

Engaging Young Fathers
in a
Trauma Informed Approach
to
Open Doors for Their Future

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Objectives

- Define trauma and a trauma-informed approach using the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) definitions.
- Describe SAMHSA's Six Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach (TIA).
- Understand the early childhood and family experiences of teen fathers and the role this plays in their fathering experience.
- Recognize how resilience and protective factors help build and maintain optimal relationships with partners and children.
- State the importance of integrating a trauma informed approach into pregnancy assistance fund programs and identify at least three strategies for doing so.

It is easier
to raise strong children
than to repair broken men.

Frederick Douglass

Developing a Trauma Informed Approach for Engaging Young Fathers

- *Resources for Resolving Violence, Inc. (RRV)* is a licensed trauma-informed mental health agency that provides intensive in-home services, program development, consultation, and training.
- Our clinical services combine sex education with the *T.O.P.* Workbook for Sexual Health* within the context of trauma therapy.
- Clinical and non-clinical staff collaborate to best serve each youth and any involved family members.

I want you to be able to:

Engage these young fathers in ways
that best **support them**
in exploring their own autonomy
to address their needs
and open doors
to enhance their lives

Who are we talking about?



Young men who are most vulnerable to becoming teen fathers are:

- In foster care
- Incarcerated
- Homeless
- Marginalized



Many Teen Fathers Have Experienced

- Poverty
- Disadvantaged family background
- Child abuse
- Sexual harm
- Exposure to substance abuse
- Interpersonal violence
- Academic struggles
- Lack of adequate health care

It's no trick loving somebody
at their best.

Love is loving them
at their worst.

Tom Stoppard

Barriers to Engagement



Challenges to engaging teen fathers in...

- Systems of care
- Service providers
- Family members
- Youth being served

Therapeutic Engagement



Effective strategies for engagement and trauma informed approaches integrate research on...

- Teen fathers
- Factors that influence outcomes in psychotherapy
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Trauma
- Resilience
- Optimum Child
- Development
- Competency Development
- Developmental Assets
- Accurate Sexual Health Information
- Affect Regulation

There is always
one moment in childhood
when the door opens
and let's the future in.

Graham Greene

You have the potential
to be that moment for teen fathers

Effective Intervention Involves

Duncan, Miller, Wampold & Hubble, 2011

- Technique (15%)
- Instilling hope & expectation for change (15%)
- Warm, non-judgmental, empathic, and genuine relationship (30%)
- Client characteristics: strengths, resources, protective factors (40%)

What are some **strategies**
you have found
to effectively engage
these young fathers?

Models for Optimal Engagement

- Motivational Interviewing (Miller & Rolnick)
- Invitations to Responsibility (Jenkins)
- The Heart and Soul of Change (Duncan, Miller, Wampold & Hubble)

Kindness knows no shame.

Stevie Wonder

Life Experiences Influence Brain Development



SAMHSA Definition of Trauma

“...experiences that cause **intense physical and psychological stress reactions**. It can refer to a single event, multiple events, or a set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically and emotionally harmful or threatening and **that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.**”

(Spring, 2014)

Trauma is a deeply distressing
or disturbing experience
that has a lasting effect on a person's life.



Key Elements of a Trauma Informed Approach

SAMHSA, 2014

- *Realizes* the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
- *Recognizes* the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;
- *Responds* by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and,
- Seeks to actively *resist re-traumatization*.

Key Principles of a Trauma Informed Approach

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice, and choice
- Cultural, historical, and gender issues

**A Trauma Informed Approach
for Adolescent Sexual Health**



Joann Schladale, M.S., L.M.F.T.

This document addresses...

- Optimum development and sex education
- Vulnerable populations
- What constitutes a trauma informed approach
- Effective strategies
- Recommendations, resources, and references

Four Components of a Trauma Informed Approach for Adolescent Sexual Health

- Sex education **Got it**
- Access to contraceptives and contraceptive services **Got it**
- Empirically informed trauma resources
- Empirically informed and evidence-based trauma therapy when indicated

Benefits of a Trauma Informed Approach for Teen Fathers

- Empirical evidence to organize and guide service delivery
- A comprehensive foundation for promoting better outcomes
- Streamlined service provision
- Hopefully prevention of repeat pregnancies

Complex Trauma...Complex Challenges...



