

# Think Trauma Participant Worksheets

---

## 3.1 Remembering Trauma

This film is part of a campaign to help the general public understand the impact trauma can have on young people and families. You can see the film again and have a discussion with people in your life about this important issue by going to [www.rememberingtrauma.org](http://www.rememberingtrauma.org).

What were potential trauma reminders for Manny, the main character?

---

---

---

---

How did Manny's girlfriend make it easier or more difficult for him to deal with his trauma reminders?

---

---

---

---

How did institutions such as the school or law enforcement make it easier or more difficult for the main character to deal with his trauma reminders?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Finding Your Ace Score

### While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in your household **often or very often** swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? Or act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

Yes                      No    If yes enter 1 here \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often** push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? Or ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

Yes                      No    If yes enter 1 here \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever** touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? Or attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?

Yes                      No    If yes enter 1 here \_\_\_\_\_

4. Did you **often or very often** feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? Or your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

Yes                      No    If yes enter 1 here \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you **often or very often** feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? Or your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?

Yes                      No    If yes enter 1 here \_\_\_\_\_

6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?

Yes                      No    If yes enter 1 here \_\_\_\_\_

7. Was your mother or stepmother **often or very often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? Or **sometimes, often, or very often** kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? Or **ever** repeatedly hit at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

Yes                      No    \_\_\_\_\_                      If yes enter 1 here \_\_\_\_\_

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?

Yes                      No    If yes enter 1 here \_\_\_\_\_

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?

Yes                      No    If yes enter 1 here \_\_\_\_\_

10. Did a household member go to prison?

Yes                      No    If yes enter 1 here \_\_\_\_\_

Now add up your "Yes" answers: \_\_\_\_\_ This is your ACE Score.

# Think Trauma Participant Worksheets

---

## 3.2 SAMHSA's 4 R's

A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed **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; and **responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively **resist re-traumatization**.

## 3.3 Barriers to Trauma-Informed Interactions Multi-System Involved Youth

Think about Manny's experience with the school counselor. What may have happened at the school that the school intended for help but may have been harmful when looking at it with a trauma lens?

---

---

---

---

---

What are examples of actions from school, child welfare, and juvenile justice settings intended to help youth, but are actually harmful?

---

---

---

---

---

# Think Trauma Participant Worksheets

---

## 3.4 Systems Response to Trauma-Impacted Youth

### NCTSN Definition of Trauma-Informed Systems

A trauma-informed child and family service system is one in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system including children, caregivers, and service providers. Programs and agencies within such a system infuse and sustain trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their organizational cultures, practices, and policies. They act in collaboration with all those who are involved with the child, using the best available science, to maximize physical and psychological safety, facilitate the recovery of the child and family, and support their ability to thrive.

A service system with a trauma-informed perspective is one in which agencies, programs, and service providers:

- Routinely screen for trauma exposure and related symptoms.
- Use evidence-based, culturally responsive assessment and treatment for traumatic stress and associated mental health symptoms.
- Make resources available to children, families, and providers on trauma exposure, its impact, and treatment.
- Engage in efforts to strengthen the resilience and protective factors of children and families impacted by and vulnerable to trauma.
- Address parent and caregiver trauma and its impact on the family system.
- Emphasize continuity of care and collaboration across child-service systems.
- Maintain an environment of care for staff that addresses, minimizes, and treats secondary traumatic stress, and that increases staff wellness.

These activities are rooted in an understanding that trauma-informed agencies, programs, and service providers:

- Build meaningful partnerships that create mutuality among children, families, caregivers, and professionals at an individual and organizational level.
- Address the intersections of trauma with culture, history, race, gender, location, and language, acknowledge the compounding impact of structural inequity, and are responsive to the unique needs of diverse communities.

# Think Trauma Participant Worksheets

---

## 3.5 Creating a Fair Justice System & Restoring the Social Contract

### Part One:

Let's return to Manny's story from Remembering Trauma. Please take a moment to answer the questions below individually and then you will discuss it further in your small groups.

1. How might aspects of race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, religion, ability status, or socioeconomic status impact a person's experience of and/or response to trauma? What might Manny's experience be?

