce negative behavior.

III. Review and discuss Hand-out on Ignoring Bad Behavior

IV. Review Hand-out on Cursing and Calling People Names

V. Role play using ignoring and positive reinforcement.

VI. Closing

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 7: Hand-out

How and When to Ignore Your Child - Ignoring Bad Behavior

Situation: *It's time for Bentley to go to bed. She is watching TV. You say, "Bentley, it is time to turn off the TV, go upstairs and get into bed." She says, "Aw, Mom! Do I have to?" You respond, "Yes, you do." She then angrily turns the TV off with the remote and starts stomping up the stairs while mumbling under her breath.*

How do you respond? Which actions do you ignore? Which actions do you respond to?

Situation: *Ryan is supposed to clean his dishes up from the table after he eats a snack. You arrive home from work and he has not done it and now he is playing his video game.*

How do you respond?

Situation: *Mom arrives home after being at Grandmother's house fixing her a meal. When she gets home, April and Tara are watching Peppa Pig. They have blocks all over the living room and several games out with pieces all over the floor.*

How do you respond?

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session 7: Hand-out
**How and When to Ignore Your Child - When
Children Curse or Call You Names**

One of the most annoying, distressing, irritating things that can bother a parent is when their child curses or calls you or others disrespectful names.

Here are 3 responses parents can use:

**IGNORE
DISMISS
REDIRECT**

Ignore- Do not respond by giving any attention to the style of communication. Instead focus on what is bothering the child.

The child says: "I hate that f___ing Steve. He's a
butthead!"

The parent replies: " Sounds like you are really mad at
Steve. What happened?"

Dismiss- Let the child know that his behavior is unusual for him.

The Child says: "I hate that f___ing Steve. He's a
butthead!"

The parent replies: "You don't usually talk like that."

Redirect- You redirect the child back to the problem.

The Child says: "I hate that f___ing Steve. He's a
butthead!"

The parent replies: "Wow! What's the problem?"

Often, **dismiss** and **redirect** are paired together.

The Child says: "I hate that f___ing Steve! He's a butthead!"
The parent replies: You don't usually talk like that. what's the
problem?"

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 8

Increasing Your Child/Teen's Independent Functioning

Goal: Child will successfully play by themselves for short periods

I. Introductions/Building Cohesion - Have parents introduce themselves and answer the question, "Parents often tell me they don't have much time to themselves. What is one thing that you would like to have more time to do?"

II. Discuss how to progressively help children to begin to play independently. Help them identify a situation in their life where they are having trouble being able to complete an activity uninterrupted. This skill usually applies to younger children.

III. Role play the skills with the parent, using either another parent, yourself, or even a stuffed animal.

IV. Closing

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 8: Hand-out

Increasing Independent Play

1. Select an activity in which you would like to engage in uninterrupted. With younger children, it may be talking on the phone uninterrupted, making dinner, reading a book, etc.
2. Ask yourself, “Is the child at an appropriate age (developmentally) to engage in this independent play?” “If so, how much time can I reasonably expect to get for the child’s age and development?”
3. Explain the expectations to the child. “Mommy/Daddy needs to make a phone call, and I would like to not be interrupted. It will take about 5 minutes.”
4. Find an activity for the child. Ask the child what they would like to do while the parent is making the call. (Make sure it is something they can do safely).
5. Repeat the expectations. “I need to make a call. You can play with your action figures while I am on the call. I’ll be on for 5 minutes. Please do not interrupt me.”
6. Begin your activity. After a few minutes, stop briefly and give the child positive reinforcement, “you are doing great job coloring and not interrupting me while I am on the phone.”
7. If the child should try and interrupt you, simply say, “I am not to be interrupted until I finish. Please continue coloring.”

then the parent should return to their activity. Do not answer the question that the child is asking, and if at all possible, do not stop the call.

8. When the designated time is over, over even earlier if you think that the child may not be able to make it the full time, end the activity and praise the child for doing what you asked.

9. Keys to Success: Try not to answer whatever question the child asks. For example, if the child interrupts and says, "Mommy, can we go to the park after you are off the phone?" you say, "I am not to be interrupted while I am on the phone call. Please color until I get off." The less you engage with the child after you set up the expectations, the better. Your goal is to provide an opportunity for the child to successfully follow your directions. Gradually the time can be lengthened as the child learns and gets older.

