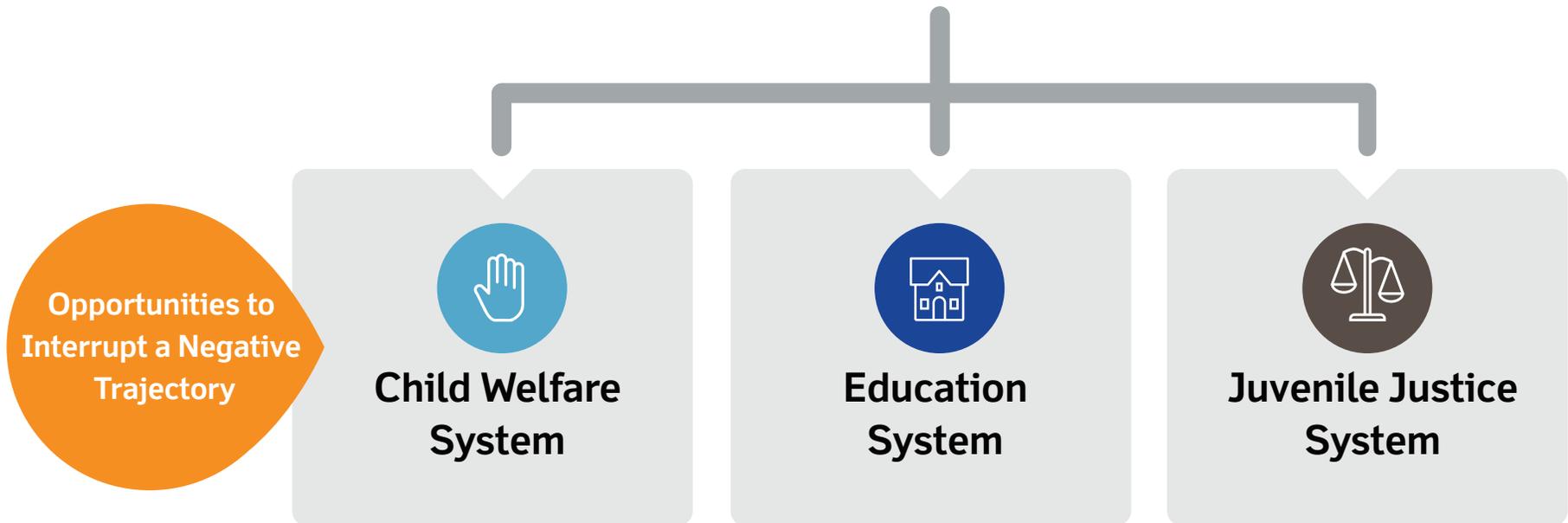
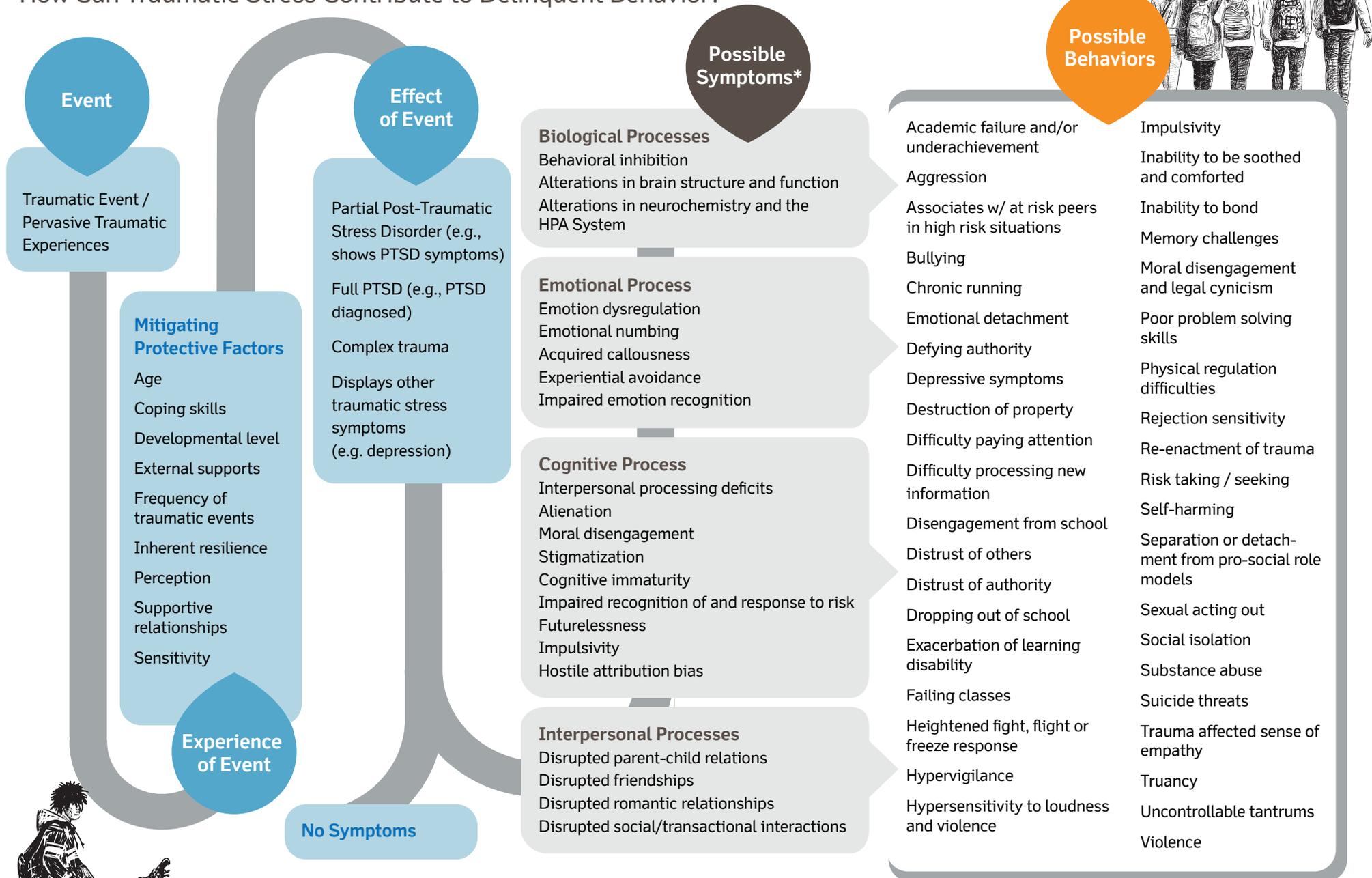


The Trajectory of a Traumatized Youth: A Three System Perspective



These graphics are meant to inform, educate and prompt discussions about the specific youth behaviors the child welfare, education and juvenile justice systems may see as a result of trauma. They are also intended to highlight the individual and cross-system policies and practices that can empower systems to improve outcomes for these youth.

How Can Traumatic Stress Contribute to Delinquent Behavior?



Please visit rfknrcjj.org/resources for a complete list of references and additional resources.

*Kerig, P. K., & Becker, S. P. (2010). From internalizing to externalizing: Theoretical models of the processes linking PTSD to juvenile delinquency. In S. J. Egan (Ed.), Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD): Causes, symptoms and treatment (pp. 33-78). Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.



How can the **Child Welfare** System Respond to a Youth with These Behaviors?



Cross-System

- Staff, parents, and substitute care providers receive ongoing training on the impact of trauma and provide more trauma-focused treatment
- Provide cultural competency training on the prevalence and impact of trauma for gender, sexual identity/orientation, racial and ethnic populations, and refugees
- Create a trauma-focused protocol for screening, assessing and serving youth
- Establish a service delivery system of providers that are trauma informed and subscribe to evidence based practices
- Look for opportunities to increase prosocial activities
- Ensure school plans and records (e.g., IEPs) follow the youth through school and placement changes
- Develop and implement an individualized, trauma-informed, cross system plan that addresses the unique needs of the youth
- Assess the child's environment for safety or support prior to implementing an intervention
- Conduct a physical health assessment
- Engage family in youth's plan of care

Interrupts Negative Trajectory

Child Welfare

- Ensure available support for parents who have experienced their own trauma history
- Establish a system that ensures placement stability and reduce youth exposure to placement disruption
- Ensure youth receives Independent Transitional Living Skills Training and is engaged in pro-social activities
- Develop a collaborative system between child welfare, education, and behavioral health
- All youth's educational needs are being met by ensuring available access to educational advocacy

