Resource Family Connection

News, Events, and Information Benefiting the Children of Waukesha County

January and February, 2022

Caregiver Trauma and Resilience: Tips to Keep Caring

By: Coalition for Children, Youth and Families

Compassionate and empathic people often lean toward caregiving roles. But these same traits that make for great caregivers of children who come from hard places also leave you vulnerable to experiencing secondary trauma and trauma of your own.

There have been several terms coined over the years to describe the stress of caring for someone who has experienced trauma. “Compassion fatigue,” “trauma burnout,” and “secondary trauma” are just a few examples. Literature often conflicts or overlaps with the definitions of these terms. However, there is an undeniable shared experienced that nearly every compassionate foster, adoptive, or relative caregiver of a child who has suffered trauma knows. It is the feeling of always being on high alert, always trying to keep everyone regulated, always trying to avoid triggers, always bracing for the unpredictable behaviors that come with trauma. It can become exhausting and, well, just plain traumatizing for the caregiver.

Recognizing the Signs

The day in and day out stress of caring for a child who has suffered trauma can take a toll physically, mentally, and emotionally. As one foster parent put it: “I went from happy and care-free to being constantly anxious. Every time my phone rings, I immediately break out in a sweat and feel sick to my stomach, knowing it’s the school saying she’s had ‘another incident’ and I have to leave work to come to get her. I know that her healing depends on me holding it together, but sometimes I feel like I just want to run away.”

Prolonged enough, the constant stress of working with a child who has trauma-driven behaviors can be debilitating for the parent or caregiver. Some signs you’re experiencing caregiver trauma may include:

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Chronic exhaustion
- Headaches, stomach aches, or other physical ailments
- Difficulty sleeping
- Panic attacks
- Decreased empathy
- Negativity
- Impaired decision-making or lack of trust in own judgement
- Loss of pleasure in things you enjoy
- Feeling overwhelmed or defeated

Some parents find they need to shut down just to make it through the day because they “just can’t anymore.” Without intervention, this constant stress can result in a compromised ability to care for much more than just the child’s basic daily needs. Parents then become ineffective in helping the child heal and develop healthy coping skills to replace the trauma behaviors.

Strategies for Resilience

We know that a child’s healing doesn’t happen overnight. So, how can parents and caregivers minimize the possibility of being traumatized while caring for a child with a trauma history?

- Seek out the help of a professional. Find a trauma-informed therapist or counselor.
- Find a safe, non-judgmental place to talk about what you’re experiencing. Even confidential online groups can be enormously helpful.
- Build a strong support system of peers with shared experience who understand, such as fellow foster, kinship, or adoptive parents.
- Focus daily on the child’s strengths and things you love about them. Challenge yourself to find something “going right” each day, even if it’s a baby step. It becomes too easy to identify the child by the challenging behaviors, and shifting the focus can help dramatically.
- Make time for self-care! Carve out time to read a book, laugh with a friend, get your nails done, or watch a football game uninterrupted. Do something that recharges your battery.
- Identify a trusted sitter or two who can give you short breaks on a regular basis.
- Develop and practice “go-to” interventions you know will keep you regulated when your child isn’t.
- Find humor in the hard situations. (One mom said that when her daughter was dysregulated, she would call her awful names. Rather than taking it personally, she would calmly challenge her daughter to come up with more creative ones, sometimes even offering ridiculous suggestions.)

Asking for Help

Perhaps the most important strategy for coping with trauma is to be open and willing to reach out for help and support. Trauma is hard - really hard. No one can deal with or heal from trauma in a vacuum. The good news is that you’re not alone.

Helping Your Child Heal After Trauma
Reviewed by: Allison T. Dovi, PhD

Parents do everything they can to protect their children. But sadly, many kids have gone through trauma.

A trauma is any event that is deeply upsetting, scary, or harmful. Things like abuse, violence, accidents, or natural disasters can be traumas. Becoming homeless, losing a parent, or a serious illness can be traumas too.

Traumas are serious events that cause kids to fear for their life or safety.

After a trauma, the emotional effects can last a long time. It can be hard to move on. For some kids, trauma can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

But kids can recover after trauma. There is therapy that can help. Kids also need extra support and comfort from parents.

How Does Trauma Affect Kids?
Trauma affects a child's sense of safety and trust. After a trauma, kids can still feel tense or scared. Some feel alone, sad, angry, or guilty. They may think they are to blame for what happened to them. For some kids, there's a loss of self-esteem or dignity. For some, there's deep grief.

Trauma also can affect a child's mood, behavior, or sleep. Some kids become depressed. They might act grumpy or seem sad. Some get in trouble more often, or do worse in school. Some have new fears, or trouble sleeping. Some have upsetting memories, called flashbacks. Often, kids avoid things that remind them of what they've been through.