---

---

---

2. How might Manny's race or ethnicity have impacted his experience with his therapist and/or the mental health system?

---

---

---

3. What are some factors that service providers should consider when serving youth from a different racial or ethnic background?

---

---

---

### Part Two: Credible Messengers and Discussions about Racial Justice

To practice having these safe and brave conversations about race, let's return to Manny from Remembering Trauma. I want you to imagine a colleague said, "Manny is an animal and did what anyone should expect from "those type of people". Using the following questions, talk at your table about how you might have a discussion at your job to address this way of thinking.

1. What biases are you hearing from the person who made this statement?
2. What might be areas of privilege that led the person to say this statement?
3. What credible messengers might you recruit to help with this conversation? What do you hope the credible messengers shares during the conversation?
4. How do we create an environment of cultural humility?
5. What specific steps might you take to become an advocate for justice in this situation?

# Think Trauma Participant Worksheets

---

## 3.6 Effective Coping Strategies

### 3 Steps for How Coping Works

1. **Appraisal:** how a person interprets a situation and deciding whether the situation seems threatening.
2. **Review options:** thinking about which coping strategies to use and evaluating whether they will work.
3. **Response:** behaviors or thoughts to deal with threats, challenges, and harmful situations.

### Strategies for Supporting Healthy Coping

- Make information and directions digestible.
- Narrate next steps to ease transitions.
- Give simple choices.
- Validate experience and avoid shaming.
- Find prosocial outlets for frustrating feeling or responses to trauma.

### Potential Coping Strategies

- Read a book
- Write in a journal
- Exercise
- Deep breathing
- Think about something calm
- Listen to music
- Sing
- Lift weights
- Play an instrument
- Dance
- Weighted blanket
- Talk to a friend
- Watch TV
- Sleep
- Play a game or video game
- Meditate
- Do yoga or Tai Chi
- Play sports
- Paint or draw
- Do a craft
- Eat ice
- Suck on a fireball
- Wash your face or hands
- Pray
- Play with toys or puzzles
- Color
- Take a walk
- Count
- Use a stress ball

# Think Trauma Participant Worksheets

---

## Additional Coping Strategies Related to Trauma Reminders

### For Before, During, and After a Trauma or Loss, or Hidden Reminder:

#### 1. Reduce Unnecessary Exposure

Limit exposure to reminders and distressing situations in a commonsense fashion, especially right after a trauma. For example, after someone has seen someone die in a street shooting or in the hospital, it might be best for a while to avoid television radio programs music or movies with similar themes, such as police or hospital dramas that include the sounds of sirens or the beeping of life support machines.

#### 2. Anticipate Exposure

A certain amount of exposure is unavoidable. How can you be proactive and get support when you know that next week is the anniversary of a loved one's death, or a holiday that you always spent together? Think about how you might feel on that day (sad, angry, lonely). Planning ahead gives you some sense of control. Plan to get support such as arranging to spend time with a peer or family member, staff person, or arrange to be alone if that is what you need.

#### 3. Do Calming Exercises

Specific CALMING activities may be used before, during and after exposure to reminders or distressing situations to manage anxiety. Key techniques include abdominal breathing and progressive muscle relaxation by tensing and relaxing muscles from head to toe. Slowed breathing will decrease the oxygen in your body and help decrease your body's stress response. Learning to tense and relax muscle groups voluntarily can make you aware of and reduce the muscles you tense in your jaw, neck, shoulders or elsewhere when you are frightened or angry. Other calming activities include vigorous exercise, listening to music, singing, rocking, swaddling yourself in a blanket, or another calming activity of your choosing.

#### 4. Build Resilience By Staying in Touch and Active

Healthy lifestyles that build resilience before, during and after exposure include appropriate sleep, eating, and exercise routines. Especially after you have been through a trauma or loss, it is important to take care of your health by eating and sleeping well and getting daily exercise. It is very important to maintain your relationships and network of support. Many people who have been through much trauma and loss tend to withdraw from other people, and this often makes them feel worse. We recommend going out of your way to keep in touch with family, friends even if you don't feel like it at first. These contacts will help you manage your posttraumatic reactions, so do continue as best you can to keep active.