Perpetuates Negative Trajectory

- Limitations on criteria for extending voluntary services to families when they are seeking voluntary services
- Fragmented child serving agency that does not always collaborate in ways that address what is in the best interest of the youth, but rather driven by budgetary restraints
- Home removals and placement disruptions due to lack of in-home trauma based supportive services that can be accessed in a timely manner and without being placed on a wait list
- A system that exposes a youth to multiple workers during the different stages of the case history with the Child Welfare agency
- Placement instability leads to a child's move from school system to school system, causing them further delays
- Placement instability leads to disruption in prosocial contacts/activities and consistent service providers

Positive Outcomes for Youth

- Youth is not re-traumatized due to harmful and ineffective system practices
- Low-risk youth are diverted from the system and given the services they need to ameliorate their individual needs
- Youth stays in school and graduates with the assistance of appropriate academic interventions (e.g., IEP) or youth transitions to alternative educational or vocational training programs that lead to a living wage job and career
- Youth receives appropriate and individualized mental health services
- Youth receives appropriate substance abuse services
- Parents will enhance their ability to care for their children when addressing their own trauma histories
- Youth is able to maintain a consistent home and school setting, thus allowing youth the ability to stabilize, connect, and attach to caretaker(s) while also reducing their chances of losing personal items/belongings as a result of moving from home to home
- Youth are able to successfully live independently when necessary, have positive social connections, and engage in pro-social activities that allow them to become successful/productive adults
- Youth receives culturally relevant treatment and supervision services that take into account the youth's history of maltreatment and assist the youth in identifying triggers, protective strategies, and coping skills
- Youth is provided with prosocial opportunities that enhance their protective capacity
- Youth does not move into the juvenile justice systems
- Restoration of trust in the social contract

Negative Outcomes for Youth

- Families who could benefit from early intervention do not get it due to lack of clear policies and available resources
- Lack of ongoing staff training and expertise around trauma leads to inability to accurately assess the right behaviors and access the right intervention for youth
- Missed opportunity to keep families intact while providing intensive in-home behavior services; if services cannot be easily accessed, long wait list, or is unable to accommodate bilingual capacity
- Child gets further and further behind academically



How can the Education System Respond to a Youth with These Behaviors?

Cross-System

- Provide annual training to all professional and support staff to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma
- Provide cultural competency training on the prevalence and impact of trauma for gender, sexual identity/orientation, racial and ethnic populations, and refugees
- Create a trauma-focused protocol for screening, assessing and serving youth
- Establish a service delivery system of providers that are trauma informed and subscribe to evidence based practices
- Look for opportunities to increase prosocial activities
- Ensure school plans and records (e.g., IEPs) follow the youth through school and placement changes
- Develop and implement an individualized, trauma-informed, cross system plan that addresses the unique needs of the youth
- Assess the child's environment for safety or support prior to implementing an intervention
- Conduct a physical health assessment
- Engage family in youth's plan of care

Interrupts Negative Trajectory

- Provide universal mental health screens at registration
- Consistently implement Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies
- Ensure Child Find protocols are identifying and serving youth with educational deficiencies
- Create in-school policies for dealing with truancy
- Create in-school policies for dealing with low level infractions or offenses (bullying, physical altercations, etc.)
- Offer in-school alternatives to suspension
- Offer re-engagement programs (e.g., credentials, apprenticeships) for students who will not graduate

Education

- Zero tolerance policy
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Profiling and labeling troubled youth and families
- Delaying or avoiding IEP or 504 assessments

Perpetuates Negative Trajectory



Positive Outcomes for Youth

- Youth is not re-traumatized due to harmful and ineffective system practices
- Low-risk youth are diverted from the system and given the services they need to ameliorate their individual needs
- Youth stays in school and graduates with the assistance of appropriate academic interventions (e.g., IEP) or youth transitions to alternative educational or vocational training programs that lead to a living wage job and career
- Youth receives appropriate and individualized mental health services
- Youth receives appropriate substance abuse services
- Parents will enhance their ability to care for their children when addressing their own trauma histories
- Youth is able to maintain a consistent home and school setting, thus allowing youth the ability to stabilize, connect, and attach to caretaker(s) while also reducing their chances of losing personal items/belongings as a result of moving from home to home
- Youth are able to successfully live independently when necessary, have positive social connections, and engage in pro-social activities that allow them to become successful/productive adults
- Youth receives culturally relevant treatment and supervision services that take into account the youth's history of maltreatment and assist the youth in identifying triggers, protective strategies, and coping skills
- Youth is provided with prosocial opportunities that enhance their protective capacity
- Youth does not move into the child welfare or juvenile justice systems
- Restoration of trust in the social contract

