

## Using a Trauma-Informed Approach to Help Children Overcome the Effects of Toxic Stress

Children can heal from the effects of toxic stress if they develop healthy relationships with caring, reliable, safe, compassionate adults who guide them through the healing process.

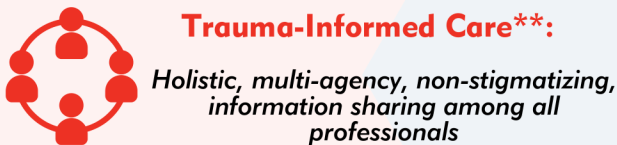
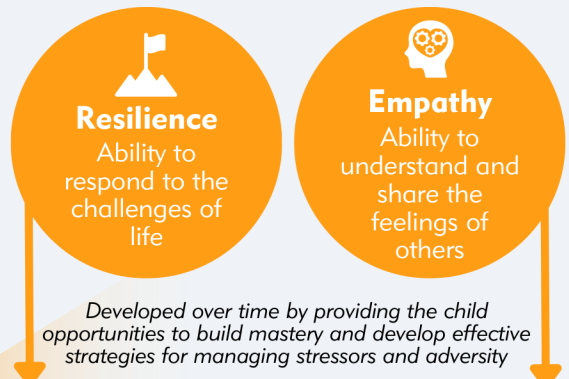
### Protective Factors\*\*:

The presence of PROTECTIVE FACTORS can often mitigate the consequences of ACEs/toxic stress.



### Developing Resilience and Empathy\*\*:

Adults can help children heal from their traumatic experiences by helping children build...



### Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®)



## How CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County is Making a Difference



- CASA assisted in the implementation and coordination of Handle with Care program in Montgomery County with the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office in 2020
- CASA co-founded the Trauma-Informed Montgomery County Task Force in 2021
- CASA Advocates (court-appointed Guardian-ad-Litem) perform ACEs assessments for every child; include assessments in the court report for the judge and others involved in the case
- First CASA staff member completed TBRI® Practitioner Training in 2016; formed CASA TBRI® Team with six Practitioners on staff in 2018; now twelve TBRI® Practitioners on staff at CASA
- CASA TBRI® Team:
  - Offers on-site or virtual TBRI® coaching to eligible parents of origin and/or caregivers/foster placements
  - Provides The Connected Child and The Connected Parent to caregivers/parents
  - Shares cultivated TBRI® YouTube video playlist with caregivers/parents
  - Presents invaluable trauma education to additional community groups/agencies encountering children who have experienced trauma but have not been removed from their homes--teachers/schools, law enforcement, attorneys, judges, healthcare workers, etc.--to help them understand how to interact in a trauma-informed way

UNDERSTANDING ACEs



SCAN ME

TOXIC STRESS & THE BRAIN



SCAN ME

TBRI® OVERVIEW



SCAN ME

IDEAL RESPONSE®



SCAN ME

\* Source: Texas Children's Hospital Blog, "The Impact of Toxic Stress in Children"

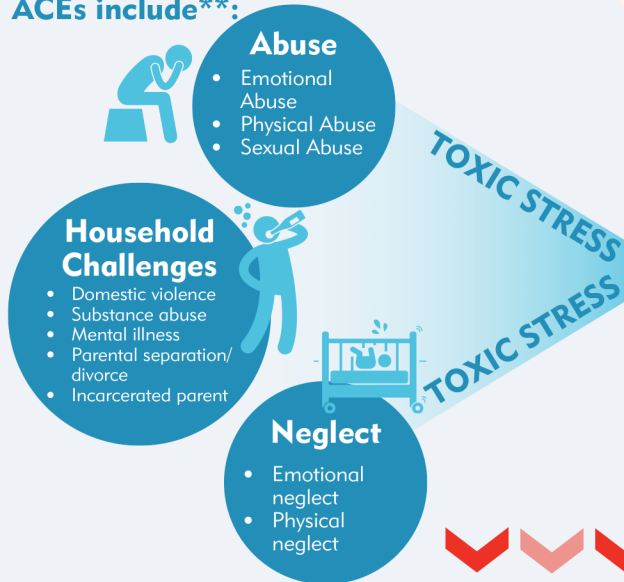
\*\* Source: 70/30 Campaign, "Empowering Communities to Protect our Children" handout

# THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA & TOXIC STRESS IN CHILDREN

## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Toxic Stress

Traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and wellbeing

ACEs include\*\*:



### Stress Response\*:

The stress response is our body's natural reaction to stressful events. Our stress response is there to protect us from potential danger.



### Toxic Stress Response\*:

*In response to this prolonged exposure to toxic events (ACEs), the child's body produces a severe stress response that lasts for an extended period of time.*

Over time, the stress hormones begin to tear down the body's organs and immune system in such a way that a child may develop severe, chronic health problems as an adult.



### Consequences of Toxic Stress\*



- Causes fear centers of the brain to significantly increase in size
- Child can develop symptoms very similar to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

- Decreases size and impairs functioning of regions of the brain responsible for learning, memory, and executive functioning
- Child at risk for having learning and behavior problems

- Immune system suppressed
- Child at risk for developing chronic, lifelong health conditions
- DNA is changed
- Gene expression affects bodily functions and can potentially be passed on



What will happen when the child grows up?



### FOR ADULTS WITH 4 OR MORE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs)\*\*:

**3X** the levels of lung disease and adult smoking



**11X** the level of intravenous drug abuse



**14X** the number of suicide attempts



**4X** as likely to have begun intercourse by age 15



**4.5X** more likely to develop depression



**2X** the level of liver disease



**"Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today."**

*Dr. Robert Block, former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics*