



TRAUMA
informed

Common Trauma Triggers

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A trauma-informed Club or Youth Center works to actively reduce or eliminate triggering or re-traumatizing experiences for youth, families and staff. Because everyone’s experiences with trauma a different, trauma-triggers vary drastically from person to person. Although we will never be able to fully eliminate all triggering experiences, we can work to create environments that reduce triggers by incorporating the 7 Elements of a Trauma-Informed Club into all that we do.

Below is a list of common trauma triggers and suggested ways to make the Club environment and your interactions with youth more trauma-informed. The suggestions are rooted in the 7 Elements of a Trauma-Informed Club. You can use this checklist to help reduce or eliminate triggering or re-traumatizing experiences for youth. Remember, trauma-informed practice is an organizational development approach that involves trauma-informed principles across all aspects of your Club organization and integrating the 7 Key Elements of a Trauma-Informed Club.

Environmental Trigger	Trauma-Informed Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A stranger entering the space• Noise level• An unexpected noise or stimulus• Harsh lighting• Lights off• A particular texture or smell• Disorganized materials• Another youth crying or fighting• A new youth or adult• New room arrangement• New piece of equipment• New staff• Clutter• Overcrowding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce stimulus – sight, sound, smell, taste, touch• Monitor noise levels• Play quiet music or nature sounds during activities• Maintain an organized and clean environment• Provide easy access to supplies• Provide enough supplies for everyone• Provide comfortable seating options• Create a clean, designated work area for youth• Introduce and build community with new youth and staff• Use lamps or softer lighting• Provide designated space for self-regulation• Demonstrate how to use new equipment• Maintain smaller groupings when possible• Intervene and provide support for youth who are dysregulated

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Facilitator Trigger	Trauma-Informed Facilitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick movements • Unexpected touch • Harsh touch • Angry or fearful facial expression • Taking something away • Too many transitions • Change in schedule • Harsh words or tone of voice • Approaching quickly • Towering over a child • Unpredictable schedule • Yelling • Not responding when called 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulate your own emotions • Speak using a calm, soothing voice • Ask before touching someone • Provide sensitive topic warnings • Allow space and time for youth to regulate • Provide support to youth in need of it • Use emotional check-ins • Maintain consistency with expectations and schedules • Provide warnings before transitions • Speak to youth on their level • Address behavior concerns on a 1-1 basis when possible • Be responsive to youth needs • Model, model, model • Follow through and follow-up – if you say you are going to do something, do it

Program/Activity Trigger	Trauma-Informed Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complicated directions • Lacking youth options • Not adapted for varying needs • Unclear expectations • Examples used are not inclusive • Covering sensitive topics without trigger warnings • Covering sensitive topics without follow-up support • Allowing youth to select their own groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear, uncomplicated directions • Use the I Do – We Do – You Do model to explain and model new skills • Use knowledge checks throughout • Model, model, model • Provide options for activity adaptation and youth choice • Use culturally diverse names, and characters • Provide sensitive topic disclosures for topics such as: death, incarceration, mental health or suicide, emotional health, some current events • Review safety resources and procedures before covering sensitive topics • Create a plan for how to support youth following sensitive topics • Use facilitator groupers • Build community with youth and staff