

Traumatic Beliefs

Why Become Trauma Smart Reminder: Putting on our trauma lens allows us to gain insight into the needs driving our behaviors. We want to reduce the negative impact of trauma and build resilience.

Objectives:

- Understand the meaning of traumatic beliefs
- Begin development of a trauma lens

Supplies:

- Poster Paper
- Markers
- Positive Shift Beliefs Handout

Content: We all “have assumptions that are formed by the collective pool of our experience in the world”, and these assumptions help guide us (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010, p. 24). The assumptions that each of us have “carry very different emotional charges and lead to different behavioral responses” (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010, p. 24). Traumatic beliefs are formed out of your significant life experiences, beginning in childhood and developing over time. Today we want to challenge those beliefs.

Activity:

1. Create posters that have a different traumatic belief written on each one. On the back of each poster write positive statements that model a shift in thinking. If needed, utilize the Positive Shift Examples when writing the positive statements. Display the posters around the room, showing the side with the traumatic beliefs. Examples:
 - i. “I’m not as smart as others so I am no good.”
 - ii. “I’ll never live up to my parent’s expectations.”
 - iii. “I don’t fit in.”
 - iv. “I’m not creative.”
 - v. “People I depend on will let me down.”
 - vi. “The world isn’t a safe place.”
 - vii. “Life is unfair. Life is hard.”
 - viii. “I’ll get hurt if I get too close in a relationship.”
 - ix. “I’m not good enough. I’m unlovable.”
 - x. “I’ll never get into college.”
2. Ask that students take a few minutes to select a poster that he or she identifies with, and to stand by it. Ideally, there will be at least 2 people per poster and possibly more.
3. Ask students to share within their group at least one reason why they chose that specific poster.
4. After sharing, prompt discussion within the group and have students challenge the belief on the poster. What experiences have you had thus far that show that this belief is not true all the time?
5. Flip the poster over to view positive statements that model the shift in thinking. “The world is not safe” to “the world can be a safe place”.

Process:

- Did you find this activity difficult?
- What can you take away from this experience?

Positive Shift Examples

Traumatic Belief

Positive Shift Statement

"I'm not as smart as others so I am no good."

"I am doing my best."

"I'll never live up to my parents expectations."

"I am important, loved, and valued."

"I don't fit in."

"I am unique."

"I'm not creative."

"I am talented and passionate about what I do."

"People I depend on will let me down."

"I can learn to trust people again."

"The world isn't a safe place."

"The world can be a safe place."

"Life is unfair. Life is hard."

"I can overcome life's difficulties."

"I'll get hurt if I get too close in a relationship." "I am deserving of safe and secure relationships."

"I'm not good enough, I'm unlovable."

"I am worthy."

"I'll never get into college."

"I am trying my best to be successful."