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SELF – ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR CHILDCARE PROFESSIONALS

TRAUMA

INTRODUCTION

Forced displacement, domestic violence, physical abuse or neglect can have a great impact on children and their social and emotional wellbeing. Childcare professionals should therefore be equipped with the knowledge and skills to work successfully with children and families who are experiencing trauma, providing an emotionally supportive environment and a sense of safety.

Below you can find a short self-assessment helping you to identify your strengths or highlight areas needing further improvement to support children experiencing trauma and families in crisis.

The self-assessment is recommended for professionals working with children from 0 to 6 years old, for example, in day-care centres, kindergartens, primary schools, social centres.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Assess yourself

Rate **39 statements** on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 – strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 – agree to some extent; 4 – agree; 5 – strongly agree), thus expressing how much you agree or disagree with each of them. For completing the form, you will need approximately **15 – 20 minutes**.

2. Discover your competence level

With step-by-step instructions, calculate your results and find out where you stand from Novice to Expert.

3. Keep growing

Finally, for each competence level, discover literature recommendations and ready-to-use materials, and get tips from experts in childcare, trauma, and social pedagogy.

The self-assessment is completely anonymous and the result will be visible only to you and the person(s) you are willing to share it with (e.g. colleague, mentor, educator).

Try to be objective and honest with yourself to get the most reliable results.

1.

COMPLETING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment: Trauma		1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree to some extent	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
♥	I respect individual differences in children's responses to trauma, e.g. social withdrawal, passivity, lack of interest and motivation, aggressive behaviour, difficulty concentrating, etc. and utilise non-judgemental approach.					
🔍	I can define what trauma is and compare different types of trauma.					
💬	While working with children affected by trauma, I can identify and build upon their strengths (e.g. personal skills, persons in their surroundings) that can help them deal with the challenge they are facing.					
🧩	I can make quick decisions in case of emergencies, e.g. when a child poses an immediate risk to themselves or others through aggressive behaviour.					
♥	I acknowledge and respect diverse coping mechanisms (reactions, behaviours) that families use in difficult and stressful situations.					
🔍	I can explain different triggers, common symptoms and categorize patterns of behaviour of traumatised children.					
♥	I can manage my own emotions to maintain professional boundaries in work with traumatised children, ensuring my responses are supportive and non-reactive.					
🔍	I can explain how forced migration (e.g. caused by a war, natural disasters) can affect child's psychosocial functioning.					
💬	I am able to communicate my personal emotions and needs with others, for example with colleagues or my family.					
🔍	I can identify resilience factors for children such as secure attachment with caregivers, providing consistent routines, and encouraging positive coping techniques like using deep breathing exercises, to help them manage their feelings.					

Self-assessment: Trauma		1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree to some extent	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
	I can support initiatives (e.g. local support programs) that promote the resilience and strength-building of children impacted by trauma.					
	I can observe non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions, responding to the child's unspoken feelings (e.g., offering a comforting touch if appropriate, or giving space if needed) to support their emotional needs.					
	I can identify community resources and services available to displaced individuals and families, ensuring they can access the necessary support during crises.					
	I can care about my own well-being e.g. through regular exercise, hobbies, social support networks, supervision, and professional development opportunities.					
	I can collaborate with professionals (e.g. therapists, counsellors, support systems for displaced children and families), colleagues or parents, to plan and provide support to the children and families experiencing trauma.					
	I can observe children to identify and document trauma-related behaviours.					
	I can seek appropriate support and intervention, e.g. when a situation is overwhelming for me and I need professional guidance.					
	I can create a space for confidential discussion for children and their family e.g. where they can openly express concerns to encourage a trusting relationship between them and myself.					
	I can collect additional information (e.g. through online research, books/articles, etc.) when my knowledge or skills need further improvement to meet the needs linked to working with traumatised children or families in crisis.					
	I can stay calm and mindful, particularly during stressful moments e.g. when a child has an emotional outburst.					
	I can value the input and perspectives of children and families in crisis by, for example, asking open-ended questions about their preferences and ideas, offering both children and family members opportunity to propose solutions.					

Self-assessment: Trauma		1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree to some extent	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
	I can assess information about family history or current challenges to provide appropriate support and guidance.					
	I can pay close attention to the well-being of my team members, e.g. by checking if someone is feeling overwhelmed in certain situations and offering support when needed.					
	I can openly express my own emotions and needs in communication with children, which helps create a deeper connection with children.					
	I can remain open and adaptable to unexpected societal changes, e.g. the arrival of new children due to displacement.					
	I can implement activities for children that strengthen their resilience and coping skills while facing challenging situations e.g. mindfulness or breathing exercises.					
	I can recognise when my expertise or competency is insufficient to deal with certain situations (e.g. I recognise when a child needs further support and guidance from other experts such as psychotherapists or psychologists)					
	I can use active listening techniques when engaging with families in crisis and traumatised children to understand their concerns and needs (e.g. maintaining eye contact, asking questions for clarification, paraphrasing their words, not judging, etc.).					
	I can take challenging situations as opportunities to improve relationships, e.g. when a child shows withdrawal, I make a point to approach them calmly and offer support.					
	I can describe different strategies and methods supporting children's empowerment e.g. using positive reinforcement and affirming their strengths.					
	I can maintain a healthy work-life balance (e.g. avoid working at home or letting work-related situations personally affect me).					
	I can explain the potential impact of working with traumatised children and families on professionals (e.g. increased stress, reduced empathy, trouble with sleeping).					
	I can advocate for the necessary resources and support by effectively communicating children's needs with colleagues and families, ensuring timely action.					
	I can identify and differentiate different factors (cultural, socio-economic) that can contribute to a family crisis.					
	I can create an environment for all children to feel safe and supported e.g. by applying trauma-informed practices such as providing a quiet space or offering sensory tools.					

