

Trauma Toolkit

Library Services to Underserved Children and Their Caregivers
September 2024

About this population

Underserved Children and their caregivers facing trauma constitute a vulnerable population that requires special attention and support. Trauma experienced during childhood can have profound and lasting effects on a child's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. It can stem from various sources such as abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, or family disruptions. The impact of trauma on children is complex and can manifest in difficulties with emotional regulation, impaired social relationships, and challenges in academic and cognitive development.

What is Trauma?

Librarians and library workers can play a crucial role in mitigating the effects of trauma on children and their families. Whether serving as mentors, educators, or sources of comfort, these individuals can provide valuable support to individuals dealing with trauma. We want libraries to be a place where families can find solace, access resources on coping mechanisms, and engage in activities that promote healing. With the knowledge of available literature and community resources, we can guide children and their families towards appropriate materials and services that contribute to the healing process. Collaborative efforts between libraries and mental health professionals further enhance the potential for creating supportive environments that aid in the recovery of families affected by trauma. Recognizing the diverse roles that librarians and library workers can play in supporting this population is crucial for fostering resilience and well-being.

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Recommended read-alouds

Divorce and Family Separation

Clayton, Anette. *Papa and Pearl: A Tale about Divorce, New Beginnings, and Love That Never Changes*. Free Spirit Publishing, 2024.

Kirkus, Seamus. *Once Upon My Dads' Divorce*. Magination Press, 2023.

Domestic Violence, Gun Violence, & Sexual Violence

Estrada, Elizabeth. *I Choose to Say No: A Rhyming Picture Book about Body Safety, Consent, Safe and Unsafe Touch, Private Parts, and Respectful Relationships*.

I Choose, 2021.

Fontaine, Valerie. *The Big Bad Wolf in My House*. Groundwood Books, 2021.

Hazzard, Ann, and Marianne Celano and Marietta Collins. *Something Happened in Our Park*. Magination Press, 2021.

Holmes, Margaret. *A Terrible Thing Happened: A Story of Children Who Have Witnessed Abuse or Trauma*. Magination Press, 2000.

Madison, Megan, et al. *Yes! No! A First Conversation about Consent*. Rise x Penguin Workshop, 2022.

Food Insecurity

Brandt, Lois. *Maddi's Fridge*. Flashlight Press, 2022.

Buzzeo, Toni. *Pa, Me, and Our Sidewalk Pantry*. Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2023.

O'Neal, Diane. *Saturday at the Food Pantry*. Albert Whitman and Company, 2021.

Talkin, Erik. *Lulu and the Food Monster*. Free Spirit Publishing, 2020.

Tamaki, Jillian. *Our Little Kitchen*. Henry N. Abrams, 2020.

Grief

Cyr, Andree-Anne. *Because I Already Loved You*. Groundwood Books, 2023.

Daniels, Natasha. *The Grief Rock*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2023.

Grimes, Nikki. *A Walk in the Woods*. Holiday House, 2023.

Heath, Melissa. *Why?: A book for kids who have lost a parent to suicide*. Magination Press, 2023.

Mir, Saira. *Always Sisters*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2023.

Smith, Heather. *Granny Left Me a Rocket Ship*. Kids Can Press, 2023.

Swemba, Kelly. *Missing Violet*. Beaming Books, 2023.

Homelessness

Boelts, Maribeth. *Those Shoes*. Candlewick, 2009.

Genhart, Michael. *I See You*. Magination Press, 2017.

Gunti, Erin. *A Place to Stay: A Shelter Story*. Barefoot Books, 2019.

Lippert, Tonya. *Home*. Magination Press, 2022.

Otis, Chad. *The Bright Side*. Rocky Pond Books, 2023.

Sigwarth, Lydia. *Dear Librarian*. New York : Farrar Straus Giroux, 2021.

Sturgis, Brenda Reeves. *Still a Family: A Story of Homelessness*. Albert Whitman and Company, 2017.

Wheeler, Eliza. *Home in the Woods*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2019.

Illness

Churnin, Nancy. *Mama's Year with Cancer*. Albert Whitman and Company, 2023.

Colfer, Eoin. *Cloud Babies*. Candlewick Press, 2023.