10, Potential Failure Points: You must keep your end of the agreement. If you say you need 5 minutes, stop at 5 minutes or earlier. A child needs to know that you keep your word. Also - keep the developmental and cognitive level of the child in mind. Don't ask more of them than they can do.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 9

How To Set a Limit: Using Empathy and Choice

Goal: Parent will be able to set an effective limit with the least likelihood that the child/teen will become angry.

- I. Introduction: Parents will introduce themselves and ask them to describe one of their parents in 3 words.
- II. Introduce the concept of setting limits. Have parents discuss the hardest things they have to deal with when they have to set a limit. (Introduce common times when limits need to be set: time to come in, time to do your homework, time for bed, that's enough time playing video games, etc.) Help parents recognize that how and what they set limits on changes as children age.
- III. Discuss the limits that they or others put upon them as adults and how they feel about them.
- IV. Discuss what we know from research about how to set a limit. Discuss empathy; discuss choice. Role play how to do empathy with or without choice.
- V. Talk about timing of telling children what they need to do, and how to use it when possible.
- VI. Closing

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 9: Hand-out

Using Empathy and Choice When Setting Limits

Showing Empathy- the ability to put yourself in someone else's situation and feel what they might be feeling, and to communicate that feeling to others through verbal or nonverbal communication

Giving Choice- the ability to have options

Often parents need to set limits in order to keep children and teens safe. Ideally the goal is to have children do what we say with the least amount of conflict in the process. Research shows that children will respond better when limits are done with empathy. We also know through research that if we are able to give a choice when setting a limit, children respond with less frustration and anger. Putting both of those concepts in place whenever possible will lessen the chance of angry outbursts. Empathy appears to decrease anger even when a parent is not able to offer a choice because a child senses that we understand and sympathize.

Examples:

Showing No Empathy/Giving No Choice: Take the trash out right now!

Showing No Empathy/Giving Choice: I am tired of telling you over and over! Either take out the trash or go up to your room.

Showing Empathy/Giving No Choice: I realize you are watching your favorite show, but I need you to take out the trash now.

Showing Empathy/Giving Choice: I realize you are watching your favorite show, but I need you to take out the trash. Do you want to do it now or at the commercial?

TIPS:

1. Don't give a choice unless you are OK with the child picking **either** choice.
2. Whenever possible, choose how you confront a child or set a limit. Embarrassing a child in front of his/her friends should never be your first choice. (You wouldn't want something like that done to you).
3. If you give a choice and the child chooses to do the task later, remind to check after the agreed upon time to make sure that the task was carried out (and remember to give positive reinforcement for the completed task).

