

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Brought to you by Rep. Chris Bos & Jessica
Hutchison



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DEFINITIONS TO GET
COMFORTABLE WITH

Trauma

Adverse Childhood
Experiences (ACES)



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Trauma:

- ❖ What we think trauma is vs. what it is actually is:

“Any negative life event that occurs in a state of relative helplessness.”

-Neurologist, Robert Scaer

- ❖ Most adults cannot point to one or even multiple moments that broke their life apart.
- ❖ Trauma is a part of life. It is UNAVOIDABLE.



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Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- What are they?

EVENTS that occur in childhood (0-17) that undermine a child's sense of SAFETY, STABILITY and BONDING.

- Why do we care?

Significant data demonstrates a strong connection between ACES and a vast number of negative health problems later in life including:

*Depression, Heart Disease, Cognitive Problems, Cellular Aging, Suicide, Cancer.



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Let's Look at the Past 2 Years:

EVERY single child in the United States has suffered from hidden, everyday traumas like:

- Leaving school and not returning.
- Coming back to school but being asked to maintain distance from their teachers and peers.
- Asked/demanded to mask up.

Their DAILY life has been **UNCERTAIN**, **INCONSISTENT** and **UNCONTROLLABLE**.



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What resiliency is and what it isn't

Children are NOT born resilient. They are TAUGHT to be resilient.

Resilience isn't built by blocking fear, disappointment, sadness, grief, etc.

It is about giving them a safe base to return to, when they experience them.

Guiding our children through difficult experiences builds self trust.

Trust in oneself, and knowing you have a safe base to return to, builds resiliency.



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WHY WE NEED TO LET OUR KIDS FALL

Self trust is built through natural consequences.

Role of parent is to be a GUIDE

- Model healthy boundaries
- Allow the child to exist as they are
- Observe and act from a state of awareness and wisdom, rather than doing it for them.
- Has faith in the foundation and trusts that the child can weather what life brings.

Why this might be difficult for many of us.



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Adaptive:

an ACTION we take to HELP us return to feelings of safety.

Such as: facing a problem head on or redirecting negative thoughts.

KEY: requires effort and a conscious acknowledgement of the discomfort.



Maladaptive:

provides REPRIEVE from the discomfort (i.e. avoidance)

EX: people pleasing, anger/rage, dissociation, emotional addiction.

Might see new behavioral struggles in setting where they did not exist before.



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Before the Conversation

Timing is everything!

It doesn't have to be traditional

Mentally prepare yourself

Have a plan

Manage expectations

Normal to feel scared, nervous, upset, etc., but it is essential to manage strong emotions with your own coping skills.

How will they potentially react, and how will you handle it?



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During the Conversation

VALIDATE, VALIDATE, VALIDATE!

- Something that has been missing during the past 2 years.
- Key to getting your child to continue opening up.
- Validation is about acknowledging their feeling, not talking them out of it.

Empathize

- Honoring their experience. “I am sorry you are feeling this way.”
- Self disclosure



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Conversation Starters and Tips



- Simply ask how they are doing. You might be surprised.
- If you get one word answer....

Gently describe the changes you have observed.

Begin with one observation, not multiple.

more with
“It seems like you have been spending time in your room, how are things going with your friends?”

- NOT:

“Why are you isolating more?”



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Tips Continued:

Ask open ended questions

Make sure you don't minimize anything.

Ask if they want you to listen or help find a solution.

It is ok to take a break.

It is ok to not have all the answers.



What is the likelihood this will happen?



Let's make a plan on how we will respond if it does



Will this matter in 5 years?



Give them the choice.



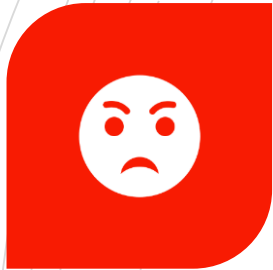
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Additional Tips:



ANGER RARELY
TRAVELS ALONE.



INTENTION VS.
IMPACT



IT'S ALL ABOUT
THE REPAIR.



TRUST YOUR
GUT



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STATE MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Illinois Department of Human Services

- www.dhs.state.il.us

- IDHS Help Line - 1-800-843-6154 or 1-866-324-5553 TTY
- Mental Health Resources - www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29735

Free & Confidential Hotline Numbers

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)
- Crisis Text Line - Text HOME to 741741
- National Helpline (referral and information services) - 1-800-622-4357 (HELP)
- Illinois Cyber Bullying & Internet Safety E-Info Hotline - 1-888-414-7678
- Illinois Crisis and Referral Entry Services (CARES) Line - 1-800-345-9049
- Lake County 211 - Call 211 or Text your zip code to 898211



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