



Trauma Informed Approaches to  
Serving Justice Involved Youth

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Does this  
behavior look  
familiar?

In what ways are the  
characters in this story  
like the youth/young  
adults you work with?



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**Freedom Writers**

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## Reaction to *Freedom Writers*

- What events did you see that you consider potentially traumatic?
- How do the traumas potentially show up in the thoughts, and behaviors of young people in the classroom and in their home lives?
- What types of traumatic events have the clients you work with experienced?

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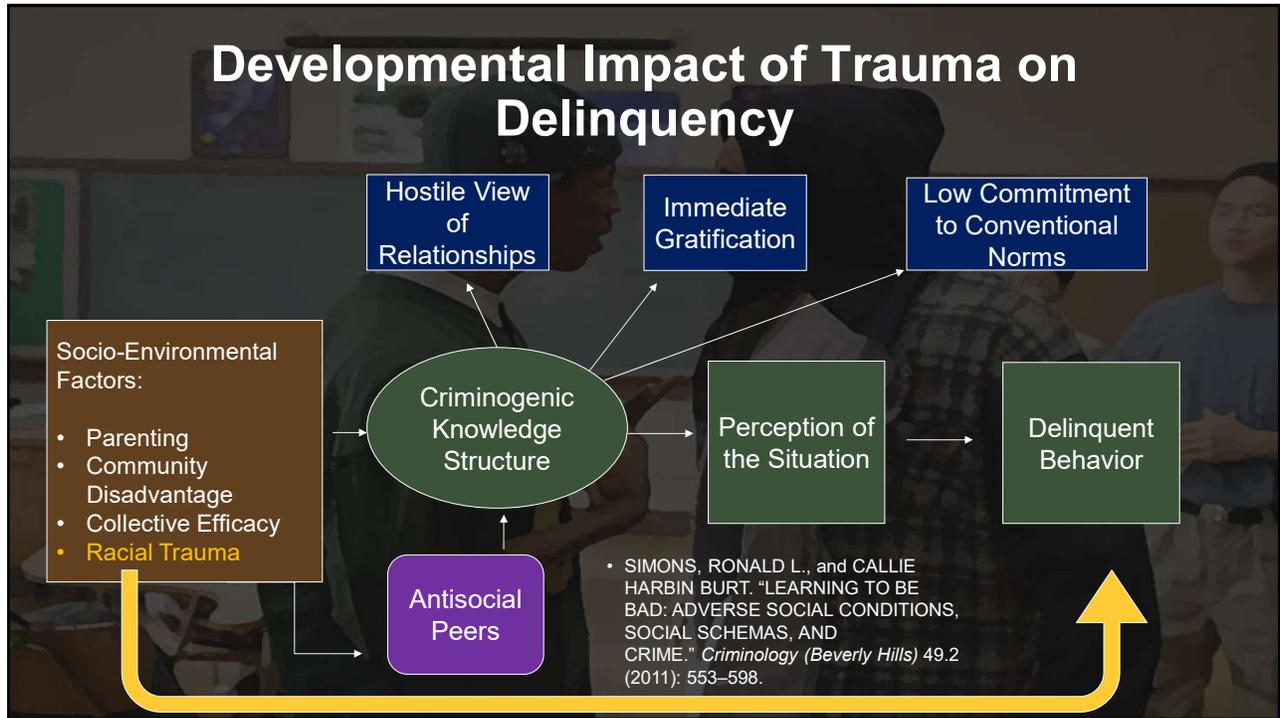
## The Invisible Suitcase



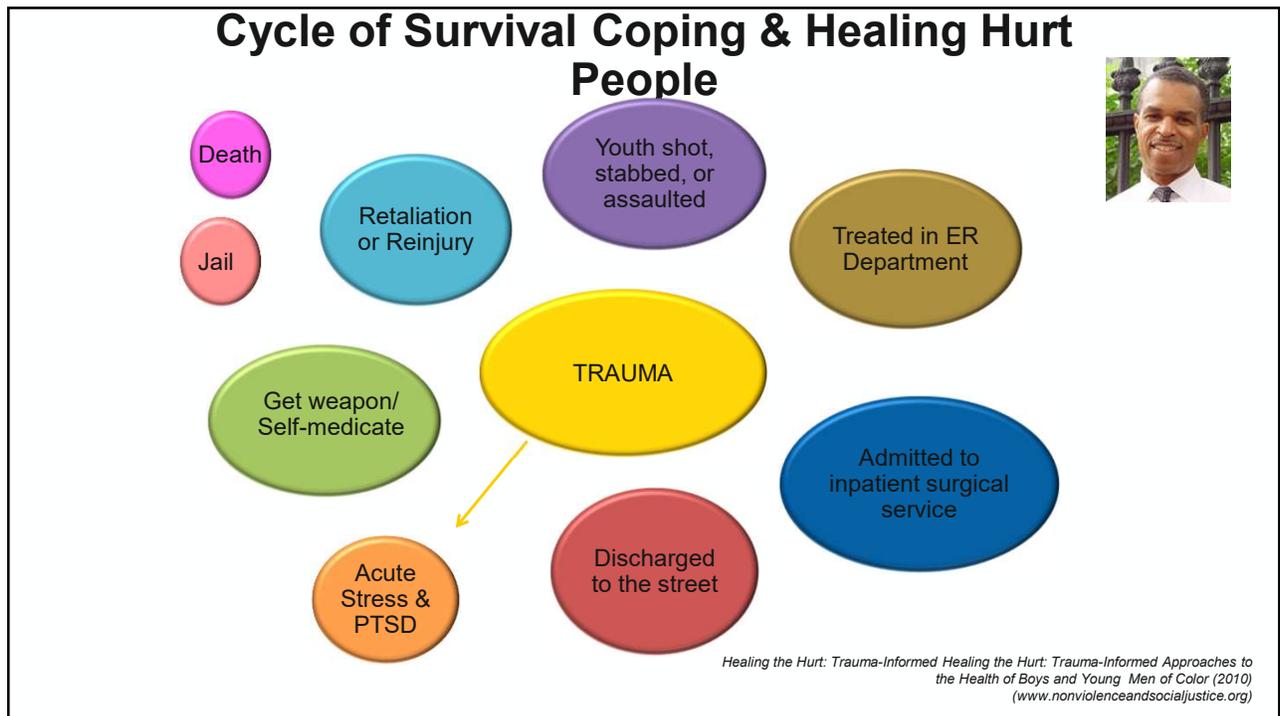
Trauma helps shape adolescents’ beliefs and expectations:

- About themselves
- About the adults who care for them
- About the world in general

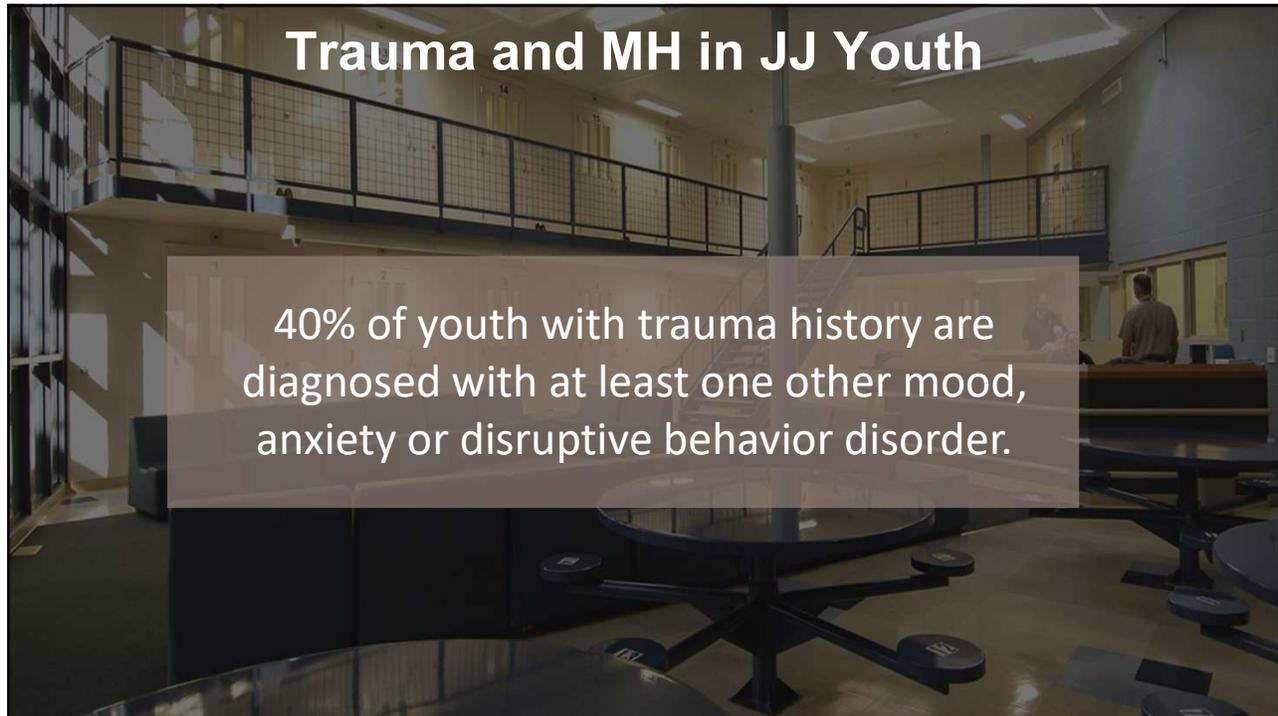
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# REMEMBERING TRAUMA