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills

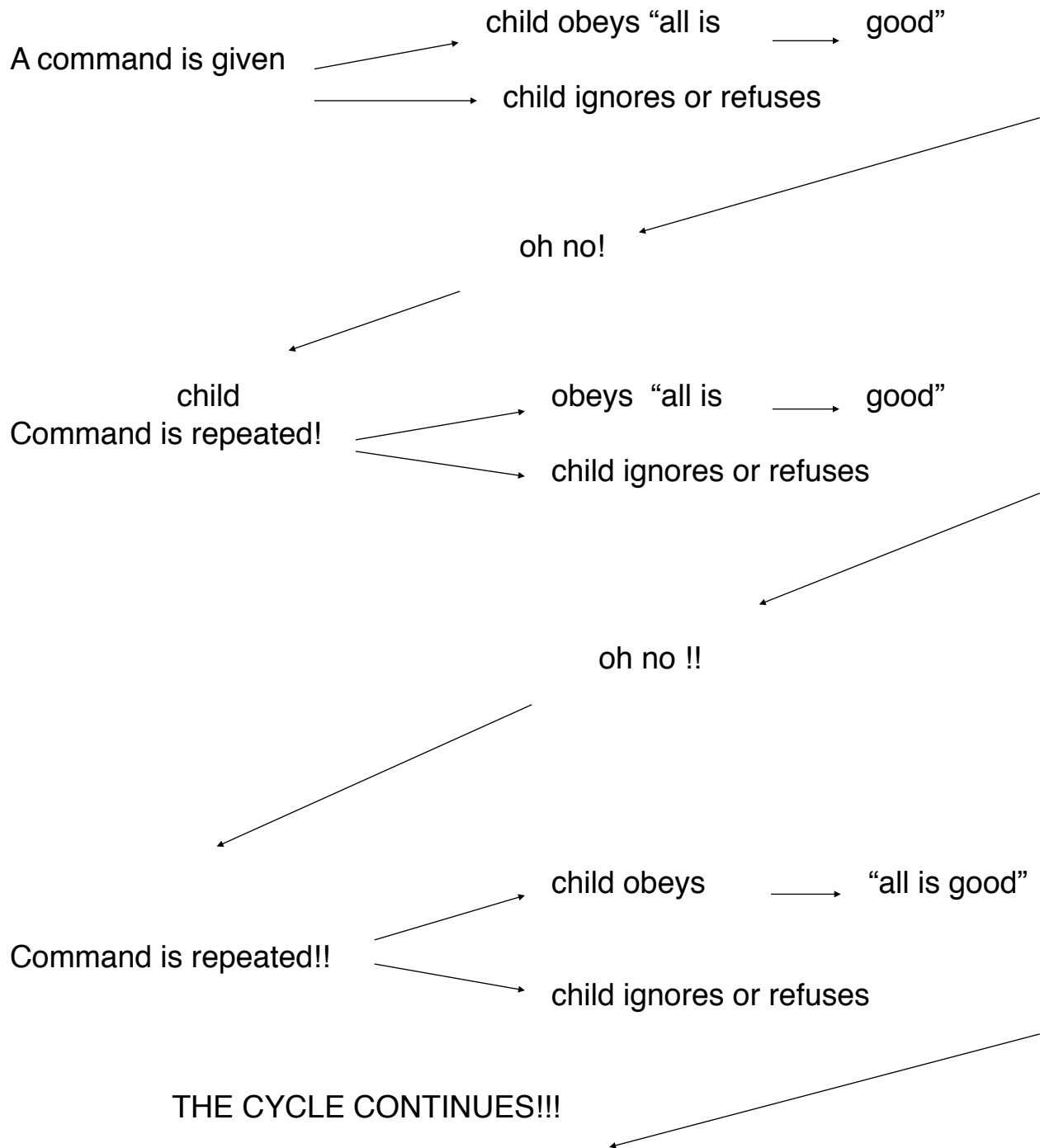
Session 10:

How to Give a Command and Follow Through

Goal: Parent will be able to give an effective command

- I. Introduction/Building Cohesion: Have parents introduce themselves by getting a ball and throwing it around. Whoever has the ball describes their favorite hobby.
- II. Have a discussion about giving commands
 - a. How were commands given when you were children?
 - b. How well did they follow directions/commands?
 - c. How do you feel about their own skills in giving directions/commands?
 - d. How well do you think your child follows directions/commands?
- III. Introduce the concept of the Negative Loop of Giving Commands.
- IV. Teach techniques for giving effective commands. Have parents practice with each other using the Crazy Command Game.
- V. Closing

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session 10: Hand-out
The Negative Loop of Giving Commands



Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 10: Hand-out

How to Give an Effective Command

Step 1: Make sure you have your child's attention. Parenting from across the room is often a mistake because a child's eyes will often tell you whether or not you have their attention. You also have to talk louder or yell to be heard.

Step 2: Give a clear command. The command should be specific. Use "I" language ("I would like you to clean your room." "I want all the dirty clothes put in the laundry room and bring all the dirty dishes to the kitchen.").

Step 3: Make sure that the command is understood and the child has heard all of the command. Have the child repeat the command back ("What is it I want you to do?"). When they repeat it back successfully, praise them for good listening.

Step 4: Make sure that the child completes the command. Your job is not through until the command is carried out.

Step 5: If the child/teen does not begin to follow the command, you should repeat the command and wait for the child to follow the command. Remember to use selective attention: If the child is in the process of completing the command, ignore unwanted behaviors like stomping and eye rolling. Also, interfering with the behavior they continue to do can be a simple way of getting their attention without yelling or grabbing them (standing in front of the TV, putting your hand on the toy, etc.)

Step 6: When the task is completed, praise the child again.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session 11
How To Understand Your Teen's Behavior

Goal: The parent will be able to understand better why a behavior is occurring and will be able to better respond and manage a behavior

- I. Introduction/Building Cohesion - Introduce the idea that behavior occurs for many reasons. Use eating ice cream as an example and list reasons for eating ice cream (tastes good, eat it because it makes you feel good, eat it when you are stressed, don't eat it at all because you gain weight, or eat it because you are trying to gain weight, etc.) Then ask members of the group to introduce themselves and their ice cream eating habit and why (if they are comfortable) they eat it or why they do not.

