

Working With Teens

Many teens that come from trauma may exhibit unhealthy behaviors which include: promiscuity, substance abuse, eating disorders, form unhealthy/abusive relationships, self-harm and have suicidal tendencies



Which interventions would you present to help?

Teen Sex and Teen Parenting Related to Trauma

In many traumatic situations; teens are left feeling alone, isolated, and begin to seek attention or love. Teens could begin looking for ways to feel accepted and one of these ways could be through sex. Teens might look for love (not given by family members) in other people. Either being pressured (thinking this is the way to give love) or thinking this will help the loneliness, teens might engage in sex. Teen parenting can come as a consequence of teen sex. Parenting might also be something the teen would like to engage in to give love, feel loved, or to create a family of their own.

71% of youth in foster care are more likely to have an unplanned pregnancy than other teens.

Teen Sex and Teen Parenting

Talk about peer pressure, finding video clips that relate to the teen.

Let the teen know that it's their body and their decision when to have sex. Their partner does not get to make that decision for them. Being coerced into having sex is rape!



No more !



Interventions for Teen Sex and Teen Parenting Prevention

Sex education and teaching teens the reality behind parenting.

Having the teen carry around a sack of flour (like a baby) and get the caregiver to help (if possible).

Create a budget of having a child and what it looks like to have someone depend on you for every need and want.

Teaching the teen about consent, sexting (permanent repercussions it could have), and resources for them to learn about safe sex.

Talking about STDs and the effects these can have.

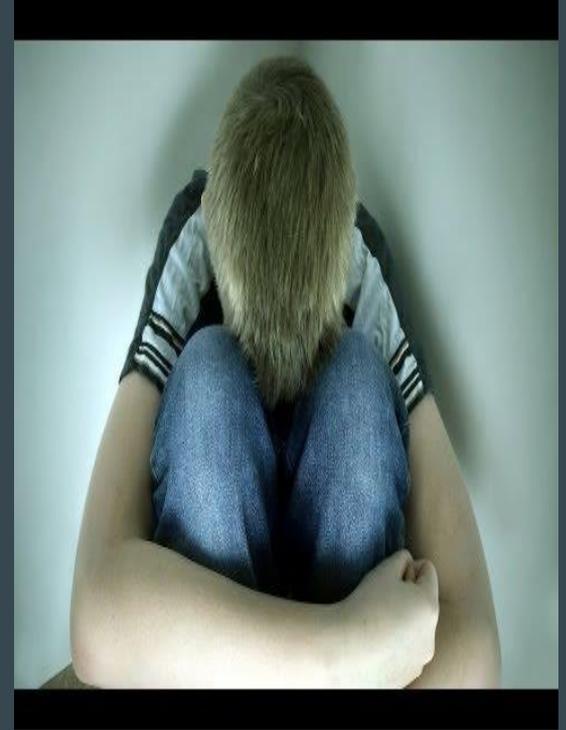
Talking about the emotional damage that could be done.

Trauma Can Cause Teenagers to Abuse Drugs and Alcohol

Neglect as a child, violence inside of a home, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse are all traumas that could cause a teenager to do drugs or drink alcohol. Teenagers do not know how to handle this trauma, so they turn to drugs or alcohol to self-medicate, escape from the world, or to at least numb their pain. Teenagers don't know how to handle situations that they are scared to talk about, what has happened to them, and they never fully recover from trauma they suffered when they were young. Caregivers sometimes fail to seek help and that's how teenagers end up turning to substance abuse. They start using drugs or alcohol because they feel guilt and/or shame. They blame themselves for what happened and are embarrassed to talk about it. Teenagers can develop post-traumatic stress disorder. What is post-traumatic disorder? It is an anxiety disorder that a person develops after experiencing an overwhelming traumatic event. This may cause a teenager to turn to drugs.

Interventions for Substance Abuse

1. A support system is very important for an intervention. Caregivers must be involved with treatment for their teen. A good treatment program will work with the family, educating them to understand their role and showing them ways to support the recovery of their teenager.
2. Having the family and teenager go to therapy. This would help because the teenager could address his or her thoughts, feelings and behaviors.
3. Teach relaxation, breathing skills and / or writing in a journal (self-care).
4. Teach the teenager communication and social skills; example; identifying emotions, communicating effectively and working to improve negative emotions. Turning negative emotions into positive ones through role play.
5. Help the teenager get involved in activities. Example; exercising, singing or participating in group functions (something that the teen loves to do). This would get their mind busy.
6. Educate the teens about the consequences of drugs and alcohol abuse by showing videos clips of the effects.



How Trauma Can Cause Eating Disorders

Eating disorders can often develop after trauma or a stressful situation in a teen's life. The trauma may cause a sense of instability or loss of control, and the eating disorder may be the only part of the individual's life that he/she can control. For example, an anorexic individual may drastically reduce food intake because this is the one area of life he/she can completely control. Anorexia Nervosa is a psychological and possibly life-threatening eating disorder defined by an extremely low body weight relative to stature (this is called BMI [Body Mass Index] and is a function of an individual's height and weight), extreme and needless weight loss, illogical fear of weight gain, and distorted perception of self-image and body.