## PART 1

1. What thoughts did you hear from Manny?
2. What belief did you hear from Manny probation officer, girlfriend, teacher, therapist?

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## Invisible Suitcase Unpacked: Linking Trauma to Expectations

1. Previous life experiences create expectations that guide behavior.
2. Expectations based on traumatic life events are shaped by:
  - Experiences of danger before and following traumatic event
  - Messages from others and society
  - Perceptions of best strategies to remain safe



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## Unpacking Manny's Thoughts

1. What thoughts did you hear from Manny?



1. What belief did you hear from Manny probation officer, girlfriend, teacher, therapist?

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## Reflecting on *Remembering Trauma* & Identifying Reminders

What potential trauma reminders did you notice for Manny?

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## Context of Danger, Safety, & Protection



- Traumatic experiences shift expectations about threats to personal and family safety.
- **Intergenerational trauma** reflects the impact of trauma across generations.
- When parents experience trauma it can impact their parenting and their decisions to keep their children safe.

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## Living through Traumatic Experiences

How did institutions or providers make it easier or more difficult for Manny to deal with these trauma reminders?



How did Manny's girlfriend make it easier or more difficult for him to deal with his trauma reminders?

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	<b>Youth as Victim</b> 	<b>Youth as Villain</b> 	<b>Youth as Resource</b> 
<b>Origin of Most Delinquent Behavior</b>	Anti-social impulses, lack of restraint due to permissiveness and absence of punishment	Anti-social impulses, lack of restraint, absence of punishment	Normative response to adolescent needs for status, belonging, power & excitement, lack of empathy
<b>How Delinquent Youth Compare with Other Youth</b>	Different psychological and emotional makeup	Different motivations & impulses toward deviant behavior	Similar to other adolescents but with fewer assets
<b>Youth Capacity for Behavior Change</b>	Incapable of typical adolescent behavior without therapeutic interventions	Incapable of typical adolescent behavior without strict discipline and punishment	Inherently capable of conventional behavior with sufficient access to supports and pro-social opportunities
<b>Principal Strategy</b>	Individual/Family Therapy	Punishment	Skill development through attachment & engagement
<b>Role of Treatment</b>	Primary	Secondary	Secondary
<b>Risk of Treatment</b>	Could fail to address "cause"	Could delay or impede deterrence	Could introduce stigma or harm

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## Essential Components of Trauma Inclusive Clinical Assessment for Justice Involved Adolescents

Assessment instruments must be reliable and valid for justice-involved youth.



Assessment should identify past and current exposure to traumatic events.



Assessment should identify current posttraumatic stress symptoms and related behavioral health (psychiatric, substance misuse, and behavioral) problems that cause impairment in the youth's psychosocial adjustment and legal status.

Assessment should determine the potential relationship of posttraumatic stress and related behavioral health symptoms to criminogenic risks/needs and responsivity factors related to recidivism.

Assessment should identify strengths possessed by the youth and family that can positively influence the legal and treatment process.

