



Trauma and Self Care During the Holidays

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*Turn A Life
Around*



ur parent agency, Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, has spent the past year focusing on the topic of Trauma Informed Care in our publication, Partners. As a tie into that publication, you will find a wealth of information regarding the topic of trauma informed care.

In this edition of Fostering Across Wisconsin, we will discuss the impact of trauma and emphasize the importance of self-care; particularly during the holiday season.

Holidays provide foster parents with a tremendous opportunity of creating lasting memories, carrying on family traditions, and reinforcing family connections. However, it is important to be aware that holidays can trigger an array of complicated feelings and conflicting emotional reactions.

Many youth in foster care and youth who have been adopted, have

experienced some form of trauma. Childhood trauma is a complex and emotionally charged issue. As a result, youth who have been exposed to trauma, tend to respond by exhibiting challenging behaviors.

There are a variety of triggers that can cause emotional stress for youth. Sometimes, we know what those triggers are and other times, we were not aware of what the specific triggers were, and there are times in which we will never be fully aware of what was the trigger.

Being aware of and prepared for the wide range of potential emotional reactions to the holidays will be beneficial for you, your family, youth in care, and birth parents.

Youth in care need your patience and support to help them mitigate these emotionally charged times. You have the ability to reinforce all of the positive experiences that the holiday season embodies.

Self Care and the Holidays

Self-care is an important life-long parenting skill. Self-care becomes even more essential during the holiday season. The holidays can trigger a wide variety of emotional reactions and behaviors for children and youth living in foster care.

In order to be the best parent you can possibly be, you need to ensure that you are taking care of yourself. Our lives are busy and being a parent is demanding. As a result, it is vital to take care of your needs so that you can be there to meet the needs of the children entrusted to your care.

The following are some suggestions for you to consider:

Enjoy all that life has to offer. Make time to enjoy your hobbies and interests:

- * Writing
- * Reading
- * Scrapbooking
- * Painting
- * Week-end getaway
- * Exercising
- * Photography
- * Go to the movies
- * Practice yoga
- * Gardening
- * Play Your favorite sport
- * Go for a walk

- * Listen to relaxing music
- * Don't forget to laugh early and often (Remember that old adage, *Laughter is the best medicine!*)
- * Seek out support from others:
 - * Talk to your Foster Care Coordinator
 - * Talk to your on-going social worker
 - * Attend a support group
 - * Attend a training
 - * Talk to your partner
 - * Talk to family and friends
 - * Call the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center: 1-800-947-8074. We are here for you!

Celebrate and Honor Holiday Traditions:

- * Develop positive relationships with the child's birth family.
- * Honor established traditions and create new ones.
- * Encourage enriching connections between children and their families.
- * Capture the cherished memories by providing children with a camera on their home visits.
- * Work together to create a holiday keepsake photo album.
- * Encourage phone calls and contacts during the holidays and throughout the year.

A publication of the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center

Changes to Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting

Over the past few years the foster care program in Wisconsin has undergone a number of changes including how foster care rates are determined for each child.

The Division of Safety and Permanence is committed to evaluating the entire Levels of Care initiative to continue to improve service provision and support to children and families, to monitor the expected outcomes of the initiative, and to make adjustments and modifications when necessary.

As a part of the evaluation modifications were recently made to the Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting policy. See DSP Memo Series 2012-11:

[dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/
num_memos/DSP/2012/2012-11.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num_memos/DSP/2012/2012-11.pdf).

The changes include:

Integrating the final changes to Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code:

- ✧ Involving team members and licensing agency involvement in the rate setting process.

- ✧ The rate setters' responsibilities.

Levels of Care Evaluation:

- ✧ Clarification for allowable costs and uses of the Exceptional Portion of the foster care rate.
- ✧ Creation of a process to manage complaints and monitoring of the rate setting process.
- ✧ Modification to the Level of Need algorithm.
- ✧ Implements an increase of the multiplier of the Supplemental Point Value to \$8.00.

The changes are effective for new placements on or after November 5, 2012 and at the six month rate re-determinations.

The change in the multiplier for the Supplemental Point value may not change the overall foster care rate for a child, but rather the proportion of the rate that is covered by the Supplemental Points with a decrease to the Exceptional portion of the rate.

Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center

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Services Provides: Resource Library · Phone Support · Networking/Outreach

Resources

Links to our 2012 *Partners Newsletters* that Focus on Trauma

- * Fall: *Trauma Informed Care Stories from Families*
- * Summer: *Emerging Therapies for Trauma Informed Care*
- * Spring: *An Introduction to Trauma Informed Care*

Go to: wiadopt.org/Resources/ARWNewsletters.aspx

Books and DVDs from the Lending Library

Born for Love: Why Empathy is Essential and Endangered, by B. Perry and M. Szalavitz. This book is an exploration of how the brain learns to bond with others—and a call to help our children.

The Brain: Effects of Childhood Trauma, by Bruce Perry (DVD).

The Legacy of Childhood Trauma: Not Always Who They Seem, by Echo Bridge Productions (DVD). This video focuses on the connection between so-called “delinquent youth” and the experience of childhood trauma. The video features the stories of four young adults who are survivors of childhood trauma.

Child Trauma Handbook : A Guide For Helping Trauma Exposed Children

by Ricky Greenwald. This no-nonsense manual helps the reader understand how and why kids’ behaviors can be related to their history of trauma, while also teaching practical hands-on clinical skills and interventions.

Self Care Resources

Foster Parenting Toolbox by Kim Phagan-Hansel, which has a chapter on support.

A Guide to Foster Parenting: Everything but the Kids. Mary Goodearle and her husband have nine children—three of whom were adopted from the

foster care system. She is a former social worker for Outagamie County, and she also worked for the State of Wisconsin as an adoption facilitator.

Mary says that foster parents require much more than good parenting skills to achieve success in today's foster care climate.

Tipsheets:

- * Helping Children in Care Build Relationships
- * What’s Behind These Behaviors?
- * The Journey of Forgiveness: How to Teach Your Children
- * Working with Children Who Have Been Traumatized
- * The Balance Beam of Life: Caring for Yourself, While Caring for Your Kids
- * Stressed Out!
- * The Journey of Forgiveness: Learning to Live a Life of Forgiveness
- * Reaching Your Boiling Point
- * The Emotional Journey of Relative Caregiving
- * Self Care for Families

WFAPA provides spring and fall conferences, as well as an extensive website, newsletter, and network of supportive WFAPA members and other foster parents who can be a resource for you.

The Spring 2013 conference is focusing on Allegations and will be held April 12-14, 2013 at the Blue Harbor Resort & Spa.

For more information, go to: <http://wfapa.org>