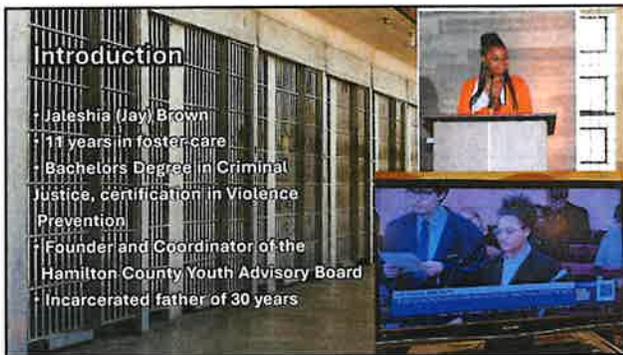


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3

Understanding the Link Between Youth Behavior

Adverse Childhood Experiences
 Traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being.

4 or more ACEs

Abuse: Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Neglect

Household Challenges: Parental Divorce, Substance Abuse, Mental Illness, Incarceration, Family Violence

20 yrs
 10x higher risk of premature death from ACEs

67%
 of participants have at least 1 ACE

Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unmet need in public health. It's not having our nation today.

7

Tyrell: 15-year-old black male

- He's been expelled twice for fighting, caught selling weed at school, and has a "bad attitude" with adults.
- Wears a hoodie low and rarely makes eye contact.
- Recently accused of stealing from a foster home.
- Writes violent lyrics in his notebook and jokes about dying before 18.

Tyrell – Backstory:

- Father murdered in front of him at age 8.
- Mother is incarcerated.
- Was in 5 foster homes in 3 years.
- Learned early that anger = protection.
- Writes music because it's the only way he feels safe expressing grief.

8

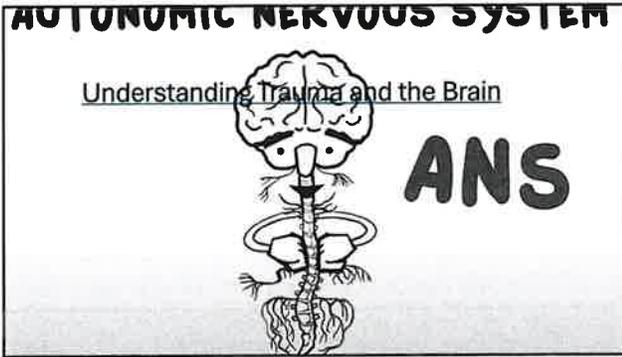
Emily: 14-year-old White female

- She's been hospitalized after a suicide attempt.
- Constantly runs away, often found with much older men.
- Known for manipulating foster placements and lying about being abused.
- Staff say she's "attention-seeking" and dramatic.
- Her TikToks show her vaping, drinking, and talking about being "dead inside."

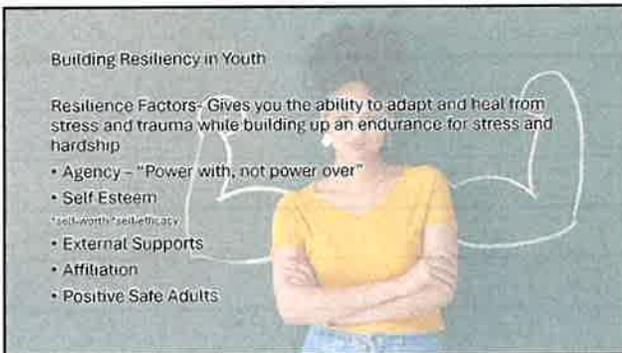
Emily – Backstory:

- Sexually abused by her stepfather from ages 6–12.
- Nobody believed her.
- Started running away to escape it.
- Has never felt safe in a home since.
- Alcohol and validation from older men fill the hole no adult has ever filled safely.

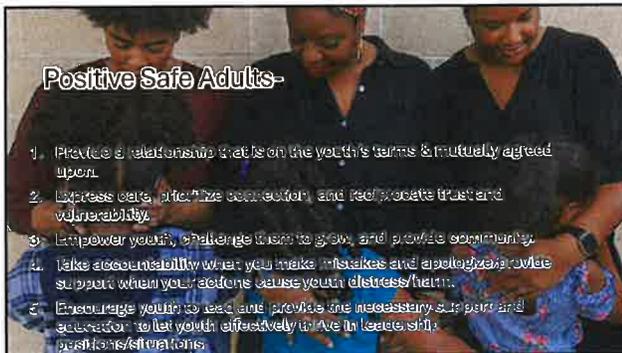
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13



14



15

Internalizing Behaviors

- Depression and Anxiety
- Withdrawal and Isolation
- Negative Self Talk
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Self Harm/Suicidal Thoughts
- Sleep Disturbances
- Shame and Stigma

THE
BAD
KIDS

19

Fear Cascade

UNSAFE

Block: Gangs, violent or mutual relationships, suicide attempts, addiction, self-injurious behavior, suppressing emotions, angry, trafficking