Negative Outcomes for Youth

- Drop out of school permanently
- Unsupervised time at home leads to delinquent acts and involvement in the Juvenile Justice (JJ) system (go to the JJ trajectory)
- Setbacks in academic achievement due to separation from structured classroom instruction which leads to potential negative self-concept, frustration, aggression, and potential school drop out
- Family tensions rise with youth at home—possible domestic violence, runaway situations, increase in substance use (go to JJ trajectory)
- Youth experiences educational deficits and delays which leads to eventually dropping out
- Youth's negative behavior possibly results in suspensions, expulsions, alienation from peers and school staff, suicide, violence, involvement in the JJ system (go to JJ trajectory)
- Missed opportunity for learning before brain maturity results in loss of plasticity which may lead to long-term vocational and educational consequences
- Youth progresses into the Child Welfare and/or Juvenile Justice System



How can the **Juvenile Justice System** Respond to a Youth with These Behaviors?

Cross-System

- Provide annual training to all professional and support staff to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma
- Provide cultural competency training on the prevalence and impact of trauma for gender, sexual identity/orientation, racial and ethnic populations, and refugees
- Create a trauma-focused protocol for screening, assessing and serving youth
- Establish a service delivery system of providers that are trauma informed and subscribe to evidence based practices
- Look for opportunities to increase prosocial activities
- Ensure school plans and records (e.g., IEPs) follow the youth through school and placement changes
- Develop and implement an individualized, trauma-informed, cross system plan that addresses the unique needs of the youth
- Assess the child's environment for safety or support prior to implementing an intervention
- Conduct a physical health assessment
- Engage family in youth's plan of care

- Establish a continuum of community-based services to provide treatment, support, and psycho-social rehabilitation.
- Incorporate evidence-based practices like TARGET, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Mode Deactivation Therapy, Aggression Replacement Training, etc.
- Ensure that youth programs targeting criminogenic needs are trauma-informed
- Use secure detention only as a last resort to protect others from violent delinquent acts
- Eliminate the use of seclusion as a disciplinary action in secure detention
- Add comprehensive Mental Health/Behavioral Health Wraparound service array that includes diversion options
- Trauma screening & assessment
- Employ developmentally appropriate & trauma-informed probation practices
- Undertake family finding for all youth prior to receiving aftercare
- Address underlying impacts of trauma and not just the criminogenic needs
- Judges utilize the National Child Traumatic Stress Network benchcard

- Mandatory detention or other restrictive sanctions for technical violations or other minor offenses
- Inappropriate use of secure detention (for status offenses or non-violent delinquent acts)
- Abusive & overly restrictive institutional measures: physical, chemical, or mechanical restraints, or seclusion as a disciplinary action
- Probation practices that focus only on compliance and fail to establish strength-based, goal directed case plans that address needs
- Inadequate or inappropriate response to youth needs (failure to provide services or failure to provide the correct type or level of service)
- Direct Commit statutes
- Lack of screening & assessment
- Under-investing in treatment resources

Interrupts Negative Trajectory

Positive Outcomes for Youth

- Youth is not re-traumatized due to harmful and ineffective juvenile justice practices
- Low-risk youth are diverted from the system and given the services they need to ameliorate their individual needs
- Youth receives appropriate and individualized mental health and/or substance abuse services
- Youth receives culturally relevant treatment and supervision services that take into account the youth's history of maltreatment and assist the youth in identifying triggers, protective strategies, and coping skills
- Youth is provided with prosocial opportunities that enhance their protective capacity
- Restoration of trust in the social contract
- Terms and length of Probation are individualized & specific to the unique needs of the youth

Negative Outcomes for Youth

- Missed opportunities to address the underlying issues that contribute to the negative behavior. Results in the youth feeling more disaffected and untrusting of adults & authority
- Missed opportunity for healing before brain maturity results in loss of plasticity
- Overly restrictive & punitive responses result in low and moderate risk youth interacting with high risk youth increasing their risk of behaviors and attitudes conducive to recidivism
- Treatment needs left unaddressed can result in recidivism & deeper penetration into the system
- Youth experience more traumatic events (incarceration, violence, sexual abuse, etc.) thereby compiling their trauma-related risks noted in columns 2 & 3

Perpetuates Negative Trajectory

Juvenile Justice System

