



## MAKING A GOOD CONNECTION: ENGAGING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES IN SCHOOL TELE-MENTAL HEALTH

### Strategies for Addressing Trauma, Crises and Grief Through Tele-Mental Health

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#### Participant Question & Presenter Response

**Q1** *How can we address co-occurring disorders, specifically substance use, as it relates to trauma?*

**A1** It may be helpful to use an integrated model and approach that incorporates techniques in working with substance use. When addressing substance use, it is important to foster a psychologically safe environment (e.g., calm understanding and free of judgement), communicate clearly and consistently, anchoring the person in hope and resilience. Providing psychoeducation can help to draw the connection between trauma and substance use. It is important to build a trusting relationship, focused on supporting their choice and voice in their healing, normalizing and validating responses to trauma, and encouraging alternate ways of coping using their resilience/protective factors. While historically providers were reluctant to address issues of trauma, it has been found that this leads to worse outcomes.

**Resource:**

[Substance Use Disorder Treatment for People With Co-Occurring Disorders TIP 42](#)

**Q2** *What are some strategies for working with young people around race and mental health?*

**A2** Establish an open and welcoming environment which makes space and acknowledges intersecting identities. Using a strengths-based approach, integrate the use of the youth's identified sources of resilience and coping, so that it is true to their own lived experiences. Acknowledge your own biases and prejudices, while practicing cultural humility, engaging in curiosity and inquiry instead of drawing on previously formed ideas. Understanding that trust needs to be established and sustained communicate clearly and consistently about the therapeutic process. Assess barriers to treatment and work together in forming solutions, remaining centered on the youth's lived experience, using empathic engagement.





Take initiative to learn more about the youth's experience and background, while not leaning on the youth to be the only source of cultural information. Be mindful of microaggressions and practice compassionate accountability – acknowledging and taking accountability for actions that create a sense of “otherness,” or support stereotypes. Further, the book *My Grandmother's Hands* offers several examples of ways for adolescents and pre-teenagers to explore the ideas of trauma and healing.

**Resources:**

[Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Racial and Ethnic Minority Youth a guide for practitioners](#), from the APA Working Group for Addressing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Youth Mental Health  
[This document](#) was compiled by Center for Racial Justice in Education.  
[This list](#) has strategies for caregivers on how to help kids handle the news from Child Mind Institute.

**Q3** *What aspects are important to consider when developing a trauma informed care model that is inclusive for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color?*

**A3** Moving from trauma informed to Healing Centered Engagement (HCE) is a great option. HCE is a non-clinical, strength-based approach that advances a holistic view of healing and re-centers culture and identity as a central feature in well-being. HCE includes using asset-driven language, engaging youth in conversations about identity and their future, building systems of support for adult social emotional growth and well-being, and creating opportunities for dreaming and imagination building, in addition to other strategies. HCE can be used in tandem with the Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) framework provided by SAMHSA as well as engage community resilience networks, such as promotoras and other cultural assets.

**Resources:**

Learn more about Healing Centered Engagement, through [this article](#) and at Shawn Ginwright's [website](#).  
Treatment Improvement Protocol [57: Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services](#)  
Treatment Improvement Protocol [59: Improving Cultural Competence](#)

**Q4** *How can we support children's mental health when they experience repeated exposure to racism and violence?*

**A4** While the prevalence of youth exposure to violence can feel overwhelming, the effects of such exposure can be mitigated using simple solutions focused on healing, resilience and thriving. As school mental health professionals and members of our communities, we all have a role to play in supporting youth who have experienced repeat exposure to violence.





Youth's repeated exposure to violence can potentially have serious consequences, such as impacts on: school success, ability to lead a healthy life, and ability to contribute to their communities. It is important to remember that permanent harm or traumatization is not the norm, and that resilience and neuroplasticity have a critical role in healing. In addition, strategies at the policy and practice level which can support healing and thriving of youth exposed to violence involve engaging the youth in therapeutic interventions and getting them connected to a supportive community and addressing the structural inequities which contribute to unsafe environments and increase the risk of exposure to violence.

**Resource:**

[Addressing Race and Trauma in the Classroom: A Resource for Educators](#) from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network

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