Self-assessment: Trauma		1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree to some extent	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
	I can adapt to the needs of traumatized children, e.g. by providing a quiet corner where they can retreat when feeling overwhelmed, instead of forcing them into activities they are not ready for.					
	I can recognize my feelings and needs in response to work-related tasks, such as feeling overwhelmed when managing challenging tasks.					
	I can list signs and effects of crisis experienced by families.					
	When children have questions about war and migration caused by it, I can answer in a child-friendly language (e.g. using simple words, examples).					

Well done!

You have reached the end of the questionnaire and can now move on to the next step – calculating and interpreting the results!

2.

INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

Follow the steps
bellow to get your
results!



STEP 1: CALCULATING THE POINTS

First, count the total number of points as follows:

- Strongly disagree = 1 point
- Disagree = 2 points
- Neither agree nor disagree = 3 points
- Agree = 4 points
- Strongly agree = 5 points

The maximum
number of points is

195

**TOTAL NUMBER
OF POINTS**

The maximum number of points is 195.

STEP 2: COMPETENCE LEVEL IN THE TOPIC OF TRAUMA

Now it is time to check your competence level in the topic of Trauma. Based on your score, the table below will tell you whether you are Beginner, Competent or even Expert.

Competence Level	Points
Novice	39 – 56
Beginner	57 – 95
Competent	96 – 134
Proficient	135 – 173
Expert	174 – 195

**COMPETENCE
LEVEL**

STEP 3: EXPLANATION OF THE COMPETENCE LEVEL

What does it mean for a childcare professional to be Novice or Expert in the topic of Trauma? Find your answer in the following table.

Competence level	Explanation
Novice	You have minimal awareness of how trauma affects children and their social and emotional wellbeing. You may recognise visible signs of distress or changes in children's behaviours, but lack a comprehensive understanding of the underlying issues. You often follow established protocols in reporting concerns but require further guidance when interacting with traumatized children. Your understanding of family in crisis is limited, making it difficult to provide effective support engaging each family member. When working with children and families who experience trauma, you may find it difficult to remain objective and maintain professional boundaries.
Beginner	You have basic understanding of the concept of trauma and can identify some of its effects on child's social and emotional well-being. You can identify common causes and symptoms of trauma in children, but have difficulties in recognising them when they appear. While you have basic knowledge of family mechanisms and strategies during a crisis, you have difficulties in personalising the approach with respect to uniqueness of family dynamics. You can assist them solving their problem, but the involvement of family members in the problem-solving process may be limited. You develop trust with children and families, but may struggle with maintaining professional boundaries.
Competent	You possess a good understanding of trauma and its varied impacts on children's wellbeing. You can recognise a wide range of causes, symptoms, and behaviours associated with trauma among children and support traumatised children, helping them gain trust and a sense of safety. You may sometimes lack in providing personalised approach, especially in new challenging situations. You are capable in supporting families in crisis while respecting their unique dynamics by involving some family members in the problem-solving process. You are adept at fostering relationships built on trust and empathy with traumatized children and their families while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries, in most cases.
Proficient	You have an in-depth understanding of trauma and its complex effects on children's development. You can quickly recognise subtle signs of trauma and differentiate between various types of traumatic experiences, such as forced displacement or domestic violence. This allows you to implement highly effective, personalized approaches to support different needs of traumatised children. You support families in crisis, actively involving all family members in the problem-solving process. Additionally, you foster strong relationships of trust and empathy with children and families while maintaining clear professional boundaries. You actively engage in self-care practices to ensure your own wellbeing while providing support to others.
Expert	You are an expert in working with children experiencing trauma. You have a comprehensive understanding of childhood trauma and its long-term effects on individuals. You can identify visible and non-visible cues of children experiencing trauma and innovate personalized, trauma-informed care approaches that address complex needs of children. You excel at navigating complex family dynamics in crisis situations and serve as a valuable resource for challenging cases. Additionally, you can provide supervision/mentoring to others in their work, ensuring high-quality outcomes, as well as actively train colleagues in maintaining their mental and emotional wellbeing in demanding circumstances. You are able to foster a relationship of trust and empathy, and easily maintain work-life balance, not letting work-related situations affect you personally. Implementing self-care practices is part of your daily routines and you are dedicated in encouraging others do the same.

STEP 4: COMPETENCE LEVEL IN FOUR AREAS

Go back to the statements and look for the symbols next to them (♥ 🎲 💬 🔍).

Now count the points for the statements with the same symbol to check your competence level in different areas:

- Personal (♥),
- Activity and decision-making (🎲),
- Social-communicative (💬),
- Methodological and professional (🔍) competences.

Competence Level	♥	🎲	💬	🔍
Novice	11 – 15	5 – 7	11 – 15	12 – 17
Beginner	16 – 26	8 – 12	16 – 26	18 – 29
Competent	27 – 37	13 – 17	27 – 37	30 – 41
Proficient	38 – 48	18 – 22	38 – 48	42 – 53
Expert	49 – 55	23 – 25	49 – 55	54 – 60
YOUR SCORE:	♥ _____	🎲 _____	💬 _____	🔍 _____

The table below explains the meaning of each of these areas as related to childcare education and trauma.