Definition of Complex Trauma

National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2003

- The dual problem of children's exposure to traumatic events and the impact of this exposure on immediate and long-term outcomes
- Children's experiences of **multiple traumatic events that occur within the care giving system**
- Simultaneous or sequential occurrences of child maltreatment

Multiple Domains of Impairment

- **Neuro-Processing:** cognition, attachment, anxiety, self-regulation, self-concept, social helplessness, aggression
- **Physiological:** cardiovascular, metabolic, and immunological disorders; addiction, eating disorders, and sexual disorders

Trauma can influence ...

- Deficits in executive functioning (*working memory, analysis and synthesis, organizational skills, internal speech, emotional and behavioral regulation*)
- Dysregulated arousal
- Maladaptive procedural learning
- Impaired sensory processing
- Impulsivity
- Harm to self and/or others
- Problem sexual behavior

Trauma Resources

- SAMHSA
- Centers for Disease Control
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)
- ACE Studies (ongoing)
- Age of Opportunity: Lessons From the New Science of Adolescence (Steinberg, 2014)
- The Body Keeps the Score (van der Kolk, 2014)
- Children Who See Too Much (Groves, 2002)

Resilience
is the ability to bounce back
after adversity.

Internal protective factors
&
Environmental protective factors

Selected Environmental Protective Factors

Henderson & Sharp Light (1996)

- Close bonds
- High warmth/low criticism style of interaction
- Supportive relationships
- Sharing responsibilities and service to others
- High and realistic expectations for success
- Meaningful participation in activities

Developmental assets
are good things that occur
in a child's life
that enhance growth
in all developmental categories.

Many of these can be provided in
service delivery for teen fathers to
enhance resilience

Developmental Asset Categories

Search Institute

- Support
- Empowerment
- Boundaries and expectations
- Constructive use of time
- Positive values
- Commitment to Learning
- Social Competencies
- Positive identity

We want teen fathers to open doors that lead to...

- Health and well being
- Love and connection
- Education/Intellectual pursuits
- Workforce development
- Pursuing their dreams
- Becoming the person they want to be

Effective Strategies

(He repaired broken and wounded hearts. They were sold wholesale and retail.)



Core Approaches to All Evidence-Based Practices for Child Abuse

Saunders, Berliner & Hanson, 2004

- Prioritize work with caregivers
- Are goal directed
- Provide a structured approach
- Focus on skill building to manage emotional distress and behavioral disturbances
- Use techniques that involve repetitive practice of skills with feedback

Skills Common to All Evidence-Based Practices for Child Abuse

Saunders, Berliner, & Hanson, 2004

- Emotional, or affect regulation: the ability to identify, modulate, and express emotions in pro-social ways
- Anxiety management
- Cognitive restructuring
- Problem solving

Affect Regulation, Disturbance of Arousal, and Dysregulation



Affect Regulation is
a person's ability
to manage emotions
without
causing harm to self or others.

Shore, 2003

Key Elements of Affect Regulation

- Thoughts (cognition)
- Feelings (affect, or emotions)
- Physiological Reactions
- Behavior
- Outcome

Arousal

To evoke or awaken a feeling,
emotion, or response.

Disturbance of Arousal

An experience that tests a person's ability to manage their feelings, or affect without causing harm.

When people get upset they have thoughts, feelings and physiological reactions that influence their behavior.

Behavior then influences outcomes.

Dysregulation

Managing emotions in ways that can cause harm to self, others, or both.

Key elements of dysregulation, like affect regulation are: thoughts, feelings, physiological reactions, behavior, and outcomes.