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## Structured Trauma-Related Experiences & Symptoms Screener (STRESS)

### PART 1 TRAUMA-RELATED EXPERIENCES

**INSTRUCTIONS** We are going to go through a list of very scary things that sometimes happen to people. Choose YES if the thing happened to you or NO if it has not happened to you. For each 'YES' response, write your age when the scary or bad thing happened or started happening on the line next to the 'YES.'

1. Have you ever been in a really bad storm or disaster, like a flood, earthquake, or hurricane?  NO  YES About how old were you? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you or anyone in your family been in an actual war?  NO  YES About how old were you? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you ever been in a serious fire or lost your home in a fire?  NO  YES About how old were you? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Have you ever been in a really bad car accident?  NO  YES About how old were you? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you ever had to stay in the hospital because you were really sick or badly injured?  NO  YES About how old were you? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Has anyone in your family ever had to stay in the hospital because they were really sick or badly injured?  NO  YES About how old were you? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Has anyone ever beaten you up so badly that you had bruises, cuts, or injuries?  NO  YES About how old were you? \_\_\_\_\_



 **SCAN ME**

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## Structured Trauma-Related Experiences & Symptoms Screener (STRESS)

16. Have you ever seen or heard adults in your home beat each other up or throw things at each other?  NO  YES About how old were you? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Have you ever seen or heard people in your neighborhood get badly hurt or killed?  NO  YES About how old were you? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Has anyone ever told you so much about how someone you loved died that you pictured it in your head?  NO  YES About ho
19. Has anyone ever told you they were going to hurt or kill you?  NO  YES About ho
20. Has anyone ever made you feel so scared that you thought they might badly hurt or kill you?  NO  YES About ho
21. Have you ever thought that someone was going to really hurt or kill someone you love?  NO  YES About ho
22. Has anyone ever tried to touch your private body parts or tried to make you touch their private body parts when you did not want to?  NO  YES About ho
23. Has anyone ever touched your private body parts or made you touch their private body parts when you did not want to?  NO  YES About ho



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## Structured Trauma-Related Experiences & Symptoms Screener (STRESS)

- ✓ 28. In the past week, how often was it hard to remember parts of what happened?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
29. How often were you bored doing things you usually like to do?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
- ✓ 30. In the past week, how often did you look around a lot, just in case something bad might happen?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
31. How often did you have scary dreams or nightmares?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
32. How often did you try to keep your body from feeling ways that reminded you of what happened?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
- ✓ 33. How often did you think the world is a bad place or not as good as it used to be?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
34. In the past week, how often did you feel lonely, even when you were around friends or family?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
35. How often did you get really scared when you heard or saw something you were not expecting to happen?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
36. How often did memories about what happened make you lose track of time or forget where you were?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
37. How often did you try to stop yourself from having thoughts, memories, or feelings about what happened?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
- ✓ 38. In the past week, how often did you think that a part of what happened was your fault?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
39. How often did you feel really grumpy?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
40. How often did you feel like you could not focus on things?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
41. How often did you get really upset when you saw, heard, or felt something like what happened?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
42. How often did you try to get away when you were in a place or saw something that reminded you of what happened?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
43. How often did you feel really bad, like mad, scared, or sad for most of the day?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS
- ✓ 44. How often did you do things that other people think are dangerous or not safe?  NONE  1 DAY  2-3 DAYS  MOST DAYS

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## Structured Trauma-Related Experiences & Symptoms Screener (STRESS)

Since the scary or bad thing or things happened is it harder to...

- |                                         |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 50. Make or keep friends                | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> YES |
| 51. Get along with other kids your age  | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> YES |
| 52. Do schoolwork                       | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> YES |
| 53. Get along with your teachers        | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> YES |
| 54. Get along with people you live with | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> YES |
| 55. Get your chores done                | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> YES |