- II. Talk about why behavior occurs - what do children get from behavior. (See hand-out: Understanding Your Child's Behavior)

- III Present the ABC's of behavior analysis.

- IV. Encourage the parents to come up with a situation where their child/teen misbehaves, and analyze it using the ABC's. (You can use one parent's example for the entire group- hopefully one that other parents can relate to).

- V. Closing

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session 11: Hand-out
Understanding Your Child's Behavior

All behavior happens for a reason!!

REASONS INCLUDE:

- 1) Helps a child meet his goals
- 2) Provides important information to self and others about what a child needs
- 3) Gives a child/teen attention or rewards
- 4) Helps a child/teen avoid unwanted outcome (boredom, anxiety, punishment)
- 5) The behavior can also signal important needs- physical safety, emotional safety, structure, physical/health (e.g., sleep, eating, medical)

The goal is to figure out why the behavior is happening so you can change the behavior.

So.....

1. First, have the parent and child describe the behavior so that anyone seeing the behavior would describe it in the same way.
2. Next, collect information about the behavior. When and under what circumstances does the behavior occur? How often does it happen? How long does it last?
3. Clearly decide what is the behavior that concerns you. For example, Johnny starts refusing to ride the bus to school.

4. Next, use your ABC's to figure out what is happening. 'B' stands for behavior. Start with the **behavior**. Use the description you had to describe the behavior. (For example, Johnny started refusing to ride the bus 2 weeks ago).
5. 'A' stands for **antecedent**. That just means what happens before refusing to ride the bus started. You can write down things you observed as well as what other people/children observed, including the child who won't ride the bus to school.
6. 'C' stands for consequences. Next, identify the **consequences** of the behavior. What happened after the behavior?
7. Now plan how to stop the behavior in the future. There are frequently many ways to change things so that the behavior won't happen again.

For an example, see the chart below.

Antecedent (What happened before the behavior?)	Behavior (What actually happened?)	Consequences (What happened afterwards?)	Plan (What can we do to change the behavior?)
Mom noticed that he got off the bus 2 weeks ago, looking kind of angry and he went straight to his room.	Johnny started refusing to ride the bus	Dad started taking him to school.	Mother spoke to the principal who talked with the monitor on the bus. He started watching for any interactions.
She also noticed that he started asking her to take him to school.		He didn't have to interact with kids on the bus.	Johnny started sitting closer to the front of the bus.
She found out from a mom of another child that there were some older boys who were pushing him out of his seat and taking his book bag.			Give consequences for the older boys' behaviors.
Johnny then told her that it had been happening for a couple of weeks.			

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills
Session 12
Using Behavior Plans- How and When

Goal: The caregiver will understand the principles of an effective behavior plan, and be able to develop an effective plan for changing behavior in their child or teen.

- I. Introduction/Cohesion- Have parents introduce themselves and, if they would like, identify one behavior they would like to change in their child/teen.
- II. Introduce the concept of behavior plans. Ask parent/s to talk about what experience they have had with behavior plans in the past- what worked, what did not, etc.
- III. Talk about what behavior plans must have to be effective and under what circumstances behavior plans fail.
- IV. Have parent take a situation where a behavior plan is needed, and develop one.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills

Session 12: Hand-out

Creating Effective Behavior Plans

1. An effective behavior plan has a **Specific and Measurable Goal/s**- the goal is clearly spelled out, so that both the child and the parent know when the goal has been reached.
2. An effective behavior plan uses **Positive reinforcement before negative reinforcement**. When possible, start off with only positive reinforcement. If the behavior plan is still not changing behavior in a couple of weeks, assess whether or not the positive reinforcer is powerful enough, or whether a negative consequence should be put in place.
3. An effective behavior plan is **Realistic and Achievable**- the goal is something that the child can be successful doing relatively quickly. The goal may need to be adjusted as it is determined to be too hard or too easy to achieve.
4. An effective behavior plan is **Age appropriate**.
5. An effective behavior plan is **Enforceable**- caregiver can verify that the goal has been achieved
6. An effective behavior plan uses **Reinforcers that Cannot be Gotten Except Through the Behavior-plan**.
7. An effective behavior plan uses a **Powerful Reinforcer**. The best way to achieve this is through mutual discussion between parent and child.
8. An effective behavior plan places the caregiver in a **“Cheerleader” role**, so that they are not always criticizing what the child or teen is doing.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 12: Hand-out