Eating Disorders Can Affect Anyone



Interventions For Eating Disorders

Nutrition Education

The individual struggling with an eating disorder may not realize the long-term effects and damage that it can cause to one's body, so informing them about proper nutrition and healthy eating habits is crucial to beginning the recovery process.

1. Create a food diary (individual writes in a journal what he/she eats on a daily basis to begin the process)
2. Develop healthy options (no matter how small initially)
3. Learn about the adverse effects that eating disorders can have on the body (by reading articles, visiting a dietician and/or joining a support group)

How Trauma Leads to Forming Unhealthy Relationships

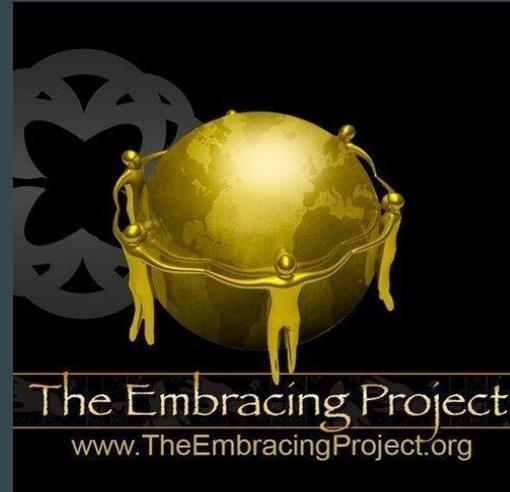
Trauma often leads teenagers to form unhealthy relationships. For example, girls are often victimized and lured into engaging in illegal activities such as performing “sexual favors,” with payment in return. A common reason for this would be young women lack stable family structures. These girls tend to have negative relationships with their parents and unsupportive family members which cause them to turn to prostitution. 90% of prostituted women have pimps while in prostitution. Pimps recruit girls from malls, schools, and over the internet by buying them stuff and making them feel like they care about them. Another cause for this behavior would be being in an unstable home environment. Teens often runaway, looking for control of their lives and often end up homeless and lack of money, it turns them into prostitution. Prostitution is not always a choice, sometimes young women are forced or manipulated into prostitution.

Forming Unhealthy Relationships can lead to Prostitution



Interventions for Forming Unhealthy Relationships.

Prostitution is often a difficult job to escape, this is why many teens feel trapped. It is more than likely no support system is present but the teen must remove herself from the negative environment. The National Human Trafficking resource center is a national, anti trafficking hotline and resource center serving victims and survivors of human trafficking and the anti-trafficking community in the United States. Assessments, referrals, peer support vocational training, counselling, mentoring, and rehabilitation would be interventions that can be offered to teens wanting to exit prostitution. The Embracing Project is a nonprofit organization in Las Vegas that offers mentoring, advocacy, clothing, hygiene items, tutoring, life skills training and more to victims of sex trafficking.



End child trafficking today, call the hotline:

888-373-7888

or text INFO or HELP to "BeFree" (233733)

*Call to report a potential case, get information, or request training.
It's 100% confidential, and interpreters are available.

How Trauma Can Relate to Self-harm/Injury and Suicide

Everyone responds to trauma in their own way. Some take to exercise, writing in a journal, while others take up a new hobby like painting. According to, Kate Kelland, 1 in every 12 teens engages in self harm. Another statistic shows that suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for teens.

But what exactly is self harm/injury? These activities include, but are not limited to: cutting, burning, poisoning, taking overdoses, battery or intentional injury to body tissue.

The most common traumatic events that precede self-harm and suicide are: the witness of/experiences of sexual and physical abuse, drug or alcohol abuse, medical illness, bullying and/or depression.

Interventions for Self Harm/ Suicidal tendencies

Self-harm/injury is categorized as an unhealthy way to cope with emotional pain, intense anger or a defense against the trauma that's going on in the teens life (home or at school). When it comes to interventions, discovering and creating healthy coping mechanisms should be a major goal. However, before a set treatment is established, it is important that parents, caregivers and/or a solid support system is active and committed to the overall goal of helping the teen.

Psychotherapy

Group therapy

30-day inpatient treatment (if suicide attempt)

Alternative outlets: Journal writing, painting, butterfly project, Stress ball, Ice

How Should Parents/Caregivers Response to Self Injury?



Help Your Teen

National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education <http://www.ncsse.com/index.cfm?pageid=932>

Prevention of Substance Abuse <http://youth.gov/>

National Eating Disorders <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/get-facts-eating-disorders>

Unhealthy Teen Relationships <http://www.pamf.org/teen/abc/unhealthy/abusiverelationships.html>

Youth Suicide Prevention Program https://www.yspp.org/about_suicide/self_harm.htm