Flag: hitting away, hiding, suicide attempts, addiction, self-injurious behavior, overeating, sleep problems, rumination, worry, trafficking

Fight: all forms of aggression, suicide attempts, addiction, self-injurious behavior, high risk behaviors, humor that hurts others, overeating, sleep problems, rumination & angry, trafficking

Freeze: depression, being stuck, not protecting children, kids' oppositional, addiction, self-injurious behavior, envy, numbness, trafficking

Faint (Submit): Protecting perpetrators, addiction, self-injurious behavior, curling into a fetal position, fleeing, trafficking

SAFE

Block: safe relationships, crisis, therapy, teams, support group, safe person or peer, positive emotions, empathy

Flag: Leaving a problematic situation, job or relationship, stepping away, taking a break, planning your future or your next steps

Fight: Assertiveness, Exercise, sports, dance, safe movement, writing protest (MADD), humor that does not hurt others

Freeze: Freeze can connect action & stillness.
 Quiet time, prayer, meditation, Breathing, numbness

Faint (Submit): Sleep, prayer, meditation, numbness

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Discussion

- What are some ways youth you encounter in your role, show up on the fear cascade?
- How can you get them to the safe side of the fear cascade?

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Encouraging Youth Voice and Best Practices

- Intentional process of recognizing, nurturing, and valuing young peoples' vital contributions as agents of their lives and positive change.
- Youth want to be included in the planning and decisions that directly impact their lives, even if the outcome is not what they want, youth agrees that having a voice at the table is meaningful.
- Youth would like an "age appropriate" understanding of their incarcerated parents' absence.
- Youth who did not have a relationship with their incarcerated parent prior to foster care, was okay with not knowing a reason for the absence.
- Scientifically, including youth in these discussions fosters their personal growth, builds stronger connection and trust with care team, and creates a more inclusive and sustainable future for you.

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"What I Wish You Knew" – Anonymous Youth Messages

- "overall, i would love for everyone to get back to the root of why these systems are put in place in the 1st place."
- "i feel like a lot of times the criminal justice system is used to punish people versus discipline and rehabilitation"
- "Was just like when everything started like going downhill because she didn't have that like other support"
- "i began to, like, get more disconnected with like people my age and just started like focusing on trying to like help my mom and trying to become the second parent and all that."
- "the criminal justice system should prioritize rehabilitation over punishment"
- "i never had that, like, i guess father figure to be like, oh, that's not like how people that should treat you"
- "they need in provide resources and support for both parents while in foster care, including the incarcerated parent."



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Self Care

8 types of self care

- Your jobs are challenging and it's essential to prioritize self care to ensure you can continue to support others effectively.
- Macro- Self Care: Taking a vacation, beginning long term therapy, making significant dietary changes, starting a new hobby
- Micro- Self Care: Meditating, walking, phoning a friend, journaling, thinking of something you're grateful for once a day, positive affirmations

PHYSICAL <small>exercise, sleep, diet</small>	MENTAL <small>meditation, journaling, therapy</small>	EMOTIONAL <small>embrace feelings, journal</small>	SPIRITUAL <small>meditation, prayer, yoga</small>
INTELLECTUAL <small>read books, podcasts</small>	ENVIRONMENT <small>clean safety</small>	SOCIAL <small>relationships, connections</small>	FINANCIAL <small>budget, track</small>

Keep Shining!!!!

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THANK YOU!!

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United Way of Greater Cincinnati

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Hamilton County Board



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Defining a Safe & Trusted Adult

1. Provide a relationship that is on the youth's terms & mutually agreed upon

- a. Establish **mutual** boundaries early on, and recognize that boundaries fluctuate and are not universal across all youth
- b. Respect boundaries whether verbalized or not
- c. Ensure boundaries cover moments of crisis
- d. Communicate what support and advice is helpful
 - *There isn't any "one size fits all approach" to interacting with youth*

2. Express care, prioritize connection, and reciprocate trust and vulnerability

- a. Provide ways to strengthen relationships in safe, comfortable settings
- b. Provide opportunities for youth to bond with their peers
- c. Treat youth as equals
 - *Treat youth equally and with respect*
 - *Don't infantilize them nor expect them to be as experienced as adults*
 - *Keep topics appropriate, respect boundaries, & follow rules of the space you're in*
- d. Build trust by connecting with youth through shared experiences
 - *Understand the difference between sympathy and empathy*

3. Empower youth, challenge them to grow, and provide community

- a. Encourage them to go after their goals **AND** help plan small actionable steps to take towards achieving the goal
- b. Holding them accountable for their actions and promises
 - *Recognize bad days and previously set boundaries from youth. Don't push youth too hard, there are often a multitude of other things going on in their lives*
 - *When youth fall short on goals/promises, forgive, help them plan to catch up, and/or make amends*
- c. Foster outside community and other connections/resources/supports
 - *Provide and encourage youth to access other supports that help "cover the gaps" of your organization*
 - *Ensure that the youth has a well-rounded support system*