Competence Area	Explanation
	Personal competence refers to the ability to be self-reflective, critical, and to act based on one's values, attitudes, and ideals. It involves self-awareness, ethical considerations, and the capacity for personal growth. In the context of trauma, it refers to respecting individual differences in responses to trauma, reflecting on and managing own emotions, maintaining healthy work-life balance and supporting others to do the same, seeking for help and support when needed, being open to unexpected social changes and being ready to deepen own knowledge to successfully deal with children and families in crisis.
	Activity and Decision-making competence is the ability to perform job-specific tasks effectively using specialised knowledge and skills. It includes expertise in a particular field and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge practically. It means creating a supportive environment for children to feel safe, perceiving challenging situations as opportunities or maintaining calm when they appear and quickly reacting during emergencies. It also refers to supporting initiatives promoting strength building of children impacted by trauma
	Social-communicative competence encompasses the ability to interact effectively with others, communicate clearly, and cooperate creatively. It includes skills like teamwork, empathy, and conflict resolution. For a childcare professional, it means having the ability to effectively communicate with children and families, ensuring a confidential discussion where each person can openly express emotions and concerns; actively listening to children, concerns and needs and adjusting the interaction accordingly; collaborating with other professionals to provide a more comprehensive approach to families in crisis or children experiencing trauma.
	Methodological and Professional competence involves the ability to apply methodological and technical knowledge to solve complex problems. It includes analytical thinking, organisational skills, or ability to share knowledge with others. It refers to having knowledge about the concept of trauma and its impact on children, describe different strategies or methods in supporting children's empowerment, understanding family in crisis, analysing family history to provide appropriate support, etc.

STEP 5: DIAGRAM CREATION

Follow the steps below to create your own diagram illustrating your competence profile in the topic of culture.

1. Select one of four areas.
2. Go back to Step 4 and check your competence level in the chosen area (Novice – Expert)
3. Find the number on the diagram that corresponds to your competence level as follows: Novice = 1; Beginner = 2; Competent = 3; Proficient = 4; Expert = 5
4. On the chart, mark your competence level (see example on the left).
5. Repeat the steps for each area.
6. Connect the dots.

Example

♥ = 3

🎲 = 2

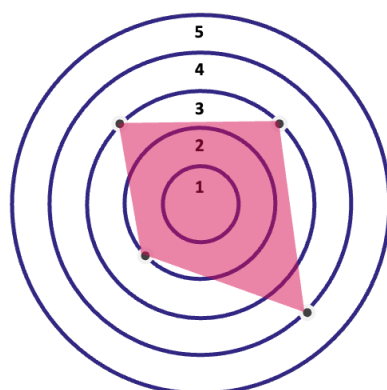
💬 = 2

🔍 = 4

PERSONAL



ACTIVITY AND
DECISION - MAKING



SOCIAL-
COMMUNICATIVE

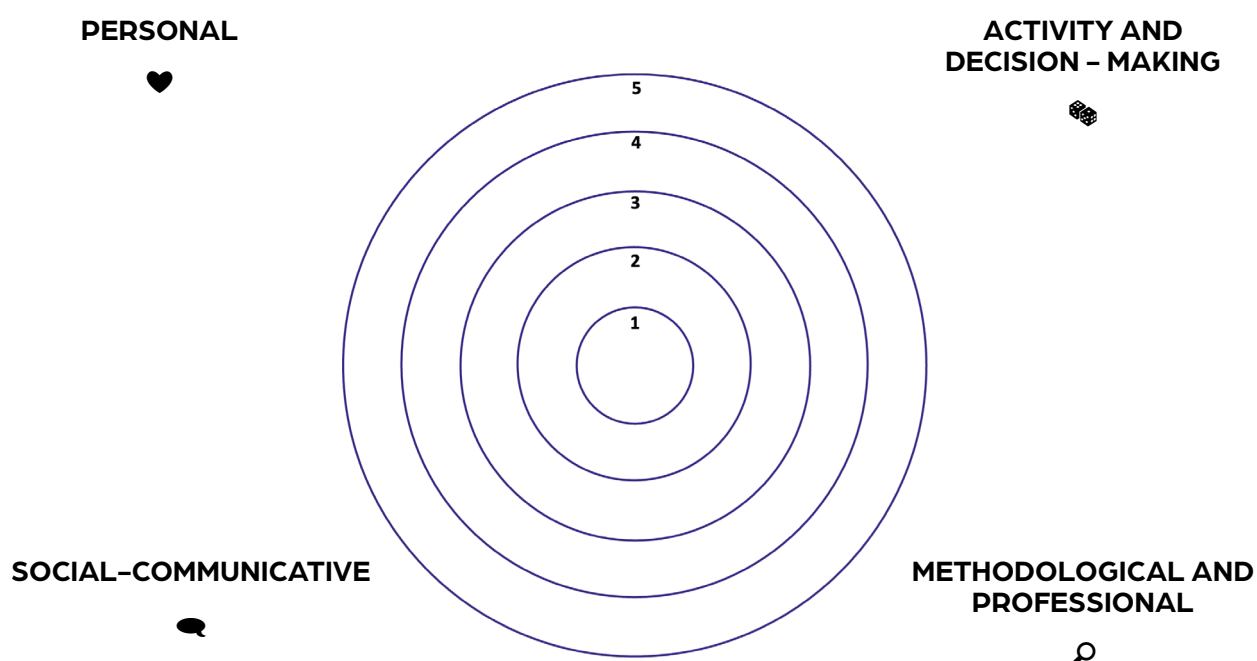


METHODOLOGICAL
AND PROFESSIONAL



Indicator	Competence level
1	Novice
2	Beginner
3	Competent
4	Proficient
5	Expert
5	Expert

Create your diagram!



Indicator	Competence level
1	Novice
2	Beginner
3	Competent
4	Proficient
5	Expert

3.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPETENCE IMPROVEMENT

With your Trauma competence profile in hand, you might be interested in improving certain competence areas.

For different competence levels, you can find:



Books/Handbooks/Articles

Different materials with theoretical information, e.g. books and articles with theoretical insights or scientific findings; guidelines on the topic of trauma; policy documents; etc



Ready-to-use Materials

Different types of materials that you can directly implement in practice, e.g. work-sheets, digital tools, videos, etc.