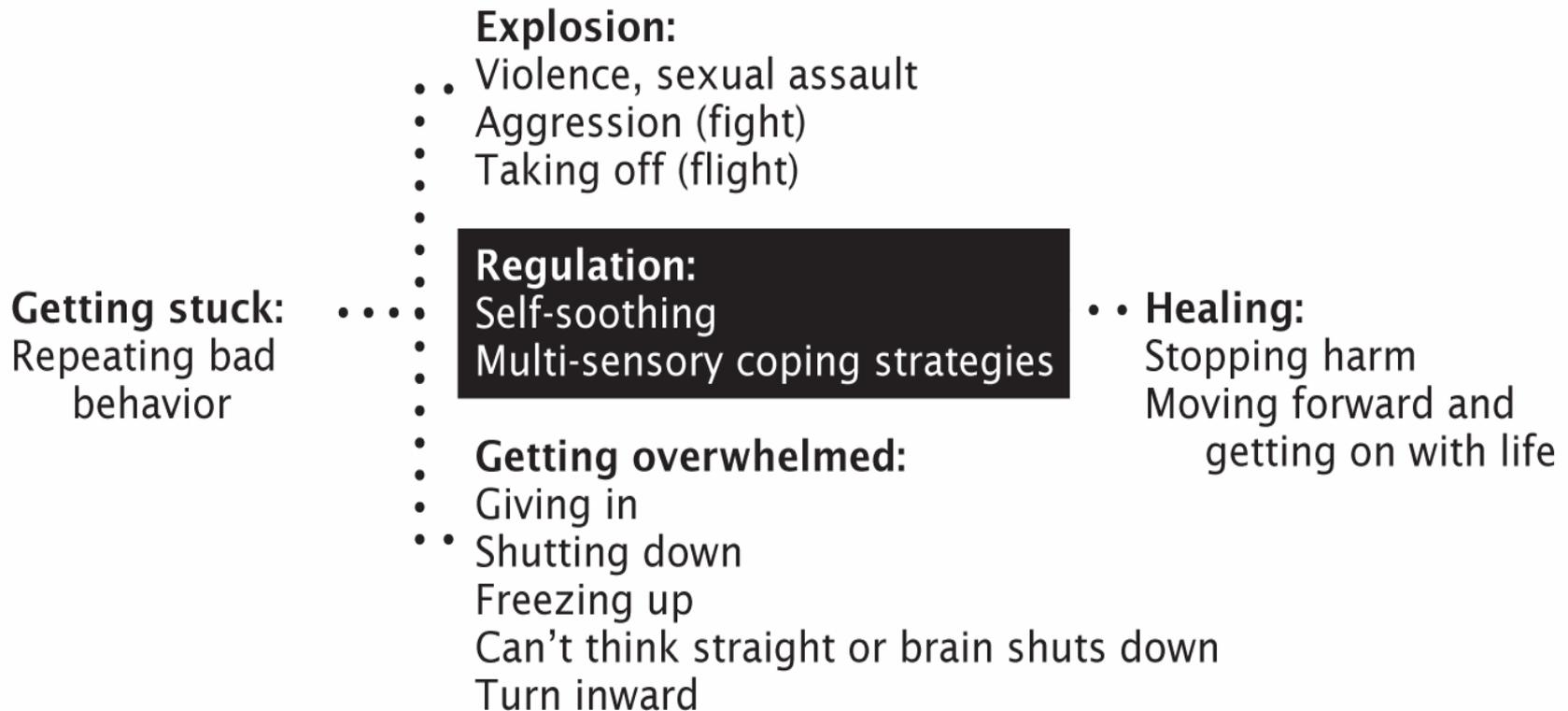
Self-Regulation is
the capacity to
formulate a plan of one's own and
implement behavior
to carry it out.

Miller & Rollnick, 2013

Disturbance of Arousal

- • **Dysregulation (Explosion):**
 - • Violent behavior, sexual assault
 - Aggression (fight)
 - Withdrawal (flight)
 -
 -
 -
 -
- • **Regulation:**
 - Self-soothing
 - Multi-sensory coping strategies
- • **Dysregulation (Constriction):**
 - Appeasement (submission)
 - • Immobility (freezing)
 - Inability to organize
 - Analgesia or mental paralysis
 - Dissociation
- • **Immobilization:**
 - • • • Repetition of trauma
 - • • • Re-enactment
- • **Mobilization:**
 - • Eliminating pathological patterns
 - • Future orientation

