

# Strength-Based Mentoring Training Toolkit:

## Module 2: Impact of Stress and Trauma on Children

### Facilitator Preparation and Planning – Pre-Match Mentor Training

The goal of this training module is to equip organizations that provide mentoring services to youth impacted by parental incarceration with enhanced training resources and tools to support positive mentor-mentee match outcomes. As staff prepare for mentor training, they should familiarize themselves with the content, training flow and scripts, slides, materials list, and activities in advance of the training session.

You will be leading a 30-minute presentation along with scenarios for mentors to begin understanding how incarceration and other traumatic events may negatively impact youth. You will use a PowerPoint presentation to highlight key concepts. If an LCD projector is not available, chart paper can be used to capture the content on the slides and should be prepared prior to the session. Complete instructions are provided below.

#### Activity Preparation

1. Be sure you have read and thoroughly comprehend the information and implications of the impact of stress and trauma on children that have been provided. Although you are only introducing these concepts to mentors at this time, you will need to be able to explain the concepts and principles in your own words.
2. Walk through the trainer guide below and practice the script several times to ensure you are solid on delivery.
3. Print the PowerPoint in Notes view; your script and actions are located there (Module 2 – Impact of Stress and Trauma on Children PPT). Note: If you are not using an LCD projector, print the script below and use a flip chart to illustrate the topics as presented in the PowerPoint.
4. Print handouts:
  - Handout 2A: Impact of Stress and Trauma on Children
  - Handout 2B: Mentor Assessment

#### Facilitator Tips

1. Have the LCD projector and computer synchronized.
  - If you are not using an LCD projector, print the script below and use a flip chart to illustrate the topics as presented in the PowerPoint.
2. Have the PowerPoint presentation loaded and in full screen mode.
3. Have the handouts ready.
4. Have pens or pencils ready.

#### Supplies Checklist

- Laptop (power cord recommended)
- LCD projector
- Chart paper, easel and markers
- Handouts
- Pens and pencils

#### Handouts and Materials

- For mentors:
  - Module 2 PowerPoint presentation (do not include script notes)
  - Handout 2A: Impact of Stress and Trauma on Children
  - Handout 2B: Mentor Assessment
- For trainer: Module 2 PowerPoint presentation with script notes

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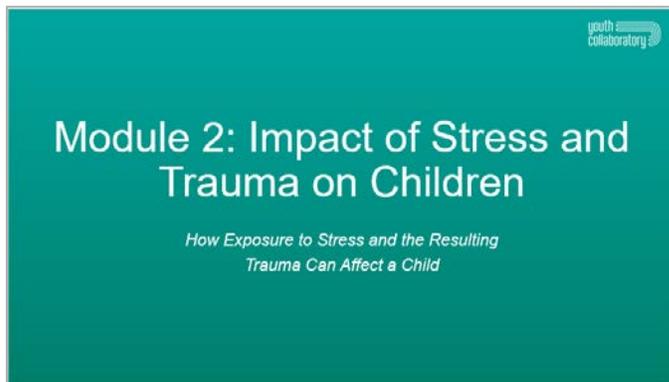
### Sample Agenda

Agenda	Time
Welcome and Introduction (self, mentors, topic)	5 minutes
Impacts of Stress, Trauma, and Grief	8 minutes
Case Study Discussions: Ben & Jon	10 minutes
Resources	3 minutes
Mandated Reporting	2 minutes
Wrap Up and Assessment	2 minutes

**Module 2 Content Total: 30 minutes**

### Trainer Guide – Pre-Match Mentor Training

**NOTES:** The following information includes directions on what you will say and do within the context of the PowerPoint presentation. This allows you to easily know what slide should be visible and corresponds to the script and activity you will be doing with the mentors. Be sure you print the PowerPoint in Notes view so you have your script. Instructions for the Activities are integrated into the power point notes. Be sure you have printed the PowerPoint (without notes) for the mentors and have them available for those that would like to have them.



#### Slide 1

##### Intention:

- Review what was learned in Module 1
- Introduce Module 2

##### Trainer Instructions:

- Ideally, this will be a continuation of the training and your mentors will be returning from a 5 minute break after participating in Module One: The Impact of Incarceration.
- If beginning with Module 2, be sure to welcome everyone

and thank them for coming to the training. Check in that all those participating have already had Module 1 since this will assist them in understanding the content you will present today.

- There is some heavy content in this module that could be daunting. Be sensitive to your language and how you present some of the situations. We do not want to convey any lack of caring or responsibility on the part of the family in discussing the challenges and trauma. Rather, we want to make sure that mentors feel comfortable talking with match support and understand that you have links to resources that can help the mentee, and their family.