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## Primary Risks & Needs

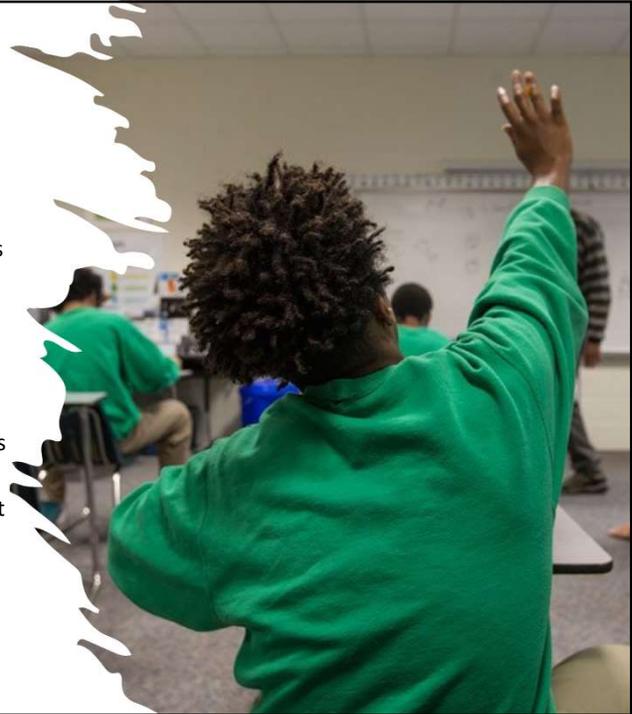
- Offense History
- Family Circumstances and parenting
- Education/Employment
- Peer Relations
- Substance Abuse
- Leisure/Recreation
- Personality/Behavior
- Attitudes/Orientation



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## Education/Employment

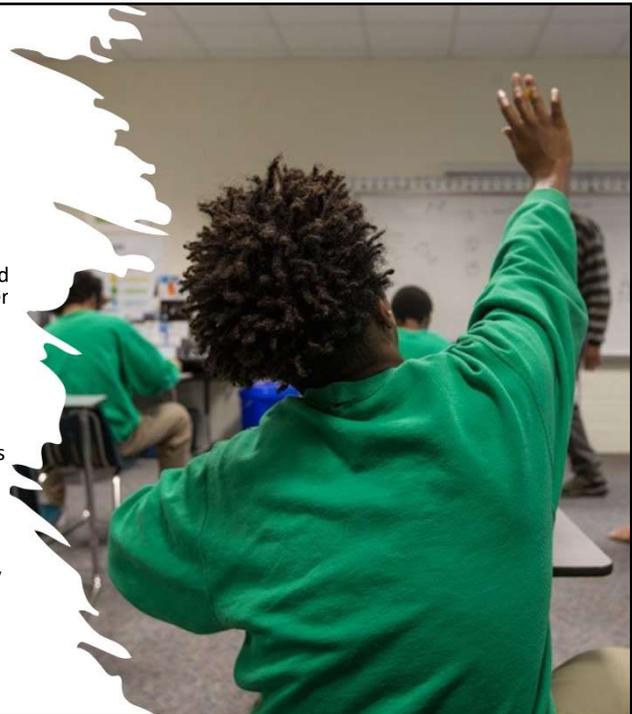
- a. **Disruptive Classroom Behavior** – Youth is engaged in acting-out, attention seeking, defiance, or other disruptive behaviors within the classroom or other areas within the school building (e.g., gymnasium, hallways, etc.); youth is considered to be a problem by teachers and other school staff within the school building.
- b. **Disruptive Behavior on School Property** -The youth is initiating aggressive or violent actions or is otherwise engaging in misconduct on school property outside classroom setting; may include criminal activities such as theft, vandalism, or drug/alcohol use.
- c. **Low Achievement** The youth is currently failing a subject or there are other indications of achievement problems. If the youth is performing at his/her expected level, but is getting low grades, 'No' should be selected for this item.