Getting Upset and Feeling Out of Control



Affect Regulation Requires

Stien & Kendall, 2004

- Safety and stabilization
- Exercise and body movement
- Healing touch
- Expression through art, drama, dance and music
- Skill building (competency development)

Promoting Change Through Multi-Sensory Activities



Seven Sensory Systems

- Sight
- Sound
- Touch
- Smell
- Taste
- Vestibular (balance, the pull of gravity, head position, and sense of movement)
- Proprioception (movement and position of muscles, joints, and the body as a whole)

Play-Doh



The Trauma Outcome Process

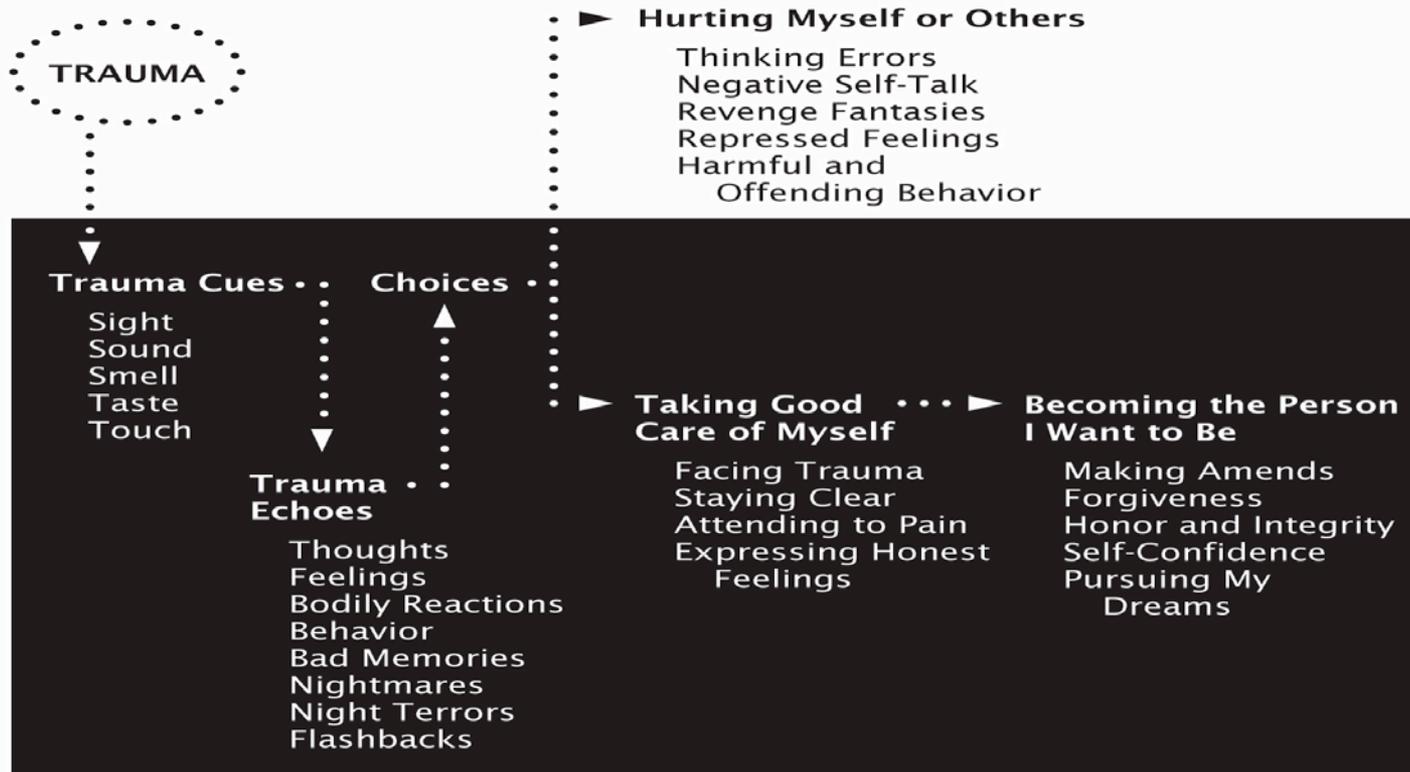


Trauma Outcome Process

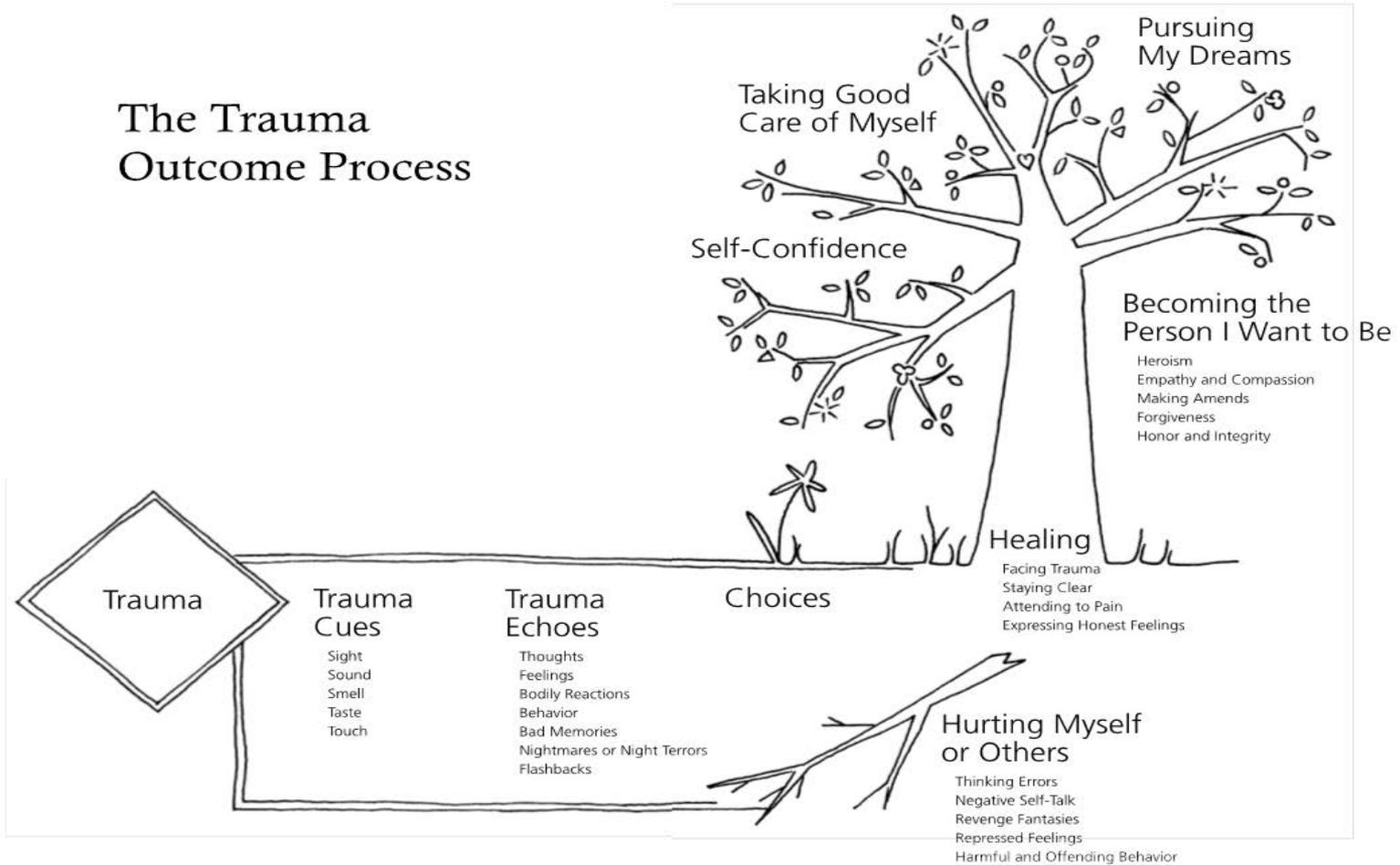
- Trauma means bad things that have a lasting effect on your life
- Outcome is a result, or consequence
- A process is a particular way of doing something

Your trauma outcome process is
the way you choose to deal with very bad things
that happened to you

The Trauma Outcome Process



The Trauma Outcome Process



What ideas do you have for helping
teen fathers
to creatively manage
disturbances of arousal?