Stamm, Julie. *Some Days: A Tale of Love, Ice Cream, and My Mom's Chronic Illness*. The Experiment, 2021.

Stier, Catherine. *When A Kid Like Me Fights Cancer*. Albert Whitman and Company, 2019.

Sullivan, Rosana. *Mommy Sayang*. Disney Press, 2019.

Incarceration

Birtha, Becky. *Far Apart, Close in Heart: Being a Family When a Loved One is Incarcerated*.

Albert Whitman and Company, 2017.

Danticat, Edwidge. *Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2015.

De La Pena, Matt. *Milo Imagines the World*. Two Hoots, 2022.

Greenwood, Sara. *My Brother is Away*. Random House Studio, 2022.

Yamasaki, Katie. *Place Hand Here*. Norton Young Readers, 2023.

Racial Injustice

Brown, Tamela Fryer. *That Flag*. HarperCollins, 2023.

Celano, Marianne. *Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story about Racial Injustice*.

Magination Press, 2018.

Florence, Melanie. *Stolen Words*. Second Story Press, 2017.
Ho, Johanna. *Eyes that Speak to the Stars*. HarperCollins, 2022.
Mendez, Yamile Saied. *Where Are You From?* HarperCollins, 2019.
Muhammad, Ibtihaj. *The Proudest Blue*. Little, Brown and Company, 2019.
Robertson, David. *When We Were Alone*. HighWater Press, 2016.
Webstad, Phyllis. *Every Child Matters*. Medicine Wheel Publishing, 2023.
Yansook Choi. *The Name Jar*. Dragonfly Books, 2003.

Recovery From Trauma

Agell, Charlotte. *Maybe Tomorrow?* Scholastic Press, 2019.
Galindo, Renata. *My New Mom and Me*. Schwartz & Wade, 2016.
Hourigan, Erin. *In the Blue*. Little Brown and Company, 2022.
Moore, David Barclay. *Boyogi: How A Wounded Family Learned to Heal*.
Candlewick Press, 2023.
Reul, Sarah Lynne. *The Breaking News*. Roaring Press Books, 2018.

*** Books for Older Readers ***

Domestic Violence, Gun Violence & Sexual Violence

Bow, Erin. *Simon Sort of Says*. Disney Hyperion, 2023.
Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker. *Fighting Words*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2020.
Chase, Paula. *So Done*. Greenwillow Books, 2018.
Guerrero, Tanya. *All You Need Is Love*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2021.
Messner, Kate. *Chirp*. Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2020.
Solter, Sonja. *When You Know What I Know*. Little Brown and Company, 2020.
Toner, Jacqueline B. *What To Do When The News Scares You*. Magination Press, 2021.
Warga, Jasmine. *The Shape of Thunder*. Balzer + Bray, 2021.

Food Insecurity

Fipps, Lisa. *And Then, Boom!* Nancy Paulsen Books, 2024.
Ogle, Rex. *Free Lunch*. Norton Young Readers, 2019.

Grief

Benjamin, Ali. *The Truth About Jellyfish*. Little Brown and Company, 2017.

Krosoczka, Jarrett. *Sunshine: A Graphic Novel*. Graphix, 2023.

Schmidt, Gary. *The Labors of Hercules Beal*. Clarion Books, 2023.

Homelessness

Baptist, Kelly. *Isaiah Dunn Is My Hero*. Crown Books for Young Readers, 2020.

Bird, James. *No Place Like Home*. Feiwel and Friends, 2023.

Choldenko, Gennifer. *The Tenth Mistake of Hank Hooperman*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2024

Cruz, Marie Miranda. *Everlasting Nora*. Starscape, 2018.

Sarno, Melissa. *Just Under the Clouds*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2018.

Venkatraman, Padma. *The Bridge Home*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2019.

Williams, Alicia. *Genesis Begins Again*. Atheneum, 2019.

Illness

Mendez, Jasminne. *Aniana del Mar Jumps In*. Dial Books, 2023.

Ursu, Anne. *Not Quite a Ghost*. Walden Pond Press, 2024.

Incarceration

Giles, Chrystal. *Not An Easy Win*. Random House, 2023.

Marks, Janae. *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2020.