#### Key Content:

- Stress and trauma can have a profound impact on children
- Exposure to stress and trauma can delay or stall typical childhood development
- Mentors should be able to understand the impact of stress/trauma and what resources are available to help cope with them

#### Suggestion Script (2 minutes)

In Module One we learned about the how children and families who have a parent that is incarcerated may be faced with a myriad of stressors and other realities that make life very challenging. We learned how these circumstances

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can affect a child and how mentors can help. We also spent some time talking about trauma.

In Module 2 we are going to take a closer look at how exposure to stress and the resulting trauma can affect a child and at times even delay or stall their progression through the stages of normal child development.



**You will learn:**

- Learn about trauma, stress and grief, and the ways that they may be expressed by a child experiencing them.
- Understand how your match support can help families coping with stress and trauma.
- Understand how mentors can help by being sensitive and understanding with the behaviors and emotions that children might exhibit.

### Slide 2

#### Intention:

- Review goals of Module 2

#### Training Instructions:

- In this module you will relate the information about incarceration from Module 1 to the impact it can have on youth: signs and symptoms of trauma, stress, grief, and loss.
- As program staff working with these youth, you will need to support them by identifying their needs, strategizing and

coaching mentors to work with them most effectively, and assist the youth and their families as falls within your defined boundaries.

#### Key Content:

- Stress, trauma, and grief may be feelings that children with an incarcerated parent experience.
- Certain behaviors may present themselves in response to the trauma children experience.
- Mentors should understand that trauma may be the root of behaviors they see in their mentee. The more you know, the better you can help.
- Match support will be available to provide additional support for the mentor and mentee when trauma, stress, or grief are present.

#### Suggested Script (5 minutes)

After completing this module, you will be able to:

- Learn about trauma, stress, and grief, and the ways that they may be expressed by a child experiencing them.
- Understand how your match support can help families coping with stress and trauma.
- Understand how mentors can help by being sensitive and understanding with the behaviors and emotions that children might exhibit.

As mentors, this information is important for two primary reasons. First, you may observe behaviors with your mentee that seem immature or unusual. By understanding how trauma can be at the root of these behaviors, you will be in a better position to help them by caring about them, setting boundaries, and providing supportive guidance. The other reason it is important is so you will recognize situations that should be shared with your match support in case additional services are needed.

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There is strong evidence that a child who witnesses the arrest of a parent will experience extreme stress that may have lasting implications for that child's emotional health and well-being. This level of stress continues during the period of parental incarceration and is compounded by:

- The disruption in caregiving relationships
- Economic and residential instability
- Social stigma and pressure to keep the parental incarceration "secret"

### Slide 3

#### Intention:

- Understand how parental incarceration can impact youth development: mentally, emotionally, and physically

#### Trainer Instructions:

- This will build on what was shared in Module one – reference back to the concept of developmental relationships to remind mentors of what they can do.
- Begin this slide by talking about resilience in order to focus on where we're going with this rather than the deficit aspect.

#### Key Content:

- Resilience - sometimes considered the ability to bounce back from stressful situations – is an important skill that we want mentees to have, and that you will learn more about fostering.
- Incarceration causes disruptions in the caregiving relationship.
- There is often economic and residential instability as a result of incarcerations.
- Many face a social stigma based on the incarceration and desire to keep the incarceration "secret"; or may brag about the incarceration.
- Each situation is unique and each child will respond to parental incarceration differently
- Qualities that foster resilience can offset the negative impact of stress and trauma

#### Suggested Script (3 minutes)

We're going to look at how incarceration affects youth mentally, emotionally, and physically so that you can understand where your mentee may be coming from and provide help as appropriate. As we begin to discuss this, I want to make sure we also touch on resilience. **Ask:** When you hear the word resilience, what do you think? How do you define resiliency? (*Listen and acknowledge responses*). Right - it is sometimes considered the ability to bounce back from stressful situations – which is an important skill that we want mentees to have. In our next module you will learn more about how to support your mentee in building resilience. For this module, remember that youth come with strengths that can buffer them from the negative impacts associated with increased stress, while others may need support to build those buffers. And that not all youth respond the same to these stresses – though we all need to be aware as the more you know, the better prepared you will be to respond.

Unfortunately, children and youth who have experienced the trauma of losing a parent to imprisonment tend to grow up experiencing increased stress which can negatively impact how they grow and develop, both emotionally and behaviorally. This extreme stress is further compounded by the disruption in caregiving relationships, economic and residential instability, social stigma, and pressure to keep the parental incarceration a secret. Each of these children and youth, however, are of course individuals with a unique situation going on and so will react differently than others.