After a trauma, some kids share how they feel. But other kids keep things to themselves. They may try to hide how they feel, or try to push it out of their minds. They may think others expect them to "get over it." Some just don't have words for their feelings. For any of these reasons, a parent might not know what their child is going through.

How Does Therapy Help Kids Heal After a Trauma?
Therapy gives kids a way to safely share their feelings, tell their story, and get support. In therapy, kids learn to talk about what they've been through. They learn coping and calming skills. They learn to adjust the way they think and feel about the trauma. Slowly, they learn to face things they used to avoid. Therapy helps kids find their own courage and gain confidence.

Child therapy for trauma is called trauma-focused cognitive-behavioral therapy (or TF-CBT). Therapy includes talk, play, and learning activities that heal trauma.

TF-CBT helps parents too. It's natural for parents to feel upset about what their child has been through. In therapy, parents get the support they need. They get advice on how to help their child at home.

In TF-CBT, parents can play a big role in their child's healing. They are coached to listen in ways that help their child open up, talk, and feel close. They help their child practice coping skills at home. They share in the good feelings as their child makes progress.

How Can I Find Therapy for My Child?
Talk to your child's doctor. Let them know what your child has been through. Your child's doctor cares about your child's mental health too.

Ask your child's doctor to refer you to a trained child therapist who can help. You might need to take your child to therapy once a week for a few months. But you'll see progress along the way.

How Can I Give My Child the Extra Support They Need?
After a trauma, kids need your support and comfort more than ever. Be sure to:

- **Spend time with your child.** Do things that are soothing, relaxing, or fun. Cook together, take a walk, play, read, make art, or sing. Try to do this every day, even if it's only for a few minutes.
- **Parent with patience and warmth.** Use kind words. Give praise when your child is doing well or trying hard. Let your child know you're proud of them. Be patient when they make a mistake. Show them how to try again.
- **Show love.** Use hugs, smiles, words, and caring actions to show your love. Use soothing words and offer comfort when your child is upset.
- **Have soothing routines.** Take a few minutes at bedtime (or any time) to read a story, snuggle together, or sing to your young child. For older kids, make it a routine to give a good night hug, along with a few minutes to talk, listen, or laugh together. Those extra few minutes with you can help your child feel calm, safe, and relaxed.

These may seem like small things - things you already do. But giving extra support and time keeps your child feeling loved and close to you. After a trauma, that closeness matters more than ever.

Local Winter Farmers Markets

Milwaukee
Agricultural vendors offer high quality fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs, poultry, and dairy products. Local food vendors also bring a wide variety of freshly baked goods, jams, cider, honey, maple syrup, sauces, and soups, as well as delicious global cuisine.
When: Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Duration: November 6, 2021 to April 9, 2022
Where: (New location!) Gather at Deer District, 333 W. Juneau Ave., Suite B, Milwaukee, WI
For Additional Information: https://fondymke.org/milwaukee-winter-farmers-market

Stone Bank (Oconomowoc)
We are a working farm located in Stone Bank, Wisconsin, providing fresh produce, dairy products, poultry, pork, and organic grass-fed beef, as well as a wide variety of artisanal foods.
When: Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Duration: November 6, 2021 to March 26, 2022
Where: N68W33208 County Road K, Oconomowoc, WI
For Additional Information: https://stonebankmarket.com/

Outdoor Winter Activities - Dress Warm! :-)

DelaFREEZE
Join us for our 4th annual DelaFREEZE event in Delafield! The Delafield Chamber of Commerce and its business members come together to provide live ice carvings and fun activities throughout the Delafield area.
Date: Saturday, January 8, 2022
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Award Ceremony at 3:00 p.m. at Revere's, 505 Wells St, Delafield, WI)
Where: Downtown Delafield
For Additional Information: https://delafieldchamber.com/delafreeze

Winterfest New Berlin
Annual outdoor festival featuring a wide variety of frosty family fun.
Date: Saturday, January 8, 2022
Time: 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Where: John J. Malone Park, 3953 S. Casper Dr, New Berlin, WI
For Additional Information: https://www.facebook.com/events/204381318503348

Waukesha Janboree
Fireworks, make and play activities, pancake breakfast, penguin egg hunt, games, and much more!
Date: January 14 - January 23, 2022
For Additional Information: https://www.janboree.org/

Helpful Links

2-1-1
2-1-1 connects you with thousands of nonprofit and government services in your area. If you want personal assistance, call the three-digit number 2-1-1 or 877-947-2211, or go to their website.
Website: https://211wisconsin.communityos.org/

