

## TRAUMA AND INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (IDD)

### QRTP Infosheet: Issue Five

Written in collaboration with Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

### WHO DOES TRAUMA EFFECT?

People with disabilities are more likely to experience trauma at every point in the “life cycle of a traumatic event” and, unfortunately, are more likely to be exposed to abuse.



The rate of child abuse and neglect is at least 3 times higher in children with disabilities than in the typically developing population\*



Youth with IDD are also more likely to experience changes in school, residential placements, and out-of-home settings\*\*



More than 90% of the time, abuse is inflicted by a person charged with protecting and supporting a person with a disability\*\*\*

### CHARACTERSTICS OF TRAUMA

Trauma includes not being accepted, not being able to do what others do, knowing that one is “different” than others, not being listened to/understood, failing at a task.

#### CHARACTERISTICS THAT INFLUENCE RATES OF TRAUMA

- Early exposure to trauma
- Decreased adaptive coping skills
- Naturally occurring isolation
- Lower levels of social skills and social support
- Poor social skills development
- Communication skills deficits
- Limited or inability to detect who is safe to be around
- Lack of instruction on how to self-protect
- Heightened family and maternal stress/depression
- Sense of learned helplessness
- Physical challenges i.e., motor skills, epilepsy

#### COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Hyper-vigilance
- Avoidance
- Intrusion
- Negative thoughts/moods
- Easily startled
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty remembering
- Low energy
- Lack of interest in things or people
- Flashbacks/nightmares
- Physical symptoms

\* Jones L, Bellis MA, Wood S., Prevalence, and risk against children with disabilities, *Lancet* 2012

\*\*NCTSN, NADD, *The Impact of Trauma on Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 2020\

\*\*\*Envision, Cincinnati Study, 2014

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## RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT

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### SAY

- “I’m sorry that happened to you”
- “Thank you for trusting me enough to share that”
- “I believe you”
- “I support you, whatever you chose to do”



### DO

- Show genuine concern
- Have a safe face, voice, and posture
- Create environments of safety, choice, and connection
- Be a sounding-board for practicing personal empowerment
- Help staff in day and residential programs understand the prevalence of trauma and its impact on the body, brain, and development



### LEARN

- **Resilience Playlist** - [a playlist of videos](#) by Mary Vicario, Finding Hope Consulting and Sarah Buffie, Soul Bird Consulting about understanding trauma and resilience, hand model of the brain, reflect/honor/connect, 3 P’s, etc.
- **Growing Family Resilience** - [a short video series](#) by Sarah Buffie about tools to use to connect with someone who may have experienced trauma or toxic stress.
- **Trauma-Informed Biographical Timelines** - [a page](#) including links to three webinars by Sarah Buffie, plus a reading list, resources, slides, etc. From that link, scroll down and you will see the Nadine Burke Harris (Former California Surgeon General), John Bowlby (British Psychoanalyst), ACE’s info, and more.
- **Strong Resilient Youth** - Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center and McKinsey Health Institute collaborated to develop [a free, interactive training series](#) for educators, focused on equipping them with the foundational knowledge and trauma-informed skills needed to support youth.

For more information, visit the [Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities TIC Website](#)