

Infants, children and youth who experience trauma have been exposed to one or more traumas across their childhood (pre birth-19 years); as a result, they can develop reactions that persist and impact their functioning during the exposure period and/or after the event(s) have ended. Common types of trauma include; **acute, chronic, complex, developmental, collective, intergenerational, cultural, historical, systems, political and vicarious** trauma. Depending on: the nature of the traumatic experience (severity and duration), how it is perceived by the person, the person's functioning and what personal/family supports are accessible will help determine if the person may or may not require mental health support. Effects of trauma will vary by age and caregiver functioning may also need to be assessed (especially for infants). The person's culture, ethnicity and experience should be considered in all care and intervention. Infants, children and youth can recover from trauma and will also have indicators of strengths, healing, protective factors, and resilience (personal, family, community, cultural).

Potential Effects of Infant/Child/Youth Trauma

❖ Behavioral

- Avoidance (i.e. trauma reminders)
- Decreased self regulation
- Decreased impulse control
- Aggression
- Regression of behaviors
- Risk Taking
- Suicidal behavior
- Crying
- Social withdrawal
- Isolation
- Cling to caregiver
- Alienation
- Screaming/Tantrums
- School/Work Impairment
- Substance misuse
- Decreased interest in activities

❖ Spiritual/Self

- Guilt
- Shame
- Self blame
- Self hatred (i.e. feeling like a bad person)
- Decreased self worth
- Decreased belief in justice/fairness
- Decreased self efficacy (i.e. decreased confidence in navigating life challenges)
- Decreased sense of personal safety
- Loss of connection to self

❖ Relational

- Attachment difficulties (i.e. increased separation anxiety)
- Decreased interest in friends/family
- Loss of family, cultural or community connection
- Relational conflict
- Difficulty establishing and maintaining relationships
- Intergenerational cycles of abuse
- Decreased understanding of social interactions
- Difficulties trusting (self and others)
- Concerns about safety of others
- Increased risk for system involvement

❖ Emotional

- Sadness
- Terror
- Fear
- Nervousness
- Despair
- Loss of Pleasure
- Hypersensitivity
- Anger
- Moody
- Disruptive
- Numbing
- Helplessness
- Lack of control
- Grief

❖ Cognitive

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Disbelief
- Confusion
- Dissociation
- Impaired concentration
- Memory impairment
- Impaired decision making
- Impaired learning
- Worry
- Suicidal thoughts
- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Develop unfounded fears
- Perfectionism
- Preoccupied of mortality of self or others

❖ Physical

- Impaired stress response
- Startle response
- Hyperarousal
- Hypoarousal
- Changes in brain development
- Sleep Disturbance
- Headaches/GI Problems
- Impaired immune system
- Fatigue
- Somatic complaints
- Changes in eating habits
- Self-injurious behaviors
- Encopresis/Enuresis (i.e. wetting or soiling self).