Racial Injustice

Brown, Waka. *Dream, Annie, Dream*. Quill Tree Books, 2022.

Hudson, Wade. *The Reckoning*. Crown Books for Young Readers, 2024.

McManis, Charlene Willing. *Indian No More*. Tu Books, 2019.

Recovery from Trauma

Arango, Andrea Beatriz. *Iveliz Explains It All*. Random House Children's Books, 2022.

Day, Christine. *The Sea in Winter*. Heartdrum, 2021.

Haydu, Corey Ann. *Eventown*. Katherine Tegen Books, 2019.

Lim, Rebecca. *Tiger Daughter*. Delacorte Press, 2023.

Recommended apps*

Breathe, Think, Do With Sesame Street

This app can be used for children with anxiety and behavior disorders. Adults should monitor the child's interaction while using the app. It contains songs and videos. The tips and curriculum guides provide strategies for parents and caregivers. Bilingual (English and Spanish)

Target Age: 2 -5

Highlighted features: Children can explore engaging activities with different challenges. Teaches a three-step method: "Take a deep breath, think about what to do next, and give the solution a try." Breathe with Monster: helps children to regulate their breathing by practicing deep breaths.

Mindful Powers

This app uses a holistic approach to help children build their social-emotional learning. Children with anxiety and behavior disorders could benefit from this app. Adults should monitor the child's interaction while using the app. Three available sessions are free. Bilingual (English and Spanish)

Target Age: 7-10

Highlighted features: Sessions have a guided voice for meditation. It can help children to focus and calm their thoughts. The focus timer helps children with concentration.

Smiling Mind

An Australian nonprofit developed this app. The application can be used in different gathering spaces or with various populations. It encourages mindfulness and helps users to manage stress. The curriculum is adaptable for preschool through high school, plus adults.

Target Age: 3 & up

Highlighted features: Easy to navigate. Variety of modules for different age groups. The tracking feature allows users to monitor progress.

Joon

This app is designed to assist children with building their independence and self-esteem, specifically children with ADHD. It encourages children to complete everyday tasks such as brushing their teeth, and completing homework and assigned chores. It is recommended by psychologists, teachers, and occupational therapists.

Target Age: 6- 12

Highlighted features: Parents can customize the tasks for their children to complete. Children use a separate app called Joon Pet Game. Audio buttons are available for children who are not reading yet.

The Zones of Regulation

This is designed for children in elementary school and up. Adults can use this app as well. It helps children to manage their emotions and their behavior. It encourages problem-solving skills. Encourages self-regulation, and emotional control.

Target Age: 5 and up

Highlighted features: It has mini-games with rewards. The interactive games allow students to view real-life situations by learning how to read facial expressions. Students can create a personalized toolbox. Various teaching methods including multiple choice selections.

Calm Kids

This mindful meditation app helps to lower anxiety and stress. It aids in creating better sleep. It has multiple modules.

Target Age: 3 and up

Highlighted features: It has sleep stories, movement activities, and music for relaxation.

Headspace

Mediation app designed to help to reduce stress and create relaxation.

Target Age: 3 - 12

Highlighted features: Guided meditations, mindfulness activities, and activities to help children manage their emotions.

Materials for the children's room*

There are many items that can be added to a children's room to help children learn, de-stress, and find comfort. While librarians and parents are not equipped to conduct play therapy in the same way licensed professionals are, there are still ways to introduce the benefits of play with our own knowledge.

Including information for families about how play therapy works, even by way of a simple flyer, can be helpful. This article by Healthline provides a helpful introduction both for librarians and caregivers: [How Play Therapy Treats and Benefits Children and Some Adults](#)

Board Games

[My Feelings, a Fun Game to Help Kids Express Emotions](#)

[The Talking, Feeling, Doing Game](#)

[Emotional Rollercoaster](#)

Card Games

[CBT 1-2-3](#)

[Don't Go Bananas](#)

[Todd Parr's Feelings Flashcards](#)

Toys

[Super Sensory Stretchy Strings](#)

[Totika Self Esteem Game](#)

[Infinity Cubes](#)

[Kimoichis Mixed Bag Of Feelings](#)

[Play Pretend Multicultural Families](#)