How to Develop a Behavior Plan

- 1) Decide on a behavior you would like to try and change. (example - Keep room clean)

- 2) Put it in clear measurable terms that can be understood by both the parent and child (example - every evening at bedtime, toys will be put in the toy box and dirty clothes will be in the hamper)

- 3) Decide how the task will be verified as completed (for example - at a designated time, in this case 'bedtime.' the parent will check the room to make sure the tasks have been completed)

- 4) Decide on the reinforcer to be used. Ideally the parent and child should decide together. There should be an immediate reinforcer. You may also add a delayed reinforcer as well. (for example - the child may earn a sticker every time his room is clean when checked at the designated time. Every time he has earned 5 stickers, he may earn a prize from the Prize Bag which the parent has created).

- 5) The parent should use positive reinforcement every time the goal is reached. If the goal is not reached, refrain from nagging or being critical. Stay positive

(for example - simply tell the child that you are confident that he can be successful and encourage him to try again tomorrow).

6) Allow time for the behavior plan to work. Follow it exactly as you set it up. Don't create new rules mid-stream. You may find that the expectations are too easy or hard. You may find that the reinforcer is not the right one and you may have to adjust it. Tell the child that you will work together to make it just right for both of you. A good behavior plan is a win-win situation for both the parent and the child.

7) If needed, a negative reinforcer can be added later, but don't make a situation where a child gets themselves in a negative hole and cannot get out (for example- if a child can earn points, but you take away points for certain behaviors, do not allow the child/teen to go into negative points. It will create a feeling of hopelessness- the opposite of what you are trying to achieve. Reassess your plan.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session 12: Hand-out
Using Behavior Plans: Types of Reinforcers

For Younger Children:

Stickers (immediate reinforcer)
Points (immediate reinforcer)
Picking out a special dessert at dinner
Going to the park
Pizza night (usually a delayed reinforcer)
TV time (limited time)
Watching a special show
Having a friend over
Breakfast on Saturday (delayed reinforcer)
Grab Bag Prize (delayed reinforcer)
Others?

For Older Children:

Points
Computer time
Gameboy time
Telephone use/time
Money (never offer more than you can afford- assume they will be successful)
Sleep-over with a friend (delayed reinforcer)
Movie night
Others?- be creative

Trauma Informed Parent Skills (TIPS)

Session 13:

Responding to Bad Behavior- Giving Consequences

Goal: Be able to choose the most effective, least restrictive consequence for a child that will stop the behavior, and yet maintain a strong parent-child relationship, and quickly allow a child to learn from their behavior.

- I. Introduction/Building Cohesion- Have parents introduce themselves, and, if comfortable, talk about the types of consequences they have used with their children in the past (parents may also wish to talk about the types of consequences they were given as children).
- II. Discuss different types of consequences (See hand-out) and when they are appropriate for different situations.
- III. Have parents take situations with their own child and evaluate the impact of using the different types of consequences on the behaviors.
- IV. Closing

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills

Session 13: Hand-out

Types of Behavioral Consequences

Natural Consequences- Natural consequences are ones that cannot be given by a parent. They are consequences that automatically happen as a result of the behavior itself.

A parent can only interfere with the natural consequence. For example- if a child refuses to eat breakfast at 8 AM, then comes to you and tells you he is hungry at 10 AM, that is a natural consequence. A parent can feed the child then or tell them that lunch will be served at noon. If they feed the child immediately, the parent interferes with the natural consequence. If the parent informs the child that they must wait to eat until lunchtime, they reinforce the consequence.

Direct Consequences- Parent gives a consequence directly related to the behavior. For example- A child is allowed to go outside after he completes his homework. His curfew is 8 PM at night, but he does not come home until 8:30. A direct consequence would be that the next 2 nights he is not allowed to go outside after his homework is done. A good rule of thumb for how long a direct consequence would be is **“You want the consequence to be long enough for the child to get the message, but not so long that it does not give the child a chance to demonstrate that they have learned from their behavior.”**

Indirect Consequences- Parent gives a consequence that is indirectly related to the behavior. For example- a child is caught smoking. The parent then has the child volunteer at a nearby cancer center.