Tips and Tricks

Suggestions/advices from the experts in trauma-informed practice, childcare, and social work on how you can improve your competence.

NOVICE

Books/Handbooks/Articles

- Childhood Education International (n.d.) Impact of trauma. Available at: <https://ceinternational1892.org/courses/impact-of-trauma/> (Accessed: 17 January 2025)
Understanding the Impact of Trauma on Young Children is an online, self-paced mini course designed for early childhood education (ECE) teachers, caregivers, and providers working with children between the ages of 0–8 and their parents.
- International Partnerships (n.d.) Forced displacement. Available at: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-forced-displacement/forced-displacement_en
The text provides an overview of forced displacement, its causes, key definitions, global policies, and the EU's development-focused efforts to support affected populations and address root causes.
- Nelson, P.T. (n.d.) Surviving a Family Crisis. Available at: <https://www.udel.edu/canr/cooperative-extension/fact-sheets/surviving-family-crisis/> (Accessed: January 16, 2025).
- Price, J. (2023) 15 Types of Family Crisis. Available at: <https://www.catalogueforphilanthropy.org/15-types-of-family-crisis/> (Accessed: January 28, 2025).
- Puddle Dancer Press (n.d.) What is the relationship between Trauma and Nonviolent Communication? Available at: <https://nonviolentcommunication.com/learn-nonviolent-communication/nvc-trauma/> (Accessed: 09 January 2025)
This article discusses different approaches that complement Nonviolent Communication and help understand trauma more fully.
- Team TICS (2024) Reflective Practice; An Essential Approach in Trauma-Informed Care'. Available at: <https://www.ticservicesltd.com/2024/06/30/reflective-practice-an-essential-approach-in-trauma-informed-care/> (Accessed: 11 December 2024).
This article emphasizes the importance of reflective practice in fostering self-awareness among professionals working in trauma-informed care.
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2011) Trauma and Your Family. Available at: https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//trauma_and_your_family.pdf (Accessed: 5 February, 2025)
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2024) Trauma Training for Early Childhood. Available at: <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trauma-training-for-early-childhood> (Accessed: 20 January 2025)
A 4-hour interactive course that provides core concepts on trauma and young children in 15–20-minute lesson segments. This course complements and expands on other early childhood curriculums while uniquely centering issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion using a relational lens. This course is appropriate for any professional who has contact with young children and/or their families.

Ready-to-use Materials

- American Academy of Pediatrics (2024) Trauma Resources for Families. Available at: <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/national-center-for-relational-health-and-trauma-informed-care/resources-for-families/?srsltid=AfmBOop-bcejUjHFCBclgFkhiqekOcETOPLx4DXntOtLJhQlg8-zCs27> (Accessed: 4 February 2025).
Two infographics to help families and caregivers learn how to communicate and provide support to children who have experienced trauma.
- Radlauer-Doerfler, J. & VanDenBerg, J.E. (2020) A Practical Guide to Self-Care for Helping Professionals. Available at: https://www.cmhnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/New_Practical-Guide-to-Self-Care-for-Wraparound-Professionals-1.pdf
This guide outlines actionable self-care practices tailored for professionals addressing trauma, focusing on managing burnout, compassion fatigue, and sustaining long-term emotional resilience.
- Seid, A. (n.d.) Introduction to Nonviolent Communication. Available at: <https://cascadiaworkshops.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/INTRO-BCS-NVC-HANDOUT-PACKET.pdf> (Accessed: 09 January 2025)
The handout provides basic information related to the application of nonviolent communication as a basis for establishing a relationship of trust and empathy.

- Youth Center Crisis (2019) Family Support is Key. Available at: <https://youthcrisiscenter.org/family-support-is-key/> (Accessed: June, 6 2024)
The website describes the unique nature of family crises and outlines their stages, emphasizes the importance of seeking assistance. It offers a free download of the manual "5 Ways to Strengthen Your Family that can be used in consulting work with the families.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ The prevalence of childhood trauma is alarmingly high, meaning that you as childcare professional are likely to encounter it. This underscores the importance to inform yourself through reading, training, and discussions with colleagues to better understand the complexities of trauma. Moreover, this will help you in adopting an open-minded approach and cultivating a compassionate, non-judgmental attitude, and overcoming personal fears or discomfort related to trauma.
- ✓ Start by learning about the different experiences and backgrounds of the children in your care. Engaging in conversations with parents and children can provide valuable insights into their unique situations.
- ✓ Approach families with an open mind, avoiding assumptions about their experiences or behaviours. Focus on listening to family members' concerns, validating their emotions, and showing empathy.
- ✓ Learn about the basic structure and functioning of families, especially in the context of stress or trauma.
- ✓ Ask simple questions (clear, direct, straightforward, easy-to-understand questions). For example: instead of "Can you describe the different phases that led to this situation?" ask "What happened first?" or "When did this start?"
- ✓ Stick to established protocols and use structured tools (like family crisis templates) to gather relevant information.
- ✓ Regularly consult with supervisors or experienced colleagues to guide your approach and improve your confidence.
- ✓ Familiarise yourself with basic concepts of Nonviolent communication (NVC). NVC starts with how you communicate with yourself – use the handout to identify your own feelings and needs, especially when feeling overwhelmed.
- ✓ Research about basic concepts of self-awareness and self-care. Attend introductory workshops or training sessions on trauma-informed care to understand its significance.