#### 5. Distract Yourself Through Positive Activities

Exercise, sports, hobbies, projects, and work are all positive activities. Regular exercise through active sports is especially calming. Once the body has gone into "Alarm mode," it can take over an hour to calm down, but some people find that jogging, basketball, or some active sport seems to help them while they are in "Alarm mode."

#### 6. Seek Support

It helps to share your concerns by talking with a trusted friend, family member or staff member before, during, and after exposure to a trauma or loss reminder. This support can help prevent an outsize reaction to a reminder. Even when you feel yourself beginning to react to something more strongly than you wish, telling someone you trust about what you are going through can help diminish the intensity of your reaction.

# Think Trauma Participant Worksheets

---

## 7. Take a Time-Out

You can calm yourself down sometimes by simply taking yourself out of a stressful situation by quietly leaving and taking a walk or going to a quiet place.

## 8. Journal Writing

Many youth and adults who have experienced trauma or traumatic loss have found value in keeping a journal. Reflecting back on your day or on past events can be calming, and it helps many people find meaning as they write down the things they remember, think, and feel.

### What other effective coping strategies would you recommend for your youth?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# Think Trauma Participant Worksheets

---

## 3.7 Problem-Based Learning for Your Case Vignette

*\*Note: "Your youth" refers to the youth from your case vignette*

It is toward the end of lunch when staff hear a commotion near the back of the cafeteria. "No I'm not!" is shouted by your youth toward another table. Youth at the other table continue to hurl insults at your youth. Staff quickly remove the youths from the other table. You are left with your youth who is clearly upset. People who observed the back and forth share that the other youth started by making fun of your youth's family and said "some really mean things." Your youth maintained control at first, but as the mean-spirited teasing continued your youth became more agitated. Your youth demanded they "take back what you said!" In the past, your youth has used survival coping strategies to deal with their problems, but has been working to better cope with triggers, stressful situations, and conflict. It seems that the comments by the other youth cut deeply and hurt your youth to their core. Your youth murmurs "they are going to pay for that." It is clear that this is a pivotal moment to help your youth effectively cope with the situation and avoid getting into trouble. You have the best connection with your youth among the staff and are in a position to help de-escalate your youth before the situation becomes worse.

**Instructions:** In your group, discuss how you might help your youth from your case vignette cope with this situation. Use the questions below to focus on the first 2 steps of coping: appraisal and review options. Use the following questions to guide your discussion.

1. What are some possible ways that your youth is appraising the situation?
  - a. Some questions to consider asking youth to figure out how they are appraising the situation:
    - i. What thoughts are you having that make you feel like this situation is threatening or challenging?
    - ii. What are some thoughts that make you feel less overwhelmed and like you can handle the situation?
  - b. What would be your youth's response to these questions?
2. What are some of the options your youth may believe they have for handling this situation?
3. What other options might you recommend for handling this situation?
4. What are some strategies for supporting healthy coping in Handout 3.6 you might use now?

# Think Trauma Participant Worksheets

---

## 3.8 Social Identities and Coping

How might different social identities impact your coping?

---

---

---

**Consider the following questions for your case vignette:**

1. What are probably some of the social identities important to this youth?

---

---

2. How might those social identities impact how the youth appraises, reviews options, and responds in this situation?

---

---

3. What coping recommendations could we recommend that lets the youth know we acknowledge their important social identities, understand the challenges that may come from being that social identity in this situation, and have suggestions for responding that honor and respect those social identities?

---

---

---

---

---

# Think Trauma Participant Worksheets

---

## 3.9 Building Healthy Connections

Consider the following questions to identify relationships that can help youth more effectively cope.

- What relationships are probably important to the youth and help them cope? Why?
- What aspects of the resilience portfolio do these relationships already promote? (The answer to this question can be used to acknowledge to the youth that the value of their relationships is recognized and understood.)
- What aspects of youth current relationships can be replicated with peers and trusted adults who will use healthy coping strategies?
- How can youth further build their healthy coping toolbox with additional relationships with peers and trusted adults who will use healthy coping strategies?
- How can the responses to these questions help address the problems faced in this scenario? How can it help with other problems that youth in your facility experience?