**Ask:** Thinking about what we've learned so far, how do you think a youth who is experiencing stress due to the trauma of incarceration may act? How might you see evidence of stress and trauma in their developmental behaviors? *Allow group to share a few ideas, such as may regress or act adult, temper tantrums.*

Let's talk more about that.

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### Stress & Trauma: What You Might See

Emotional:	Developmental:	Physical:	Behavioral:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of interest in activities</li> <li>• Problems concentrating</li> <li>• Irritability and anger</li> <li>• Flashbacks of the event which interrupt daily activity</li> <li>• Play-acting the event or repeating behavior that reminds them of the trauma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May behave in ways that seems "childish" for their age</li> <li>• Asks to do things that seem young for them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headaches and stomach aches</li> <li>• Bed wetting or "accidents" that might be more emotional than physical in their cause</li> <li>• Trouble sleeping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat emotional state</li> <li>• Hyper vigilance: highly sensitive alertness</li> <li>• Sleep problems and nightmares</li> <li>• Exaggerated startle response and panic</li> <li>• Sudden and extreme emotional reactions</li> <li>• Incorporating the trauma into story-telling</li> </ul>

### Slide 4

#### Intention:

Use case study to understand how stress and trauma may present themselves

#### Trainer Instructions:

For this slide, you will focus on how stress and trauma affects children, not necessarily on the individual points. There is no need to read out reach bullet point.

You will do be using Handout 2D: Impact of Stress & Trauma on Children to apply the concept to individual case studies.

First review content, and then you will apply to case studies. You will do "Ben" as a group and then have them do "Jon" in small groups. Ask a volunteer to read "Ben" case study out loud and ask the group about their impressions about Ben. Make sure they have the gist of the signs of stress and can relate that Ben is acting younger than his age, that talking with match support would be a good idea so they can get some suggestions but also so they can follow-up with the family if indicated.

Invite them to go on and do Jon on their own. Have them form small groups (3-4) or if sitting at tables already with those at their table. Tell them you will give them a few minutes to do this. Have them read the case study on Jon and ask for their impressions as to how Jon may be demonstrating signs that he is experiencing stress and trauma.

Bring group together again and ask them to share what signs they discussed. After a few signs are shared, ask what a mentor could do to support Jon.

Encourage mentors to come up with ways to express caring and provide support as one would in a developmental relationship. Emphasize that this would be a situation that a mentor would want to discuss with match support. Ask them why. Match support could suggest other supportive services for Jon and his family.

#### Key Content:

- Emotional response to stress may include: lack of interest, trouble concentrating, irritability, flashbacks, and concerns about death
- Developmental response to stress may include: immature behavior and acting younger than their actual age
- Physical response to stress may include: headaches/stomachaches, bedwetting accidents (involuntary/urination/defecation), poor hygiene
- Behavioral response to stress may include: hyper vigilance, sleep problems, exaggerated responses and panic, sudden/extreme emotional reactions
- Mentors should remember the qualities of a developmental relationship
- Mentors and match support can help youth develop more appropriate responses to stress and trauma
- Match support is there to help mentor and family with suggestions

#### Suggested Script (5-10 minutes)

*Distribute Handout 2A: Impact of Stress & Trauma on Children*

On the screen and in your handout, you see some pretty common ways that youth who are experiencing the negative impact of stress and trauma may act. Stress and trauma will be experienced by children and youth differently and

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sometimes the signs are subtle and easy to miss. Other times they are quite apparent and even daunting. These signs can emerge emotionally through problems concentrating or unusual responses to situations, sometimes they may act in ways that seem much younger because they are “stuck” at the age when the trauma occurred. Some physical signs can be noted with patterns of headaches or trouble sleeping – bedwetting can be another way. Behaviors that could be noted are extremely low emotional response or what is called a “flat affect” or easily startled in an extreme manner. Often you will note more than one of these.

Some might say that these youth need supportive relationships and other protective factors to develop resiliency and help them cope with these situations. They may need counseling or medical care. That is where match support can help. As a mentor, your role is to be that caring adult and to share concerns with match support. Match support can gather more information and determine if additional support services could be helpful.

Let’s look at a case study. **Ask:** Will someone read about Ben for us please? *Have person read Ben’s case study.* What are your impressions about Ben? What signs of stress is he demonstrating? Pause for responses. Have you ever seen a picture of an iceberg? There is a small portion of it visible above the water but where is the bulk of that iceberg? Often behaviors are telling us more than we actually can see and hear. If this is just a one time thing, probably just a bad day, but if you are noticing a pattern, talking with match support would be a good idea. They can give you some suggestions and insights to help you use your developmental relationship as a mentor to make a difference. Match support will also be listening for any concerns that they will want to follow-up on with the family if indicated.