BEGINNER

Books/Handbooks/Articles

- Better Health Channel (2022) Trauma and families. Available at: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/trauma-and-families> (Accessed: January 28, 2025).
- CEU Outlet (2024) Family and Crisis Intervention: Essential Strategies for Social Workers and Mental Health Professionals. Available at: <https://www.ceuoutlet.com/blog/family-and-crisis-intervention-essential-strategies-for-social-workers-and-mental-health-professionals> (Accessed: 5 February 2025)
- Childhood Education International (n.d.) Introduction to Trauma-Informed Practices. Available at: <https://cein-international1892.org/courses/introduction-to-trauma-informed-practices/> (Accessed: 17 January 2025)
Childhood Education International provides the online micro-course "Introduction to Trauma-Informed Practices" which is approximately two hours, for practitioners looking to increase their understanding of trauma and trauma-informed practices.
- Moudatsou, M., Stavropoulou, A., Philalithis, A. & Koukouli, S. (2020). 'The Role of Empathy in Health and Social Care Professionals', Healthcare (Basel), 8 (1), pp. 26. Available at: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7151200/> (Accessed: 21 January 2025)
This article analyses the concept of empathy in health and social care professionals, emphasizing its importance in communication with clients/service users through emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions.
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2017) Family Resilience and Traumatic Stress. Available at: https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/family_resilience_and_traumatic_stress_providers.pdf (Accessed: 22 May 2024)
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2024) The 12 Core Concepts for Understanding Traumatic Stress in Children and Families. Available at: <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/overview-of-the-12-core-concepts> (Accessed: 20 January 2025)
The link leads to an e-learning course that helps professionals to better comprehend the effects of traumatic experiences and losses. It is interactive course, easy to follow, informative and represents an important foundation for professionals who work with children and families exposed to trauma events. To attend the course it is necessary to register, the attendance is free of charge.
- UNHCR (2021) Teaching About Refugees: Guidance for teachers on stress and trauma. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-teaching-about-refugees-2021-stress-and-trauma-guidebook>
This guidebook offers tools for educators to support children affected by forced displacement and trauma, with strategies to address their emotional and psychological needs in educational settings.

Ready-to-use Materials

- Child Mind Institute (n.d.) Helping Children Cope After Traumatic Event. Available at: https://childmind.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CMI_TraumaGuide_English.pdf (Accessed: 24 January 2025)
This guide was assembled by psychiatrists, psychologists and mental health experts who specialize in crisis situations. It offers simple tips on what to expect, what to do and what to look out for. There are general suggestions as well as age-specific information.
- CONNECT Modules (n.d.) Starting a relationship (Video 4.4). Available at: <https://connectmodules.dec-sped.org/connect-modules/resources/videos/video-4-4/> (Accessed: 4 February 2025)
The video provides guidance on initiating relationships with families in a sensitive and family-centered manner.
- Giraffe Nonviolent Communication (2021) Exercise in Empathy | Nonviolent Communication explained by Marshall Rosenberg (AUDIO ONLY). September 21, 2020. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0oJflwttH8> (Accessed: 09 January 2025)
The video offers an explanation of how to practice and apply empathy in interpersonal relationships.

- McLeanHospital (2020) Trauma Informed Care With Refugee and Immigrant Youth. November 27, 2020. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zvGu-iBGPo> (Accessed: 06 March, 2025)
This video discusses strategies for providing trauma-informed care to support the well-being of refugee and immigrant youth.
- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (n.d.) Strategies for Family Engagement: Attitudes and Practices. Available at: <https://www.firstup.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Family-Engagement.pdf> (Accessed: 4 February, 2025)
The guide explores the importance of family engagement and practice strategies for building relationships with families.
- Oregon Family Support Network (2019) Life Domains for a Crisis Plan. Available at: <https://oregonwrap-around.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Wraparound-Life-Domains-for-a-Crisis-Plan.pdf> (Accessed: 4 February 2025)
This resource supports professionals in facilitating collaborative discussions with families to identify priorities addressing multiple life domains.
- Radlauer-Doerfler, J. & VanDenBerg, J.E. (2020) A Practical Guide to Self-Care for Helping Professionals. Available at: https://www.cmhnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/New_Practical-Guide-to-Self-Care-for-Wraparound-Professionals-1.pdf
This guide outlines actionable self-care practices tailored for professionals addressing trauma, focusing on managing burnout, compassion fatigue, and sustaining long-term emotional resilience.
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2008) Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators. Available at: https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//child_trauma_toolkit_educators.pdf (Accessed: 20 January 2025)
Provides school administrators, teachers, staff, and concerned parents with basic information about working with traumatized children in the school system.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ Together with colleagues, discuss different methods they use to address trauma in childcare. Exchange ideas, concerns, and experiences, and support each other. Additionally, continue to research literature regarding trauma and family dynamics in crisis.
- ✓ Attend training on trauma and its effects on family dynamics. Focus on understanding common crisis scenarios.
- ✓ Rely on checklists or templates to guide conversations with families and identify their needs.
- ✓ Build trust with families by listening without judgment and validating their experiences.
- ✓ Identify and acknowledge the family's existing strengths, which can be used to foster resilience
- ✓ After grasping the basics from these resources, consider attending basic NVC (Non-violent Communication) workshops or joining practice groups. Learning from experienced practitioners can deepen your understanding and offer real-life examples of how NVC supports trauma recovery.
- ✓ Regularly consult with more experienced colleagues for guidance and feedback.
- ✓ Practice maintaining professional boundaries to ensure objectivity in interactions.
- ✓ Share your experiences with colleagues to identify common stressors and coping strategies. Participate in group discussions or forums focused on self-care practices in your field.