How is all this related to opening
doors to their future?

The most important contributor to success
and well-being in adolescence
is strong self-control.

The capacity for self-regulation is probably
the single most important contributor
to achievement, mental health, and social success.

Lawrence Steinberg

Neuroscience indicates that youth who have experienced trauma thrive in settings that...

- Promote optimal child development
- Are calm and soothing
- Provide a variety of stimulating, engaging, and increasingly challenging experiences
- Respond to youth's needs with flexibility
- Allow for mistakes and poor judgment to be self-corrected with adult support and encouragement

Expert Tips for Resilience

Charney & Southwick, 2012

- Develop a core set of beliefs that nothing can shake
- Try to find meaning in whatever trauma has happened
- Try to maintain a positive outlook
- Take cues from someone who is especially resilient
- Don't run from things that scare you: face them
- Be quick to reach out for support when things go haywire
- Learn new things as often as you can
- Find an exercise regimen you'll stick to
- Don't beat yourself up or dwell on the past
- Recognize what makes you uniquely strong-and own it

We can ...

- Understand a young father's vulnerabilities in the context of his life experiences
- Provide physical, social-emotional, and moral safety
- Provide opportunities for young fathers to be powerful in a safe setting
- Promote sensory, physical, relational, and cognitive stimulation
- Address self-regulation, anxiety, and impulsivity
- Intersperse frequency, intensity and duration with novelty to enhance learning
- Create opportunities for new neural connections to emerge which activate positive mental states and improve behavior

Effective engagement involves...

- Assessing service settings and creating soothing environments for everyone involved- teen fathers, their families, and staff.
- Providing practical and effective training for all staff.
- Integrating ongoing supervision to enhance permanent integration of key concepts.
- Monitoring service delivery for continuous quality improvement
- Documenting community resources and making sure staff and young fathers have easy access to them.
- Modeling sex positive communication that celebrates sexuality, supports healing for those in need, and promotes health and well being for everyone.
- Knowing it is not necessary to have mental health professionals on staff to provide excellent trauma informed services.
- Providing warm, non-judgmental, empathic, and genuine interaction at all times.
- Maintaining a referral directory of local licensed mental health service providers who can document specialized training in a trauma informed approach.
- Considering ongoing consultation as needed with a licensed mental health service provider who specializes in this work.

Some questions to think about...

- What elements of your program reflect effective engagement within a trauma informed approach?
- What challenges need to be addressed to more effectively support teen fathers in opening doors for a brighter future?
- Please identify at least 3 strategies you can integrate into your pregnancy assistance fund program based on our time together today

In summary: Five Things to Know about Trauma

The bad news:

1. Trauma can influence physical problems such as cardiovascular, metabolic, and immunological disorders; deficits in functioning such as attachment problems, anxiety, depression, aggression, addictions, and eating disorders; challenges with memory and organizational skills; emotional and behavioral regulation; impulsivity; harm to self and/or others; and problem sexual behavior.

The very good news:

2. Humans are very resilient and often bounce back from adversity without a need for intensive intervention.

3. It's all about affect regulation. Affect regulation is the ability to manage our emotions without causing harm to ourselves or others and self-regulation is the capacity to formulate a plan of one's own and implement behavior to carry it out. Everyone, no matter how hard life has been, can practice self-regulation.

4. Educating trauma survivors with user-friendly empirical evidence about stopping harm, healing pain, and changing lives can influence optimal sexual decision making.

5. Becoming the person we want to be involves repetitive practice with corrective feedback. Like anything else in life, practice makes perfect. Anyone who has experienced trauma can learn to use a broad range of multi-sensory coping strategies to manage difficult situations and minimize the damaging effects listed above.

Good process
creates good outcomes.