Why don’t you to take a few minutes to try doing Jon on your own and we’ll discuss. *Break into pairs or small groups and give 3 to 5 minutes for discussion.*

Then **Ask:** Do you see anything that concerns you? *Listen for responses, which may include poor grades, losing ground in school, low self-esteem, lacks positive view of his future, really nervous and anxious.*

**Ask:** What might you do if you were Jon’s mentor? *Talk to match support, ask Jon about things he likes to do, respect Jon’s feelings. Note: be ready for mentors to want to solve his problems and cross boundaries – this is when you emphasize the role of match support and the need to respect the choice of the family in how to address the situation.*

**Ask:** In what ways might match support be helpful?

One thing to remember – you might not see some of these symptoms directly, rather a parent or caregiver may share a concern or observation with you. You can still take that information to your match support, as they can help determine if more intervention and support may be needed.

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### Resources Might be Needed

Mental and physical health	Spiritual/Church	Transportation
Schools	Food assistance	Financial assistance
Housing assistance		Child care

### Slide 5

#### Intention:

Identify types of resources that are available to youth and their families

#### Trainer Instructions:

- This slide allows mentors to understand the extent of resources that families can tap. Be sure to reference the list of resource examples on the handout.

#### Key Content:

- There are numerous types of supports that are available to families impacted by incarceration
- Match support can help mentors identify the right types of support for their mentee
- Mentors should not try to connect with resources on their own - mentors should discuss them with their match support

#### Suggested Script (3 minutes)

As a mentor, you should know that your match support team has an inventory of people, organizations, and places that they can suggest to families if needed. Match support staff are professionally trained to recognize situations that require additional support and have developed relationships with other service providers in our community to make referrals more comfortable for the families. In Jon's example, sharing your observations and concerns with match support is really helpful so they can follow up with the family. For example, match support would want to be sure that his parent/caregiver is aware of the symptoms of anxiety he is exhibiting and the trouble he is having with school. They can discuss these concerns with the parent/caretaker, provide support, and share suggestions as well as contact information about resources to help if needed.

Are there any other resources not listed here that you feel might be helpful?

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### Mandated Reporting

**Reminder:**  
You must report any disclosure of abuse or suspicion of child abuse and/or neglect.

Be sure to follow the procedures shared with you by the match support specialist.

### Slide 6

#### Intention:

Review requirements for mandated reporting

#### Trainer Instructions:

- Mandated reporting laws vary by state. In some states, volunteers are mandated reporters. This content was covered in your standard orientation training and should be referred to again within this conversation.
- Regardless of your state's laws, it's important to emphasize that match support is there to help them figure out what they might be seeing.

- Reiterate your program policy that was shared with mentor in your standard orientation training.

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### Key Content:

- Mentors are mandated reporters in some states
- All cases of potential neglect or abuse, or if concern of harm to self, must be reported
- Match support can help mentors understand when a situation requires reporting and the process for doing so

### Suggested Script (2 minutes)

The last area we want to talk about today is to remind you that as a mentor of a youth, though rare, you may see evidence of abuse or neglect that will need to be reported to authorities. Or you may have a real concern that your mentee might harm herself. All members of our program staff are considered ‘mandated reporters’ and are required by law to report any suspicions of abuse or neglect. *(If applies, note that as volunteers, they too fall under this umbrella).* Since we discussed this during your orientation, we won’t go into detail. *Summarize key points of your program’s policy.* We are reminding you about it because sadly, many children who have experienced trauma are at higher risk of victimization.

**Ask:** Do you have any concerns or questions?

### Wrap Up

- What did we learn?





### Slide 7

#### Intention:

Conclude the training and prepare for the next training

#### Trainer Instructions:

- As you thank the mentors for their participation, pass out the brief assessment (Handout 2E).
- Ask mentors to complete the brief assessment so your program will know if the training was effective.
- Instruct mentors on options for training in Modules 3 and 4 (after break or time/date/location)

### Key Content:

- Reflect on what mentors have learned in the first half of their pre-match trainings
- Hand out mentor assessment
- Invite mentors to next training on Module 3

### Suggested Script (2 minutes)

So let’s take a few minutes to share some insights you gained today. What is one thing you learned that will be helpful to you as a mentor?

In Modules 1 and 2, we learned about the harsh realities that might be facing the children you will be mentoring and how you, as mentors, can help simply by forming a caring relationship and by being there consistently. In Modules 3 and 4 we are going to learn more about how you can do that. Before you leave, please take a few minutes to complete this brief assessment so we will know if our training was effective.