Corona Virus

• This unsettling time will leave a generational mark on young people.

• How can we adults shape the impact it leaves?
Corona Virus

• This experience underscores that it is shortsighted and wrong to treat this as a germ that does not discriminate. It does.

• At the root of why it discriminates is at the crux of the reason that now is not the time to set aside the topic of trauma and resilience. It is the reason that we should double down.
Childhood Trauma Affects:

The Body

The Brain

Behavior

Genetics
A needed course correction . . .

An Integrated Model that includes all we’ve learned from

✓ Positive Youth Development
✓ Resilience Building Strategies
✓ Trauma-sensitive Practices

A model that acknowledges pain, but sees the best in people.

A model that recognizes structural racism and the undermining forces of low expectations, but that prevents a new label from being applied to already marginalized communities. In sharp contrast, it must recognize the inherent strengths of individuals, communities, and cultures.
At the root of all models is the primacy and power of human relationships both to build strong, successful youth and to heal those who have endured hardships.
Seeking the “Sweet Spot”

We know young people need **safe, secure, sustained relationships** to thrive. We even know that such relationships can allow them to heal from hard pasts. We must guide them so they are accountable to being their best selves. When we do so, they must know that our high expectations are rooted in our caring. Ideally our efforts at accountability must enhance, rather than disrupt, our protective relationships.
In Theory, Where Can the Greatest Progress be Made?
Every earned emotion creates an opportunity for building resilience
We who serve young people must be the kind of adults they deserve in their lives. We must create environments where youth can be heard, process their emotions, and ultimately made to feel safe. We can acknowledge that having emotions is good, talking about them is necessary, and being honest with them is healing. We can’t talk away uncertainty, but we can join together. We can create safe settings, a haven that says the world is complicated, but that in this space, we care about each other. In this space we protect each other. In this space, we’ve got you.
Youth Development 101
How do we define success for ALL Young People?
Problem Free . . .

. . . is NOT Fully Prepared!

Karen Pittman
We Matter...
more than the buildings or the programs.

Kids come for the *content*, but the *context* is what heals youth.
Trauma-sensitive Practices
Childhood Trauma Affects:

- The Body
- The Brain
- Behavior
- Genetics
UNLESS
Trauma Does Not Break Kids . . . Nor Does it Cause Brain Damage

• A Different Kind of Credential
• Having a “Protector’s Brain”
• Having a Brilliant Amygdala
Offer Radical Calmness Amidst a Chaotic Reality

• **Co-regulation**
  • Amygdala to amygdala communication
  • Key to de-escalation
  • Critical to anticipation
  • Key to allowing “Mother Teresa” to surface

• **Self-regulation is a skill to be developed**
How Do Hard Lives Make People Experience Transitions Differently?

Every new opportunity is a chance to be rejected entirely

- Where's the tiger?
- Am I safe?
- What if I am judged? Will I be rejected?
- Should I pretend I don’t care?
- Should I fail fast to maintain my control?
- Should I choose to fail, so at least I’ll control my destiny?
Key Principles of Trauma Sensitive Practices

1. Knowing what is about you and what is not about you

2. Changing your lens from “What’s wrong with you!” to “What happened to you?”

3. Seeing people as they deserve to be seen, not based on labels they’ve received or behaviors they’ve displayed

4. Giving control back to people from whom control has been taken away
To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

- Youth who need us the most are often those who push us away
- Youth who need us the most are often those who push our buttons
- Youth who need us the most may raise uncomfortable feelings in us
- Youth who need us the most often don’t give us the feedback we crave
Nobody dared go near the tower. A fearsome dragon sat on its top.

Until one day, a knight rode up. "Do you need help to get down?"

"Please."

O. Westin. Micro SF/F Stories