



SESSION 3: DEVELOP A SENSE OF TRUST

The purpose of this group is to learn more about how youth, families, and your community are impacted by trauma and violence and what you can do to help. Each week we will review a new topic or theme. Our sessions will begin with a brief check-in and video about the session. We will then have a discussion and activity connected to the theme for the week. There will also be some activities that you can work on at home to practice the skills learned in the session or to prepare for the following week's topic.

There are a few important rules and reminders for the group! Important things to remember are that no one has to share if they do not want to, be generous to others in the group and active listeners, do not share information heard here with others outside of the group, and that group facilitators are mandated reporters.

Today's session *Develop A Sense of Trust* focuses on how trust develops, how it is broken, what we can do to strengthen or enhance trusting relationships. Developing a sense of trust is about creating safe, stable and nurturing relationships with children and adults.

When we are young, part of the developmental process includes learning how close we need to stay to our caregiver to feel secure. As we grow, we have many experiences that can increase or disrupt our sense of trust in others and, therefore, in ourselves. The presence of positive and stable relationships is extremely important for all children. The care and support provided by caregivers, peers, or mentors can help with positive development, demonstrating prosocial behaviors, and resiliency.



Each week you will be encouraged to take time to reflect on what has been discussed in the group and examine how it relates to your current situation or experiences. For example, has someone in your family ever done something that made you feel like you could no longer trust them? How did it make you feel? Was the situation ever fixed?

As a caregiver, you are constantly modeling to your child how they should behave and interact with others. What do your own actions and relationships say to your child about trusting others? Your previous interactions with your child have likely had an influence on your current relationship. What are some ways that we can all develop or enhance the sense of trust that we have with our children?

At-Home Activity

- Watch Brené Brown's "Empathy vs. Sympathy" video. Click on the following link to view the video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>
- Complete the *Blindfolded Trust Walk* activity with your child and have a follow-up conversation about the importance of repairing and rebuilding trust.
- Upcoming session: *A Sense of Mastery- Developing life skills in children and adolescents*

BEST PRACTICE 2: A SENSE OF TRUST

Support safe, stable, and nurturing relationships with children and adults.

Youth Action Statement

Identify people you can trust and depend on.

Caregiver Action Statement

Identify people you can trust and depend on. Be a person your child can trust and depend on.

There are a range of traumatic experiences that may cause children to feel that they cannot rely on anyone for safety or support. The presence of positive and stable relationships is extremely important for all children. The care and support provided by caregivers, peers, or mentors can help with positive development, demonstrating prosocial behaviors, and resiliency.

Developing a sense of trust is about creating safe, stable and nurturing relationships with children and adults. It is only when we feel safe, that we can go beyond our comfort zone and it is only when we have experienced stable and nurturing relationships that we can practice reaching out to others for support. Babies depend on relationships for their development and their survival. As we grow older and become more independent we learn how to identify the relationships that help our growth and our own feelings of security and safety as well as our sense of self-identity and self-worth.

Once parents are successful in identifying their own beliefs and patterns around trust, then they can begin the process of developing or growing their own network of support and modeling that strategy for their children. For young children, modeling trust may look like being consistent in your parenting or teaching them how to be a friend to other children. For youth, modeling trust may be listening without judgment and being curious about the choices they make instead of always looking to punish mistakes. On the flip side, children and youth who have experienced trauma need the consistency and containment of a parent who is not playing a dual role as their friend. Both parents and children need to have a sense of self-compassion that will allow them to recognize that although we sometimes make mistakes, having patience and learning from our mistakes is valuable for ourselves and our relationships.



Children who have experienced interpersonal trauma become really good at noticing signals of possible threat, but not so good at noticing possible sources of support.

For this reason, it is important to be explicit about your intention to be helpful and you should be willing to notice or receive feedback from your child about their experiences.

BLINDFOLDED TRUST WALK



This activity will help you explore a range of things about yourself and your relationship with your child. Pay attention to feelings of trust and mistrust, nervousness or anxiety about what will happen next, and the type of communication used throughout the activity.

For this activity, one person in the pair will be blindfolded and the other person will be their guide. If you or your child do not feel safe or comfortable being blindfolded, you may choose to close eyes or put one hand over your eyes.

Decide if you or your child will be blindfolded first and who will be the guide first. The guide will have 3-5 minutes to lead the blind-folded participant on a walk (you can determine the parameters based on your location). At the end of 3-5 minutes the roles are reversed: the guide now becomes the person blindfolded and the other person becomes the guide.

REFLECTION

What did you notice about yourself during your role as the guide? When you were blindfolded?

What did you notice about your child when they were the guide? When they were blindfolded?

How would you describe your ability to trust your child while you were blindfolded?

Did your child trust you to guide them on the walk while they were blindfolded?

How would you describe the communication between you and your child during the activity?

What did you notice about the importance of communication during this activity?

How might your previous experiences have influenced how you responded to this activity?

How might your child's previous experiences have influenced how they responded to this activity?