

June 10, 2015

# Trauma Education Statements for Teachers

**Trauma education statements validate and normalize the experiences of survivors of adversity, and provide encouragement. They give Teachers a script to have in their pocket to pull out in scenarios that can be awkward.**

When parents and their children experience scary things together, it's common that their ability to connect can be impacted. Your child needs to feel connected to you now more than ever; we can help with that.

Many of the teens I've worked with engage in risk taking behaviors like smoking, drinking, cutting or other things. This can be related to scary or stressful things that are happening now or in the past. But with the right support, they can do just fine and learn how to make safe choices.

Many of the moms I work with feel overwhelmed by guilt or shame when they begin to really sit with the impact the domestic violence (insert any trauma here) is having on their child. I wonder how this might feel for you?

We feel before we think. This is how our brains work. When a child has lived with trauma, their feelings are often so big that they interrupt the thinking process. This can look like shutting down or acting out. You can help them get back to thinking.

Many of the adults I've worked with have used drugs and alcohol as a way to manage overwhelming symptoms of anxiety, depression, hyper-vigilance or shame related to trauma. It's a coping skill – but maybe this coping skill doesn't work anymore. We can find new coping skills that are in line with your goals of being a stronger parent.

If your connection to your child has been impacted by stress or trauma (which is common), they may be feeling the impact. This can affect their ability to learn strong social and emotional skills. We can help you keep your relationship with your child strong, so they can learn these skills from you.

Your child learns how to cope with the stress and trauma from you. If you are anxious and unavailable most of the time, your child



could develop similar struggles. This is an impact of trauma. Many parents have found the support to overcome this.

You, more than anyone, are who your child needs to recover and develop resiliency, which is the ability to thrive even after trauma. This can feel overwhelming to parents who are themselves struggling. We can help you feel more confident in your ability to help your child develop resiliency.

When kids have lived with stress or trauma, they need to feel connected to as many safe, nurturing adults as possible. This is an important way to recover from trauma. This connection can come from you, teachers, counselors, advocates, friends, community members, neighbors, extended family, etc. What types of activities does your child enjoy where they can have contact with more safe adults?

Domestic violence is traumatic for you and your child. It also often feels very chaotic to children, which is upsetting. This is why establishing routine can actually help your children heal from trauma. They can feel a sense of control which helps them regulate their emotions.

Children and youth impacted by domestic violence often struggle with regulating their emotions. This is a symptom of trauma. But they can always learn, and they learn from safe adults they are connected to, like you!

Stress and trauma can impact brain development, and make it hard for kids to be in control of their bodies when they have big feelings. When they have big feelings they need us to teach them how to be in control of their bodies. Punishment does not teach them that, which can be hard for parents. Safe adults who model that skill, even when they themselves are frustrated, are how children learn to control their bodies.

Taking care of yourself means you can take better care of your child when he or she is having a meltdown. She needs to learn from you about how to manage frustration, which means you need a reserve of patience. We can help with that.

\*Compiled by Erin Fairchild, MSW