COMPETENT

Books/Handbooks/Articles

- Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) (2018) About Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors Framework. Available at: <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/About-Strengthening-Families.pdf> (Accessed: 5 February 2025)
- Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (2011) Crisis planning tools for families: A Companion Guide for Providers. Available at: https://www.cbhknowledge.center/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Crisis-Planning-Tools_Guide_for_ProvidersFinal.pdf (Accessed 6 February 2025).
The guide provides tools, strategies, and structured approaches for crisis planning, with a focus on involving families in creating actionable plans during crises. It emphasizes collaboration between providers and families and includes worksheets, templates, and guidelines to support the planning process.
- Fazel, M. & Betancourt, T. S. (2022) 'Impact of War and Forced Displacement on Children's Mental Health', Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 63(2), pp. 123–135. Available at: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9209349/> (Accessed: 11 December 2024).
This study highlights the psychological effects of war and forced displacement on children, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions.
- Moss, L. (2013) Working with Families in Crisis. EI Excellence. Available at: <https://www.eiexcellence.org/working-with-families-in-crisis/> (Accessed: 31 January 2025).
- National Traumatic Stress Network (2018) Attachment Vitamins: Interactive Course on Early Childhood Attachment, Stress, and Trauma. Available at: <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/attachment-vitamins-interactive-course-early-childhood-attachment-stress-and-trauma> (Accessed: 15 January 2025)
The link leads to a 4 hours long, free, e-course that provides self-paced learning for parents, caregivers and professionals interacting with children under the age of five. The course provides an overview of early social-emotional development with insights and suggestions to support healthy child-caregiver relationships, teach about impact of stress and trauma; reflect on the possible meanings of children's behaviors; explore the influence of culture on families' socialization goals; familiarise with a number of strategies aimed to promote secure attachment and safe socialization practices.
- Rosenberg, M.B. (2003) Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life. 2nd ed. Encinitas, CA: Puddle-dancer Press. Available at: <https://ccpgc.usmf.md/sites/default/files/inline-files/Nonviolent%20Communication%20A%20Language%20of%20Life%20Life-Changing%20Tools%20for%20Healthy%20Relationships%20%28%20PDFDrive%20%29.pdf> (Accessed: 29 January 2025)
This book uses stories, role-plays, and real-world examples to introduce the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) process focusing on establishing empathy.
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services (n.d.) Developing Parallel Skills for Trauma-Informed Practice. Available at: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02641.pdf> (Accessed: 11 December 2024).
This document provides strategies for professionals to develop self-awareness and resilience in trauma-informed care settings.

Ready-to-use Materials

- CECE Early Childhood Videos at Eastern CT State U (2020) The Importance of Self-Care for Early Care and Education Professionals. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9tPoR4Ctec>
- Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) (2018) Parental Resilience: Protective & Promotive Factors (Action Sheets). Available at: <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ProtectiveFactorsAction-Sheets.pdf> (Accessed 4 February 2025)
Action sheet that provides clear, actionable steps for implementing the Protective Factors Framework in practical settings, focusing on strengthening families and supporting resilience.

- National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement (n.d.) Guide to Developing Relationships with Families. Available at: <https://headstart.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/building-partnerships-developing-relationships-families.pdf> (Accessed: 4 February, 2025)
The guide offers professionals a comprehensive framework for building respectful and effective partnerships with families, emphasizing trust, cultural sensitivity, and communication. It includes practical tips and reflective activities to enhance professionals' ability to engage families in meaningful collaboration.
- Paige, H. (n.d.) Nonviolent Communication Practices that Embody Person-Centered and Trauma-Informed Care. Available at: <https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-42/2/Nonviolent%2520Communication%2520Practices%2520PPT.pdf> (Accessed: 29 January 2025)
This material provides an explanation of the connection between person-centered trauma-informed (PCTI) care and Nonviolent Communication (NVC), as well as numerous individual and group exercises for experiential learning.
- NCTSN Core Curriculum on Childhood Trauma Task Force (2012) The 12 core concepts: Concepts for understanding traumatic stress responses in children and families. Core Curriculum on Childhood Trauma. Los Angeles, CA, and Durham, NC: UCLA- Duke University National Center for Child Traumatic Stress. Available at: https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//the_12_core_concepts_for_understanding_traumatic_stress_responses_in_children_and_families.pdf (Accessed: 23 January 2025)
The document outlines 12 core concepts for understanding traumatic stress responses in children and families, developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. These concepts highlight the complexity of trauma, its broad context, secondary adversities, varied reactions, safety concerns, impact on caregiving systems, protective factors, developmental influences, neurobiological underpinnings, cultural considerations, social contract challenges, and the importance of self-care for providers. The project is supported by SAMHSA and emphasizes evidence-based practices to improve care for trauma-affected children.
- Oregon Wraparound (2019) Sample of some holistic crisis plan components. Available at: <https://oregonwrap-around.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Family-Crisis-Plan-Template.pdf> (Accessed 6 February 2025).
The template provides a structured format to identify potential crises, triggers, and solutions. It serves as a tool to document a family's history and patterns of dealing with crises, which professionals can use to develop more tailored action plans.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ Focus on enhancing personalized, trauma-informed interventions by developing a more flexible, adaptive approach to meet the unique needs of each child and family. Continue to refine your ability to assess individual cases by incorporating more advanced strategies, such as reflective practice and ongoing professional supervision.
- ✓ Enhance skills in tailoring approaches to individual family needs and dynamics.
- ✓ Regularly evaluate your approaches and adapt strategies to new challenges.
- ✓ Attend workshops or training sessions focused on trauma-informed care to enhance your understanding and application of these principles in your work with children and families.
- ✓ Begin integrating NVC (Nonviolent Communication) in low-stress environments. For example, practice using empathetic language with friends, family, or colleagues before applying it in more sensitive situations involving trauma. Consistency will help build your confidence and skills over time. Engage in Continuous Learning.
- ✓ Regularly assess your emotional responses to work-related situations and identify areas where you can improve your self-care practices. Use tools like journals or reflection logs to track your progress.
- ✓ Work on balancing emotional engagement with maintaining professional objectivity.