Punishment- Parent gives a consequence that is not related to the behavior. For example- having a child stand in a corner with a book on his/her head. Punishments, while they may be effective in the short term, can have lasting negative consequences on a child (can make the child feel angry or hopeless). They are also given when a parent is very angry and may be excessive and/or harmful.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 14:

What to Do When You Are Angry

- I. Introduction/Building Cohesion- Have parents introduce themselves and talk about what they currently do to manage their own anger around their children.
- II. Discuss healthy versus unhealthy ways of coping with anger.
- III. Discuss the 3 D's and the R- Delaying, Distraction, Doing Something Incompatible with Anger, and Relaxation.
- IV. Closing

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session 14: Hand-out
What to Do When You're Angry - Delay

Delay Processing Form

Delaying before you discuss something that is bothering you can be helpful in allowing yourself time to cool down, decide what you want to say, and say it in a way that gets your point across but does so in a strong, respectful way. Use the following form when you are angry to help you identify your feelings and thoughts while delaying. Then come up with ways to communicate those thoughts and feelings using assertive communication (strong talk).

What happened or was said that bothered you?

What are you thinking? How are you feeling?

Do you need to communicate those thoughts and feelings to someone? yes ___ no ___
Who do you need to talk to? _____

Use "I" language to write down the main points of what you would like to say.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session 14: Hand-out
What to Do When You're Angry - Distraction

My Distraction List

Distraction is known to be effective in letting go of or decreasing anger. Having lots of ways to distract yourself when angry may mean the difference between keeping a friendship and losing a friendship because of mean talk. Make your list of distraction techniques that you can use. Include those to be used in different environments, i.e. school, home, work, playground, etc. Be specific. After you have decreased your anger, you can then use the Delay Processing Form to plan how to talk to the person.

At Home

At School

Outside

At Work

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 14: Hand-out

**What to Do When You're Angry - Do Something
Incompatible with Anger**

My Absolutely Fun Activity List

Name 5 things you could do that would bring you joy or happiness. Add ideas to your list and let it grow as you grow!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)
Session 14: Hand-out
What to Do When You're Angry - Relax

There are lots of ways to relax. We can use relaxation to help us calm our body and feel less angry. Figure out which ways to relax work best for you, and practice, practice, practice!

My body lets me know I am stressed when:

My body lets me know I am relaxed when:

Relaxation Ideas

Progressive Muscle Relaxation
Imagery
Exercise
Mindful Eating
Listening to Music

Relaxation skills for me to practice:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 15

Handling Criticism/Disrespect From Your Child/Teen

Goals: to utilize techniques when your child is being disrespectful that will assist your child in calming down and becoming more respectful in his/her communications with you.

I. Introduction/Cohesion Building - Have parents introduce themselves and have them talk about the issues that create the most anger when working.

II. Introduce the idea that we, as parents, can affect our children's behavior by our own actions, and that the best way to do that is through modeling respectful communication with our children, even when they don't use respect. Discuss why traumatized children may need a different approach to managing their disrespectful behavior.

III. Give hand-out on "Maintaining Respectful Communication When Being Disrespected".

IV. Teach skills and allow practice time with parent.

V. Closing

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills (TIPS)

Session 15: Hand-out

Managing Respectful Communication While Being Disrespected

- 1) Avoid the tendency to flee (be passive) or fight (be aggressive). Try not to over-react.
- 2) Determine whether or not it is safe to utilize techniques for handling verbal aggression.
- 3) Be able to actively listen when someone is aggressive, giving them time to run down.
- 4) Respond to cursing or name calling, using ignoring, dismissing, and redirecting responses.
- 5) Be able to use empathic responses (statements of concern).
- 6) Be aware of your non-verbal communication. It should have a calming effect rather than an escalating effect.
- 7) Use reflection to make sure you accurately understand the problem. (For example - “what you are saying is that you think I am being unfair to you for grounding you?”)
- 8) Help the person put vague complaints into more precise ones (Negative inquiry- “what exactly are you angry with me for?”).
- 9) Follow up with questions to clarify the problem and redirect to problem solving.

Tips:

- 1) Empathy and active listening are essential.
- 2) Do not go to problem solving too quickly. People first need to feel heard.

Trauma Informed Parenting Skills
Session 16
Taking Care of Yourself

- I. Introduction/ Cohesion Building - Have parents introduce themselves and talking about which skills they have learned that they feel have been the most important and which skills they feel have not worked for them.
- II. Discuss the idea that self care can make the difference between being successful at parenting a child who has been traumatized and being unsuccessful.
- III. Identify signs that a parent needs a break from parenting.
- IV. Explore ways that parents can recharge themselves given their circumstances.
- V. Closing