Wall Art

[Feelings Charts](#)

[Calming Corner Art](#)

Resources for Families

[Infographics: Parenting Kids Who Have Experienced Trauma](#)

Materials for programming*

Library programs for underserved families dealing with trauma should aim to create a safe and supportive environment while providing resources and activities that foster healing and resilience. Here are some materials and resources that can be used:

Books on Trauma and Healing

Stock the library with a variety of books targeted towards different age groups that address trauma, coping mechanisms, and resilience. Look for titles such as "The Body Keeps the Score" by Bessel van der Kolk, "The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog" by Bruce D. Perry, "Trauma-Proofing Your Kids" by Peter A. Levine, and "The Deepest Well" by Nadine Burke Harris.

Therapeutic Activities

Provide materials for therapeutic activities such as art therapy, journaling, and mindfulness exercises. These can include art supplies like coloring books, markers, crayons, and paper, as well as journals and prompts for reflection.

- [Teen Line Resources](#): Includes Teacher Facilitation Guide
- [6 Therapeutic Activities for Kids \[Hackensack Meridian Health\]](#)
- [Therapy Worksheets for Children \[Therapist Aid\]](#)

- [Trauma-Informed Activities for Students, Soul Shoppe](#)

Community Resources

Compile a list of local organizations, support groups, and mental health services that cater to underserved families dealing with trauma. Make these resources easily accessible within the library or through informational pamphlets.

Educational Workshops

Host workshops or guest speakers who specialize in trauma-informed care, parenting strategies for dealing with trauma, and self-care techniques. These workshops can provide valuable information and support to families navigating difficult circumstances.

Multimedia Resources

Offer a variety of multimedia resources such as documentaries, podcasts, and online videos that explore topics related to trauma, resilience, and healing. Provide access to computers, tablets, or other devices for families to engage with these resources.

Supportive Literature Circles

Facilitate literature circles or book clubs where families can come together to discuss books related to trauma and healing. This can provide a sense of community and validation as families share their experiences and insights with one another.

Creative Expression

Encourage creative expression through activities like storytelling, drama, music, art, and dance. Provide materials such as musical instruments, costumes, art supplies, and props to support these activities and allow families to express themselves in meaningful ways.

Counseling and Support Services

Collaborate with local mental health professionals to offer counseling services or support groups specifically tailored to the needs of underserved families dealing with trauma. This can provide families with a safe space to seek support and guidance.

Publishers and vendors*

Several book publishers and vendors produce materials for libraries that focus on helping children and their caregivers deal with trauma. Here are some publishers and vendors that are known for producing such materials:

Free Spirit Publishing

Free Spirit Publishing offers a range of books and resources addressing social-emotional learning, resilience, and mental health for children and teens.

Magination Press

This is the publishing arm of the American Psychological Association (APA) and provides books on mental health and emotional well-being for children.

Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Known for publishing books on various mental health topics, Jessica Kingsley Publishers offers resources for children, parents, and professionals dealing with trauma and emotional challenges.

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)

NASP offers publications and resources that focus on supporting the social-emotional needs of children, including those dealing with trauma.

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)

CWLA produces resources, including books and guides, on child welfare and trauma-informed care.

Brookes Publishing

Brookes Publishing specializes in educational resources, including books on early childhood development, mental health, and trauma-sensitive practices.

PESI Publishing & Media

PESI Publishing offers books and materials on mental health and trauma for professionals, educators, and parents.

Guilford Press

Guilford Press publishes books on psychology, mental health, and education, with titles that can be valuable for addressing trauma in children

Redleaf Press

Redleaf Press focuses on early childhood education and offers resources that support children's social and emotional development.

Gryphon House

Gryphon House publishes books for early childhood professionals and parents, including resources that address trauma-informed practices.

Professional resources

Books

The Public Library Association Social Worker Task Force. *A Trauma-Informed Framework for Supporting Library Patrons: The PLA workbook of best practices*. ALA Editions, Chicago, 2022.

Tolley, Rebecca. *A Trauma-Informed Approach to Library Services*. ALA Editions, Chicago, 2020.

Ward, Judith, and Nicholas Allred. *The Librarian's Guide to Bibliotherapy*. ALA Editions, Chicago, 2024.