Winter Car Safety
Make an emergency kit for your car, prepare your car for emergencies, and car safety tips.
Website: https://www.ready.gov/car

Free Online Games

PBS Kids
PBS Kids has a variety of kids games that you can play online for free. No download required.
Website: https://pbskids.org/

Learn 4 Good Games
We have spent over 12 years creating this online games site, and believe that we have added some of the best classic-style and newest free games for kids, teens, and families to enjoy.
Website: https://www.learn4good.com/games/index.htm

Winter Activities in Waukesha County Parks

Enjoy cross country skiing, dog walking, dog parks, sledding, snowshoeing, and hiking.
Website: https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/winteractivities

Waukesha Public Library Online Fun and Services

Brainfuse HelpNow
Homework help with live tutors, real time skills building, submit essays to the writing lab for constructive feedback, homework questions, and more. You need a library card to access this service.
For Additional Information: https://landing.brainfuse.com/authenticate.asp?u=main.bridgesparent.wi.brainfuse.com

Flipster Digital Magazines
More than 80 magazines to download on your phone, tablet, or computer with library card.
For Additional Information: https://bridgeslibrarysystem.org/flipster-e-magazines

Hoopla
Hoopla is a groundbreaking digital media service offered by your local public library that allows you to borrow movies, music, audiobooks, ebooks, comics, and TV shows to enjoy on your computer, tablet, or phone - and even your TV!
For Additional Information: https://www.hoopladigital.com/

New Year Creativity Online Workshop

Join Angela Johnson, professional artist, creativity coach, and educator, in this interactive workshop as she guides you through mindfulness exercises to help cultivate your personal creativity and inspire you to start the year strong. Free online event.
Date: Saturday, January 22, 2022
Time: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Website: https://www.facebook.com/events/224702546419739

Craft Recipes

Make your own play dough, gak, and puffy paint at home!
Website: https://www.4-c.org/craft-recipies/

Paint Your Own Pottery

A Touch of Glaze - Waukesha
A Touch of Glaze is a new type of ceramic studio for people of all ages to come in and paint a piece of bisque (unfinished pottery). Our pottery selection ranges in price from $2.99 to $60, with the majority being in the $8 to $25 range. We use an all-inclusive pricing system, so the price you see on the price tag is what you pay (not including sales tax).
For Additional Information: https://paint471.wixsite.com/atouchofglaze

La Terraza - Wauwatosa
Paint your own pottery. Walk-ins can come in any time, no reservations! Great for all ages from toddlers to adults! No artistic experience necessary! Choose from thousands of pieces, a large selection of colors, and let our knowledgeable staff guide you into creating your own unique master piece. Prices include all paint, brushes, firing, and personal instructions!
Price: Child - Piece price plus $3.00 each; Adult - Piece price plus $5 each; Piece prices start at $4.98 and up.
For Additional Information: https://potteryfun.com/

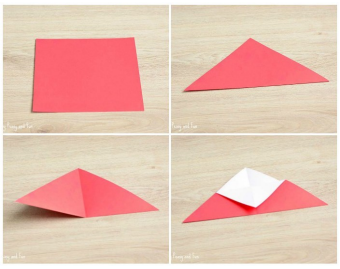
Pepper It Up - Waukesha
Welcome to my home studio where you can paint bowls, mugs, plates, platters, boxes, figures, etc.! Over 250 different pieces to choose from and over 200 different awesome glazes! No group is too small or too large. There are no extra charges. Prices indicated include the pottery piece, the glaze, and the firing. Prices start at $9.00.
For Additional Information: https://www.facebook.com/PepperItUp/

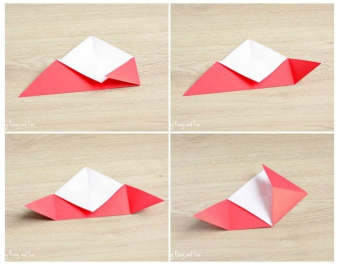
Craft Time!
Heart Corner Bookmarks
By: easypeasyandfun.com

This is a fun craft to do with kids (and adults!) of all ages and encourage reading at the same time!

What You'll Need:
- Origami Paper in Red (or Pink!)
- Scissors

What You'll Do:
1. Fold the origami paper diagonally across both diagonals. Fold into a triangle. Grab the top of the triangle and fold it toward the bottom.
2. Fold the left and right angle towards the middle. Unfold. Fold the left and right angle towards the top and "tuck them into the pocket."
3. Cut the heart shape with scissors.





Additional Training and Events

Due to COVID-19 and social distancing, we currently are not having any in-person trainings or informational sessions. A survey will be distributed at a later time regarding in-person trainings.