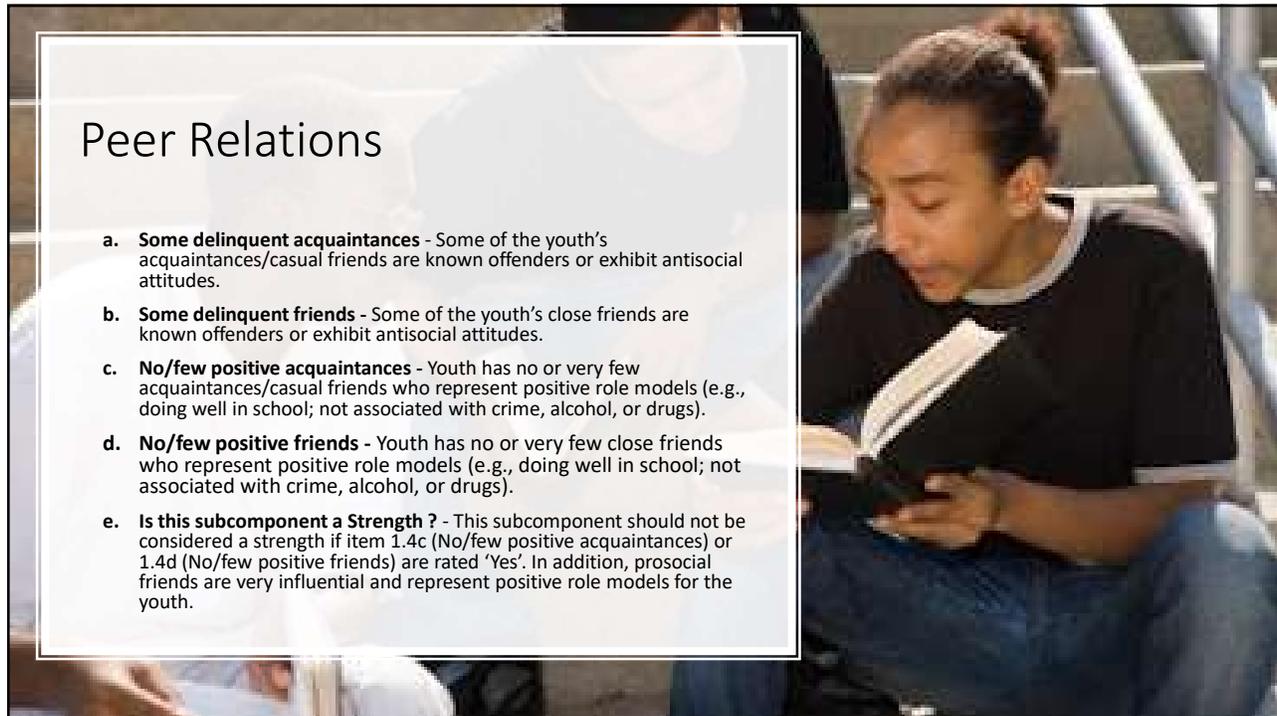
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## Education/Employment

- d. **Problems with Peers** - There is evidence that the youth is disliked, isolated, withdrawn, or there is evidence of poor relations with peers within the school setting.
- e. **Problems with teachers**- There is evidence of significant and continuing problems between the youth and his/her teacher (or other school official); youth hates teachers or is hostile toward them.
- f. **Truancy** - Youth is currently missing school days or skipping classes without legitimate excuses.
- g. **Unemployed/Not Seeking employment** - Mark this item if, without good reason, (e.g., full-time student), the youth has no job and is not engaged in employment-related activities (e.g., actively seeking work, engaged in employment training, or work schemes).
- h. **Is Education/Employment a Strength** – Involvement in educational and employment activities can be a particularly important area of strength because of the large time commitment required and the varied sources of interpersonal rewards.