Ron Suskind

If you treat an individual as he is,
he will stay as he is,
but if you treat him as if he were
what he ought to be and could be,
he will become what he ought to be
and could be.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

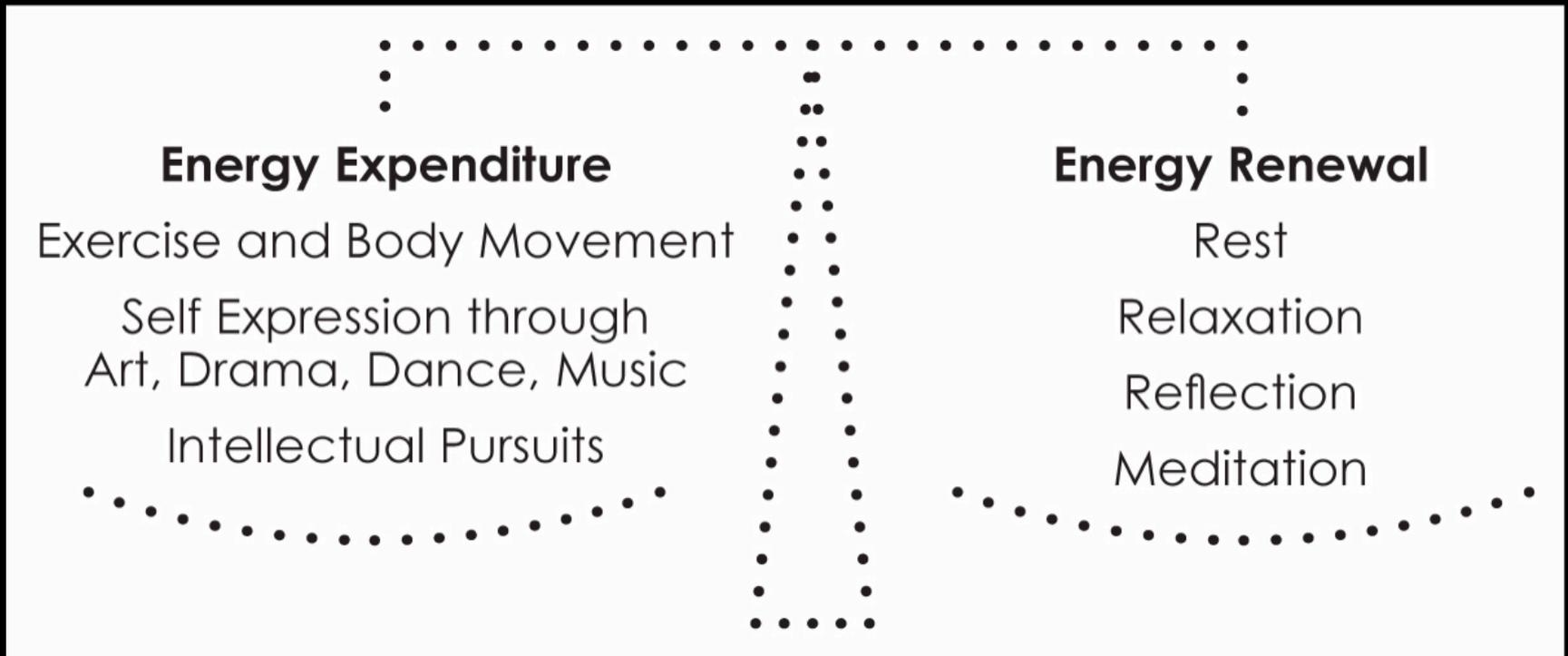
Promoting Long-Term Success

- Make services easily accessible
- Offer time and assistance
- Remember that teenagers only look fully grown
- Keep in mind that individuals mature at different rates
- Respond to maturity rather than chronological age
- Teach them to take good care of themselves
- Offer suggestions respectfully
- Involve other trustworthy adults

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- Support a variety of coping strategies
 - Exercise patience
 - Mentor them
 - Keep your emotions in check
 - Have some fun
 - Treat them respectfully as a young adult even when they don't act like one
 - Continue to help them when they fail

Balance is more than not falling down

Chinese Proverb



Success is to be measured
not so much by the position
one has reached in life
but rather by the obstacles
he has overcome.

Booker T. Washington

Thank you for your dedication
to these young men and their families