Caregiver Connection
Caregiver Connection is a group for kinship and foster parents. This group will provide education, support, and networking for these caregivers residing in Waukesha County.

This is a virtual group on Microsoft Teams.

January Topic: Parenting in the Age of Screens, Social Media, and Gaming
Description: We look at the dangers and benefits of social media, gaming, and online culture, and discuss some ways that parents can keep their children safe while still allowing them access to the online world.
Date: January 18, 2022
Time: 6:00 p.m.
To Register: Email Rhonda Klinger at rklinger@waukeshacounty.gov by January 17

February Topic: Raising Resilient Kids
Description: We will talk about resilience, define what it is, and why it is so important for kids in our care.
Date: February 23, 2022
Time: 6:00 p.m.
To Register: Email Rhonda Klinger at rklinger@waukeshacounty.gov by February 22

Craft Time!
Snow Paint
By: growingajeweledrose.com

What You'll Need:
- Shaving Cream
- White School Glue (Chilled)
- Peppermint Extract (Optional)
- Iridescent Glitter or Buffalo Snow (Optional)

What You'll Do:

1. Put the glue in the refrigerator overnight to chill, but then leave the glue out on the counter for about 10 minutes prior to starting so it will flow a little easier.
2. Combine roughly equal parts of chilled glue and shaving cream in a bowl.
3. Sprinkle in glitter or buffalo snow if desired. You can also add a few drops of peppermint extract for a wintery scent.
4. Grab some paper and have fun with making snowy creations.

Waukesha County Foster Parent Information Sessions
Open to Waukesha County residents interested in learning more about foster care in our community. Also required for any new foster parents. The information sessions will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams.

Date: January 12, February 9, 2022
Time: 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Date: January 27, February 24, 2022
Time: 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

To Register: Email Rhonda Klinger (rklinger@waukeshacounty.gov). Please include your full name, email, and the information session that you plan to attend.

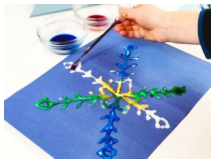
Healing Hearts of Waukesha County
Free, local peer groups welcome children, youth, and families who grieve loss due to death, divorce, addiction, incarceration, deportation, or military deployment. In person and virtual groups available.
For Additional Information: https://www.healingheartsofwaukeshaco.org/

Craft Time!
Watercolor Salt Painting
By: thebestideasforkids.com and teachbesideme.com

What You'll Need:
- Construction Paper
- Salt
- Glue
- Watercolor Paints
- Eye Dropper or Paint Brush
- Pencil

What You'll Do:
1. Draw a snowflake on a piece of paper.
2. Trace over the snowflake with glue.
3. Sprinkle salt over the wet glue and let it dry.
4. Paint the walt with watercolors either by dripping it on with an eye dropper or with a paint brush.

Tips:



- When you are done, you can store the remainder salt to use again for another salt craft. DO NOT EAT IT!
- Pour a lot of salt over the image to ensure full coverage.
- You can also use food coloring, but the color may not be as vibrant.
- Use very little water so the color will be more vibrant and the paper won't get too wet.
- You can paint after the glue dries or right away.

Contact Numbers:

Foster Care Social Workers:

Waukesha County Health & Human Services
262-548-7212

Michelle Lim, Foster Care Supervisor
262-970-4761

Cassie BeLow 262-896-8574
Rhonda Klinger 262-548-7240
Jennifer Mantei 262-548-7250
Libby Sinclair 262-548-7277
Hilary Smith 262-548-7254

Case Management Social Workers:

Angie Sadler, Ongoing Social Work Supervisor
262-548-7272

Eric Calvino, Ongoing Social Work Supervisor
262-548-7271

Jennifer Eiler, Ongoing Social Work Supervisor
262-548-7260

Nicole Allende..... 262-548-7265
Jamie Carter 262-548-7264
Kimberly Dudzik 262-548-7347
Stephanie Engle..... 262-548-7424
Megan Fishler..... 262-896-8570
Abbey Girman..... 262-548-7695
Sharon Godwin 262-548-7684
Laura Jahnke..... 262-548-7359
Jessica Larsen 262-548-7346
Maria Maurer 262-548-7345
Jessica Palmersheim 262-896-8281
Johanna Ploeger 262-896-6857
Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349
Kim Sampson..... 262-548-7273
Linda Senger..... 262-548-7698
Brittany Sutton 262-548-7262

Children's Mental Health Outreach
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911

Family Emergency: 211 or 262-547-3388

If an Allegation of Abuse or Neglect has been made against you, please call:

FASPP
Norma Schoenberg
920-922-9627