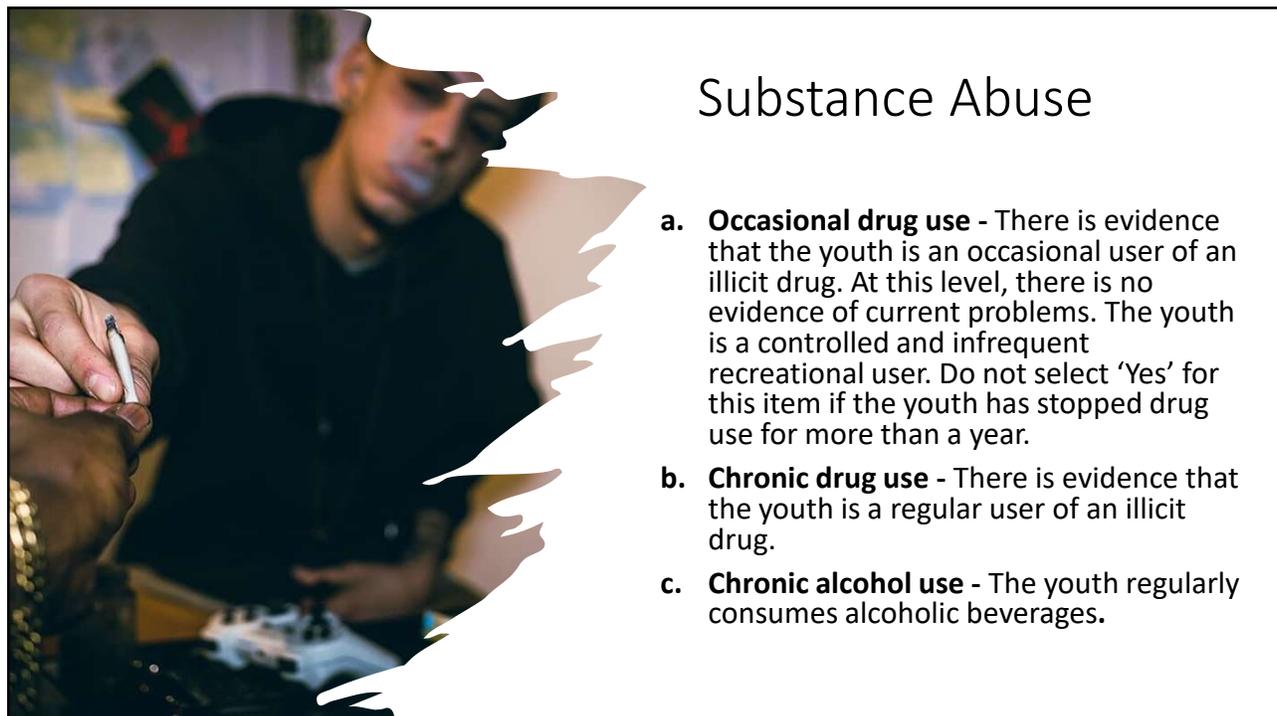
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## Peer Relations

- Some delinquent acquaintances** - Some of the youth's acquaintances/casual friends are known offenders or exhibit antisocial attitudes.
- Some delinquent friends** - Some of the youth's close friends are known offenders or exhibit antisocial attitudes.
- No/few positive acquaintances** - Youth has no or very few acquaintances/casual friends who represent positive role models (e.g., doing well in school; not associated with crime, alcohol, or drugs).
- No/few positive friends** - Youth has no or very few close friends who represent positive role models (e.g., doing well in school; not associated with crime, alcohol, or drugs).
- Is this subcomponent a Strength ?** - This subcomponent should not be considered a strength if item 1.4c (No/few positive acquaintances) or 1.4d (No/few positive friends) are rated 'Yes'. In addition, prosocial friends are very influential and represent positive role models for the youth.

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## Substance Abuse

- Occasional drug use** - There is evidence that the youth is an occasional user of an illicit drug. At this level, there is no evidence of current problems. The youth is a controlled and infrequent recreational user. Do not select 'Yes' for this item if the youth has stopped drug use for more than a year.
- Chronic drug use** - There is evidence that the youth is a regular user of an illicit drug.
- Chronic alcohol use** - The youth regularly consumes alcoholic beverages.

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## Substance Abuse

- d. **Substance Use Interferes with functioning** - Drug and/or alcohol use affects the youth's physical or social functioning and/or is associated with antisocial activity. May involve interference with schoolwork or job, tension with parents, loss of friends, accidents, etc.
- e. **Substance use linked to offenses** – There is reason to believe that the youth's criminal activity is related to drug or alcohol use (these "*influence or cause*" criminal activity). Substance abuse itself is not considered an offense. Mark this item only if the substance use directly contributes to another criminal act or probation violation.
- f. **Is this subcomponent considered a Strength?** - An example of a strength is a recovering substance abuser who has not consumed alcohol or used illicit drugs for a long period of time.

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## Leisure/Recreation

- a. **Limited organized activities** - There is no evidence that the youth participates in sports, clubs, or other types of organized positive activities
- b. **Could make better use of time** - The youth spends too much time in passive or unconstructive activities (e.g., watching TV or videos, playing video games, partying, hanging around). Activities interfere with the youth's ability to socialize with prosocial peers, or have a negative impact on other areas such as education or employment.