PROFICIENT

Books/Handbooks/Articles

- Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) (2015) Core Meanings of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors. Available at: <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Core-Meanings-of-the-SF-Protective-Factors-2015.pdf> (Accessed: 4 February, 2025)
The document focuses on the core meanings of each protective factor enabling professionals to integrate these concepts into more complex strategies or frameworks they may already be using in their work with families.
- Key, A. & Rider, K. (2018) 'Secondary Traumatic Stress Among Mental Health Professionals', Graduate Student Journal of Psychology, 17, pp. 69–80. Available at: <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/media/centers-amp-labs/gsjp/gsjp-volume-pdfs/final-6-Key-et-al.pdf> (Accessed: 11 December 2024).
This study examines the prevalence of secondary traumatic stress among mental health professionals and its implications for training programs.
- KMB CAMH (2016) Holistic Crisis Planning: A Companion Guide for Providers Working with Adults and Families. Available at: https://kmb.camh.ca/eenet/sites/default/files/pdfs/Holistic%20Crisis%20Planning_A%20Companion%20Guide%20for%20Providers%20working%20with%20Adults%20and%20Families.pdf (Accessed: 5 February 2025)
While the guide provides foundational tools and templates, its emphasis on a holistic and person-centered approach allows professionals to adapt and integrate these resources into complex and challenging cases.
- Neumann, M. M. (2023) Building Resilience Capacity in Young Children: Practical Insights for Early Childhood Educators. Childhood Education, 99(2), 32–39. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2023.2185040>
The article offers practical insights for building resilience capacity in young children, on the level of learning programs and environments.
- Unlocking Children (2024) Enhancing trauma-informed practices when working with children. Available at: <https://unlockingchildren.co.uk/cat/trauma-informed-care/enhancing-trauma-informed-care> (Accessed: 03 February 2025)
This resource provides insights for childcare professionals to build trust, foster empathy, and apply trauma-informed practices, including Nonviolent Communication, to support trauma-impacted children and their families.
- Young, K. et al. (2024) 'Young Children's Development After Forced Displacement: A Systematic Review', Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 29(1), pp. 45–58. Available at: <https://capmh.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13034-024-00711-5> (Accessed: 11 December 2024).
This systematic review examines the impacts of forced displacement on the social, emotional, and cognitive development of children aged 0 to 6 years.

Ready-to-use Materials

- Belinda Thomson, Natasha Chow. (2020). Your Brilliant Brain (a book about complex childhood trauma). Queensland Health, Australia. Available at: <https://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/your-brilliant-brain-a-book-for-children-teens-about-complex-childhood-trauma/> (Accessed: 31 January 2025)
For professionals and families seeking to support children through complex trauma, this book is an essential resource, offering insights into the brain's response to trauma and practical strategies for recovery. It underscores the importance of informed and sensitive guidance from adults, highlighting the need for regular practice of coping strategies to reduce the effects of toxic stress.
- Center for early child development: Guidelines for becoming a trauma-informed school (2003) Available at: <https://blackpoolbetterstart.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/School-TIG-Digital-Version.pdf> (Accessed: 04 February 2025)
Guidebook provides a framework for professionals on how to implement a trauma-informed approach within schools. It focusses on recognizing and responding to trauma and supporting families and staff.

- Family Rights Group (n.d.) Family group conferences: advice for families. Available at: <https://frg.org.uk/get-help-and-advice/what/family-group-conferences-advice-for-families/> (Accessed: 4 February 2025)
This website provides detailed information about Family Group Conferences (FGCs), explaining their purpose and how they support families in making plans for children's welfare. It is designed to guide families and professionals through the FGC process, emphasizing collaboration and family-led decision-making. While primarily aimed at families, it can also be a valuable tool for professionals working to engage families in structured, solution-focused discussions.
- National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement (2019) Engaging with Families in Conversations about Sensitive Topics. Available at: <https://headstart.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/engaging-with-families-conversations-about-sensitive-topics.pdf> (Accessed: 4 February 2025).
The guide offers professionals a comprehensive framework for building respectful and effective conversations with families about sensitive topics.
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network (n.d.) Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators. Available at: <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/child-trauma-toolkit-educators>.
Provides school administrators, teachers, staff, and concerned parents with basic information about working with traumatized children in the school system.
- Northwest MHTTC (2020) Educator Wellbeing 101: Practical Tips to Help You S.O.A.R. October 30, 2020. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHg-Flk16-M>
This video offers practical advice for educators on maintaining personal well-being and managing stress, focusing on a strategy called S.O.A.R. (Self-care, Observation, Adaptability, and Reflection) to help educators enhance resilience, balance work pressures, and improve their emotional health.
- Oregon Wraparound (2019) Sample of some holistic crisis plan components. Available at: <https://oregonwrap-around.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Family-Crisis-Plan-Template.pdf> (Accessed 6 February 2025).
The template provides a structured format to identify potential crises, triggers, and solutions. It serves as a tool to document a family's history and patterns of dealing with crises, which professionals can use to develop more tailored action plans.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ Create a trauma-informed surrounding by sharing with colleagues and furthering their and your own expertise in trauma-informed techniques that promote long-term resilience and recovery, such as trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy (TF-CBT) or other specialized approaches. By continually expanding toolkit available to you and your colleagues, you can ensure that support to children and families remains responsive and effective, particularly in highly challenging cases.
- ✓ Share your expertise by coaching less experienced professionals in family crisis work.
- ✓ Create a support network within your organization to share best practices and resources related to trauma-informed care among colleagues who work with displaced children.
- ✓ Work with other (external) professionals to address complex family needs comprehensively.
- ✓ Deepen knowledge of trauma's complex effects and integrate this into your work.
- ✓ Extend trauma-informed practices beyond the classroom by engaging families in the process. Use NVC (non-violent communication) when communicating with parents or guardians, ensuring they feel heard and supported. Use this input to refine your application of NVC principles, ensuring continuous improvement in creating supportive environments for trauma-affected individuals.
- ✓ Guide families in collaboratively developing sustainable solutions.
- ✓ Take initiative to create a culture of self-care within your team or organization by sharing resources, organizing workshops, or facilitating discussions on the importance of self-awareness and self-care practices.
- ✓ Prioritize practices like mindfulness or peer support to maintain emotional resilience.

