

# Trauma Informed Practices (TIPs)

**Child trauma** occurs when a child experiences significant distress following a frightening, dangerous, violent, or tragic event or series of events. The traumatic event(s) may have happened directly to the child, or may have been something they witnessed taking place.



Understanding trauma helps adults to be more responsive in implementing effective trauma sensitive strategies and interventions. This fosters an environment where a child can feel safe.



Using a **trauma-informed lens** allows adults to recognize and not misinterpret why a child is acting a certain way.



Child trauma often stems from **adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**. For more information on ACEs, visit [decyde.ca/educational-materials/#tips](https://decyde.ca/educational-materials/#tips)

"Neurobiologically, students can't learn if they don't feel safe, known, and cared for within their schools."

Aupperle et al., 2012



Traumatic experiences affect everyone differently. We should not judge what we think is traumatic to the child.



Protective factors can build resilience and mitigate the effects of trauma.

Learn more here:

[decyde.ca/educational-materials/](https://decyde.ca/educational-materials/)

## Effects of Traumatic Experiences

Trauma and stress may alter a young person's brain development, impacting memory, learning, behaviour and relationships.

### Memory & Learning

Forgetfulness	Short attention span
Difficulty concentrating on simple tasks	Distracted & disengaged
Difficulty with language, communication & processing new information	Challenges transitioning to new tasks
	Challenges with reasoning skills

### Emotion Regulation

Negative self-talk	Low self-esteem & self worth
Anger, rage or aggression	Difficulty self-soothing
Intense emotional reactions	Mood swings
Difficulty managing stress	Hypervigilance
	Hyperactivity

### Relationships

Argumentative or defensive behaviour	Difficulty trusting others
Isolate themselves from peers	Impulsive
Drawn to unhealthy relationships	Extremely shy
	Display or engage in inappropriate social interactions

### Physical Health

Stomach aches	Difficulty sleeping
Headaches	Changes in appetite
Fatigue	Longterm or recurring illness
Hypersensitivity to light, sounds, smells	Body aches

### Spiritual Wellbeing

Difficulties with forgiveness	Change in relationship with one's faith
Moral distress or guilt	Feeling punished by a higher power
Shift in pre-existing beliefs	

Children impacted by trauma may feel they have lost trust in those who were supposed to protect them. This may cause them to become guarded in their interactions with others.

Child trauma may increase **risk behaviours:**

- Smoking
- Eating disorders
- Substance use
- High risk activities

Children who experience trauma may live in a **near-constant state of fight or flight** and overreact emotionally, behaviorally, and/or physically.



# Trauma Informed Practices (TIPs)

## Incorporate a Structured Learning Environment



- Provide predictable routines and schedules
- Communicate clear and consistent expectations
- Display daily routines and schedules
- Inform youth of upcoming changes
- Incorporate fair and consistent behaviour expectations

## Foster Supportive, Safe and Positive Learning Environment



- Incorporate consistency
- Encourage youth to “Do Their Best”
- Practice “check-ins” with youth
- Ask open-ended questions which encourage youth input
- Provide student choice
- Model and incorporate Mindfulness techniques

## Incorporate Social & Emotional Learning Strategies



- Model and teach social and emotional strategies for:
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-management
  - Social awareness
  - Relationship skills
  - Responsible decision-making



## Foster a Positive Self-Concept



- Celebrate diversity and uniqueness
- Acknowledge and celebrate accomplishments
- Model and encourage positive self-talk
- Encourage questions
- Be positive in praise and encouragement
- Provide supportive and authentic feedback
- Encourage self-care

## Use Restorative Practices



- Model and encourage students to use problem-solving skills
- Model and encourage active and empathetic listening
  - Example: “What I hear you saying is..”
- Encourage use of affective language such as “I” statements
  - Example: “ I feel---- -- when ----because----”
- Encourage use of and questions such as “What do you think needs to happen to make things right?”
- Model and practice de-escalation strategies
- Create visual reminders of restorative practices



Educators working with children who experience trauma may be vulnerable and experience **empathic strain.**

Learn more here:

<https://decycde.ca/educational-materials/#tips>

There are external resources available for youth who require additional support. Learn more here: [decycde.ca/support-resources/](https://decycde.ca/support-resources/)

## Duty to Report

Everyone has a legal responsibility to report suspected abuse and neglect of children and youth. Abuse can take many forms, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Reporting abuse or neglect helps ensure the safety and well-being of our children. To report a concern of suspected child abuse and/or neglect, call toll-free 1-833-552-2368.

For more information visit us at:

[www.decycde.ca](http://www.decycde.ca)

## References:

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3. National Child Traumatic Stress Network Schools Committee. (October 2008). *Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators*. Los Angeles, CA & Durham, NC: National Center for Child Traumatic Stress
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7. National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (n.d.). About Child Trauma. <https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/about-child-trauma>
8. Crouch, E., Radcliff, E., Strompolis, M., & Srivastav, A. (2018). Safe, Stable, and Nurtured: Protective Factors against Poor Physical and Mental Health Outcomes Following Exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, 12(2), 165–173. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-018-0217-9>