Articles and Websites

Bartlett, J. D., & Steber, K. (2019, May 9). [How to Implement Trauma-informed Care to Build Resilience to Childhood Trauma](#). ChildTrends.

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2020, August 17). [Resilience](#).

Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (n.d.). [Trauma and Grief Virtual Learning Library](#).

Sesame Workshop (n.d.). [Traumatic Experiences](#).

Videos and Webinars

[A Trauma-Informed Approach to Public Library Social Service](#). Archived Youtube Video. Indiana State Library. Recorded June 30th, 2021.

[Trauma-Informed Supervision for Library Leaders](#). Available on-demand through ALA E-Learning. Recorded June 7th, 2023.

[Understanding Trauma-Informed Approaches in Public Libraries](#). Available on-demand through ALA E-Learning. Recorded September 24th, 2019.

Community resources

Librarians and library staff can play a critical role in supporting children and families dealing with trauma by providing resources that offer comfort, education, and coping strategies. Remember to approach this topic with sensitivity and ensure that the resources provided are inclusive and culturally relevant. Additionally, staying informed about local mental health initiatives can help librarians connect families with the most relevant and timely support.

Ensure that these resources are easily accessible to everyone. Certain families might find it challenging to communicate their needs or may feel intimidated or ashamed to reach out for help. By making these resources visible, we can address such unexpected situations and provide support to those who may need it most.

Getting Started and Getting Connected

Collaborating with outside organizations often strengthens the programs, services, and resources that libraries provide.

Community Resource Directories

Compile a directory of local resources, including counseling services, support groups, and crisis helplines, and make this information easily accessible within the library. This is for both library staff and patrons, as this list can be a starting point for librarians looking to connect with organizations that can assist with current or future library initiatives.

Collaboration with Mental Health Organisations

Partner with local mental health organizations to plan workshops, seminars, or support groups for families dealing with trauma. Provide information about these events at the library.

Community Events and Partnerships

Collaborate with community organizations to host events addressing trauma awareness and resilience-building. This can foster a sense of community support.

Potential Programs

Therapeutic Storytelling Programs

Organize storytelling programs that focus on themes of resilience, empathy, and emotional well-being. Invite mental health professionals or counselors to participate in these events.

Creative Expression Workshops

Offer creative workshops such as art therapy, writing, or music sessions to help children express their emotions in a safe and supportive environment.

Library Programs Focused on Well-being

Develop programs that promote emotional well-being, mindfulness, and self-care. This could include yoga classes, meditation sessions, or other activities that encourage relaxation.

Other Resources for Patrons

Online Resources

Provide links to reputable online resources, websites, and apps that offer guidance on coping with trauma. Ensure that the content is age-appropriate.

Quiet Spaces for Reflection

Designate quiet corners in the library where individuals can find solace and reflection. Consider incorporating calming activities like coloring books, puzzles, or mindfulness resources.

Successful library programs*

[Art Therapy for Tweens at Santa Clara County Library](#)

In this art therapy program for kids ages 10 and up with their older sibling or caregiver, tweens explore art projects and discuss what is currently stressful or exciting in their lives. Soothing sensory elements such as calm lighting, relaxing music, and aromatherapy are used throughout the program.

[Food Pantry Storytime](#)

A model for holding storytime at a food pantry, promoting free food giveaways, and free book giveaways, and building normalcy for families who can benefit from using a food pantry.

[The Neutral Zone at Santa Clara County Library](#)

In partnership with trained therapeutic counselors, this 6-week program for children ages 7-13 supports children affected by divorce or separation through games and activities that facilitate open communication about the challenges of a changing family.

[Resiliency Kits at the Gail Borden Public Library](#)

These resiliency kits are part of a special collection, and each kit features books, hands-on activities, and information for grown-ups to help families navigate difficult traumatic experiences and provide support as they move toward healing.

[Healing Kits at Seymour Public Library](#)

Each kit contains materials and picture books to help families heal during periods of trauma. Three different kits are offered that families can use at home to help cope with these difficult experiences: “Death of a Loved One”, “Death of a Pet”, and “Alzheimer’s and Your Family”.