EXPERT

Books/Handbooks/Articles

- Bowie, V. (2020) 'Trauma-Informed Self-Care for Child and Youth Care Workers', *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 25, pp. 157–175. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347116523_Trauma-Informed_Self-Care_for_Child_and_Youth_Care_Workers
This article discusses trauma-informed self-care strategies for professionals working with children and youth, emphasizing the importance of personal resilience, reflection, and boundary-setting to prevent burnout and promote overall well-being.
- Carr, A. (2006) *Family therapy: Concepts, Process and Practice*. 2nd ed. John Wiley & Sons Ltd. Chichester, England.
- Damico, S. (2020) 'The Resilience Cascade: The best way to promote resilience in children is to foster resilient teachers', *Childhood Education*, 96(1), pp. 54–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2020.1707538>
The article discusses the importance of the "resilience cascade" to highlight the point that promoting resilience in children requires educators and caregivers to pay close attention to own social and emotional well-being.
- KMB CAMH (2016) *Holistic Crisis Planning: A Companion Guide for Providers Working with Adults and Families*. Available at: https://kmb.camh.ca/eenet/sites/default/files/pdfs/Holistic%20Crisis%20Planning_A%20Companion%20Guide%20for%20Providers%20working%20with%20Adults%20and%20Families.pdf (Accessed: 5 February 2025)
While guides provides foundational tools and templates, its emphasis on a holistic and person-centered approach allows experts to adapt and integrate these resources into complex and challenging cases. It can be useful for experts to refine their practice, navigate complex family dynamics, and serve as mentors or trainers for less experienced colleagues.
- Palenica-Ramírez, N. & Mallah, F. (2024) *Forced Displacement: Implications for Refugee and Asylee Students*. Available at: https://immigrationinitiative.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/AUGUST-2024-Forced-Displacement_Implications-for-Refugee-and-Asylee-Students_final.pdf
This resource explores the impact of forced displacement on refugee and asylee students, highlighting trauma-related challenges and providing strategies for supporting their educational and emotional well-being.
- Paul, S. (2023) 'Unpacking the impact of childhood trauma on empathy and emotional intelligence: A correlational study', *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11 (4). Available at: <https://ijip.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/18.01.169.20231104.pdf> (Accessed: 04 February 2025)
This empirical study delves into the intricate relationship between childhood trauma and the development of empathy and emotional intelligence in adulthood.
- Van der Kolk, B.A. (2015) *The body keeps the score: brain, mind and body in the healing of trauma*. NY, Penguin books.
Book *The Body Keeps the Score* by Bessel van der Kolk explores the profound impact of trauma on the body and mind. It examines how trauma affects brain function, memory, and emotional regulation, and emphasizes the importance of understanding and healing through therapies like yoga, EMDR, and neurofeedback. Van der Kolk advocates for a holistic approach to trauma recovery, focusing on the body's role in processing and healing traumatic experiences.

Ready-to-use Materials

- Burns, G.W. (2005) *101 Healing Stories for Kids and Teens: Using Metaphors in Therapy*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.
101 Healing Stories for Kids and Teens is a comprehensive guide that explores the power of storytelling and metaphors. This resource is especially beneficial for professionals working with children and adolescents, offering a range of creative techniques that can be combined with other evidence-based approaches like play, art, music, and drama therapies. The book is organised into chapters that provide guidance on effective storytelling and using metaphors, along with practical tips on generating healing story ideas, planning, and presenting them.

- Caudle, C. (2023) Trauma and Trauma-Informed Practices in Early Childhood Education with Cara Caudle. Available at: <https://creators.spotify.com/pod/show/everythingecee/episodes/133-Trauma-and-Trauma-Informed-Practices-in-Early-Childhood-Education-with-Cara-Caudle-e2gf655>
This podcast episode explores trauma and trauma-informed practices in early childhood education. Cara Caudle discusses effective strategies for educators to support young children who have experienced trauma, emphasizing the importance of understanding trauma's impact on children and the value of creating a supportive, empathetic learning environment.
- CEU Outlet, Inc. (2023) 5 Effective Techniques for Family and Crisis Intervention: A Guide for Therapists. Available at: <https://www.ceuoutlet.com/blog/5-effective-techniques-for-family-and-crisis-intervention-a-guide-for-therapists> (Accessed: January, 28 2025)
- Williams B., Edlington T., (n.d.) Can DVD simulations be used to promote empathy and interprofessional collaboration among undergraduate healthcare students? Monash University, Australian Government, Office for learning and teaching. Available at: https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1217984/empathy-toolkit.pdf (Accessed: 04 February 2025)
This toolkit is useful for promoting empathy and adopting empathetic attitudes and behaviours among professionals.

Tips & Tricks

- ✓ As an expert, actively mentor less experienced colleagues in applying trauma-informed practices, including Nonviolent Communication (NVC). Focus on guiding them through complex cases where trust, empathy and emotional intelligence are critical, offering constructive feedback and fostering a culture of continuous professional growth.
- ✓ Provide training on self-care and emotional wellbeing to colleagues. Help them develop their skills in managing trauma-related stress effectively.
- ✓ Stay updated with the latest research and best practices in trauma-informed care.
- ✓ Contribute to or initiate research projects that further investigate the intersection of trust, empathy, communication and trauma.
- ✓ Advocate for systemic improvements in family crisis services or policies.



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