

**Building Trauma-Informed Clinical Teams
A Train-the-Trainer Session at the AAP-CA2 Symposium**

CLINICAL PEARLS

Clinical Pearl #1: Trauma-informed care is relational health care.

Childhood trauma and adversity are widespread and can affect physical, emotional, and developmental health, but their impact can be mitigated with trauma-informed care. Trauma-informed care is fundamentally relational health care, or the ability to form safe, stable and nurturing relationships. Pediatric clinical teams can support the caregiver-child relationship, the context in which there can be recovery from trauma and the restoration of resilience.

Reference: Forkey H, Szilagyi M, Kelly ET, Duffee J; COUNCIL ON FOSTER CARE, ADOPTION, AND KINSHIP CARE, COUNCIL ON COMMUNITY PEDIATRICS, COUNCIL ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, COMMITTEE ON PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH. Trauma-Informed Care. *Pediatrics*. 2021;148(2):e2021052580. doi:10.1542/peds.2021-052580

Clinical Pearl #2: The affiliate response is modulated by oxytocin and instills a sense of safety and wellbeing.

Trauma-informed care begins with engaging patients and families with empathy that builds trust, promotes safety, and supports healing. The affiliate (“tend and befriend”) response helps patients shift from a reactive (“flight-fight-or-freeze”) stress state to a more regulated, relational one. Small actions like offering choices and validating concerns promote a sense of safety and control.

Reference: Olf M, Frijling JL, Kubzansky LD, et al. The role of oxytocin in social bonding, stress regulation and mental health: an update on the moderating effects of context and interindividual differences. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*. 2013;38(9):1883–1894

Clinical Pearl #3: Healthcare teams’ wellbeing and resilience are important in trauma-informed care.

A trauma-informed approach must include attention to the health and wellbeing of health care teams. Unaddressed burnout, moral injury, and administrative harm among clinical teams can compromise care quality and safety. Trauma-informed care involves not just patient-facing changes but system-level commitments to reflective supervision, peer support, and responsive leadership.

Reference: National Child Traumatic Stress Network. “Creating Trauma-Informed Systems.” <https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care/creating-trauma-informed-systems>