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## Personality/Behavior

- a. **Inflated Self-Esteem** - Youth thinks he/she is superior to others; brags constantly; feeling of self-worth seems to exceed accomplishments.
- b. **Physically aggressive** - Youth initiates acts of physical aggression against others, starts fights, or has engaged in violent actions. Youth believes physical aggression is an appropriate way of expressing oneself and dealing with others. Physical aggression is directed toward humans or animals.
- c. **Tantrums** - Youth displays acts of temper; loses control when frustrated or angry. Tantrums are directed toward objects.
- d. **Short attention span**- Youth has difficulty attending to the task at hand; difficulty completing tasks; is hyperactive.
- e. **Poor frustration tolerance**- Youth deals with frustration poorly; loses patience easily; tends to act impulsively.

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## Attitudes/Orientation

- a. **Antisocial/pro-criminal attitudes** - The youth's attitudes are supportive of a criminal or anti-conventional lifestyle; consider attitudes, values, beliefs and rationalizations concerning the crime and victim; youth does not think social rules and laws apply to her/him.
- b. **Not Seeking Help** - Youth is not seeking help, is reluctant to seek needed interventions, or does not recognize the need for help.
- c. **Actively rejecting help**- Youth is actively resisting the interventions of helping persons or agencies.
- d. **Defies authority** - Youth refuses to follow directions from parents, teachers, or other authority figures; youth is hostile to the criminal justice system.

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## Parent Questions

1. **Chronic History of Offenses** - Members of the youth's immediate family (parents or siblings) are engaged or have previously engaged in criminal acts. Include any convictions (adults), dispositions (youth), or formal charges (both)
2. **Emotional Distress/Psychiatric** - One or both of the youth's parents have a current psychiatric disability or a recent history (past year) of such problems.
3. **Drug and Alcohol Use** - One or both of the youth's parents have current substance abuse problems or a recent history (past year) of such problems. Examples include, but are not limited to, alcohol/drug use to intoxication or the majority of social activities center around alcohol/drug use.
4. **Marital Conflict** - The youth's parents are currently experiencing marital conflict or have recently (past year) experienced marital conflict. Examples include, but are not limited to, frequent arguments (e.g., regarding money, child rearing or custody, ex-partners, etc.), infidelity, contemplating/accepting separation/divorce, or physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse.
5. **Financial/Accommodation Problems** - The youth's family is currently facing a financial and/or housing problem. Examples of financial problems include, but are not limited to, unmanageable debts (e.g., mortgage, student loan) and/or inadequate or inconsistent financial income or employment. Accommodation problems include the youth's family's expressed dissatisfaction with their living situation and/or accommodation conditions that may promote association with criminal others.
6. **Uncooperative parents** - The youth's parents are unwilling to co-operate in efforts to address the youth's problems. Do not include parents who are unable to cooperate (e.g., financially or otherwise).
7. **Cultural Ethnic Issues** - The youth's family is facing difficulties or conflicts relating to cultural, ethnic, or religious adjustment. Examples include, but are not limited to, immigration issues, language barriers, or being the victims of racially motivated abuse.
8. **Abusive Father** - The youth's father has engaged in physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a family member.
9. **Abusive Mother** - The youth's mother has engaged in physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a family member.
10. **Significant Family Trauma** - Select Yes if there has been a death or illness, a family break-up, or a similar type of crisis in the youth's family. Do not include any events already noted in the previous items of this section. This section has an option to enter information/details
11. **Other (Specify)** - Select Yes if there are any other needs for the youth's family/parents not already listed in this section. This section has an option to enter information

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## Youth Questions

40. **Victim of Bullying** - Select Yes if the youth has been a victim of bullying. Victims of bullying often experience serious psychological and emotional distress. Effects often range from isolation and lowered self-esteem to rare extreme outcomes including aggression, depression, or suicide. Case management plans may include psychological counselling.
41. **Victim of Neglect** - The youth is currently experiencing or has previously experienced neglect. Case management plans may include victim-oriented services.
42. **Victim of Physical/Sexual Abuse** - Select Yes if the youth is currently experiencing or has previously experienced physical or sexual abuse. Case management plans may include victim-oriented services.
43. **Victim of Domestic Violence** - Select Yes if the youth has witnessed violence among family members, but was not directly the victim of abuse. Domestic violence witnessed by the youth may be a source of emotional distress. Domestic violence may also necessitate involvement of child welfare agencies.
44. **Other Mental Health Issues – (open text field)**
45. **Other (Specify) – (open text field)**

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## 6 Guiding Principles to a Trauma Informed Interventions



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### Core Principles of a Trauma Informed Approach



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