4. Be inclusive: take consideration to be culturally competent & trauma-informed in their words & actions

- a. Take time to learn about how youth identify, things culturally important to them, and how their culture/identity impacts their mental health
 - *Ask youth directly!! If you don't understand a term or pronoun, ask youth to explain. This shows that you care and respect them and their identity.*



Ladder of Participation

8) Youth-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults

This happens when projects or programs are initiated by youth and decision-making is shared between youth and adults. These projects empower youth while at the same time enabling them to access and learn from the life experience and expertise of adults.

6) Adult-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Youth

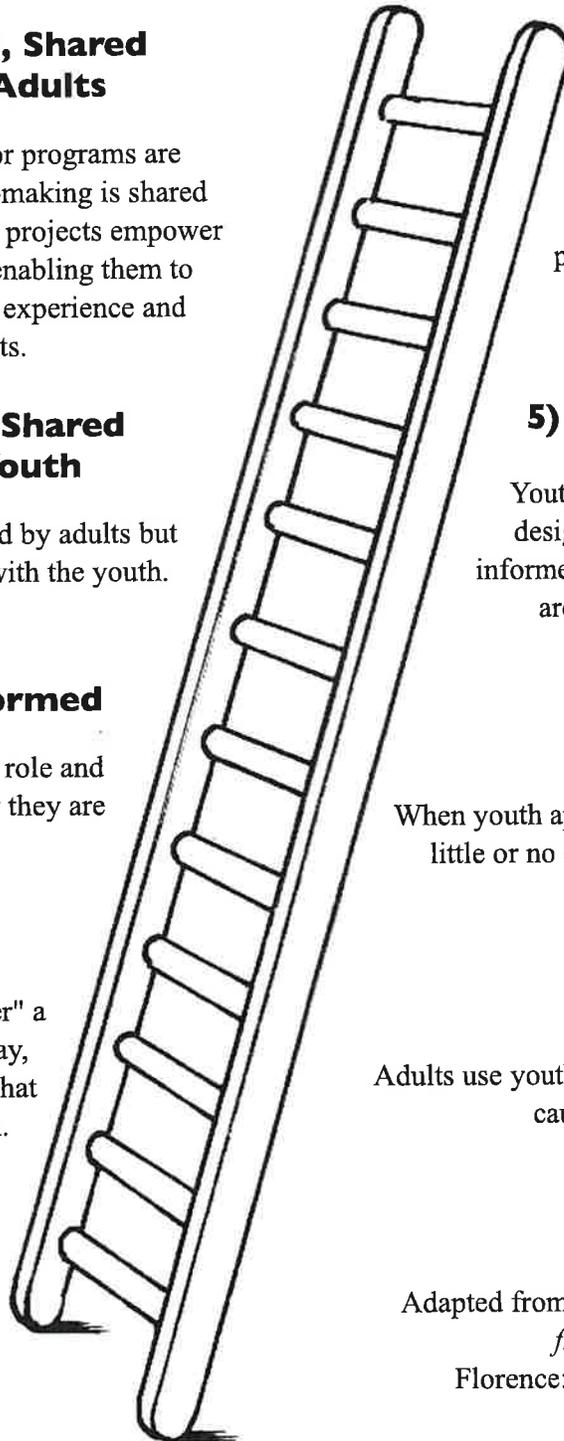
Projects or programs are initiated by adults but the decision-making is shared with the youth.

4) Assigned but Informed

Youth are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved.

2) Decoration

Youth are used to help or "bolster" a cause in a relatively indirect way, although adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by youth.



7) Youth-Initiated and Directed

Youth initiate and direct a project or program. Adults are involved in a strictly supportive role.

5) Consulted and Informed

Youth give advice on projects or programs designed and run by adults. The youth are informed about how their input will be used and are told the outcomes of the decisions made by adults.

3) Tokenism

When youth appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate.

1) Manipulation

Adults use youth to support causes and pretend that the causes are inspired by youth.

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*.

Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

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Crossing the Bridge to the Neurological Purpose of Behavior Worksheet

Standing in the middle of the bridge – Traditional View of the 5 Functions of Behavior:	What the 5 Functions of Behavior Look Like:	Making it to the other side – We all want: (©Burke, 2014)	Strategies
Attention	Ex. Irritating others	To feel connected, accepted & loved	
Escape	Ex. Running away	To feel safe & secure	
Tangibles (Things) like stealing or hoarding	Ex. Stealing, hoarding, compulsive shopping	To have some say or control in your life	
Bored	Ex. "I am bored." "I don't know why I did, I was just bored."	To have a purpose in life	
Pain	Ex. Self-harm	To feel less isolated or trapped	