



Safety & Healing Through Positive Experiences

*Safe Children
Stronger Communities
Brighter Tomorrows* ♥

Building connection
before children need to ask for help

Developed and Presented by
Jessie Adamson, MS and Cassey Chang, LCSW

*Stronger
Brighter
Safer
Together* ♥

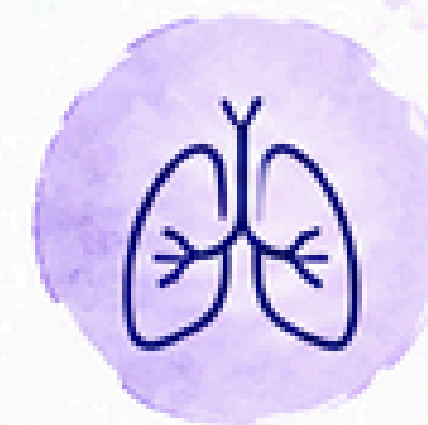


tykes & teens
CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

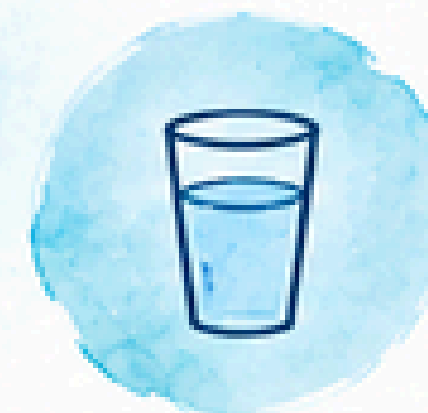
Trauma Warning

This presentation may include references to trauma and maltreatment.

Please take care of yourself.
Use the strategies on this slide to support your well-being, and step away if needed.



Take a deep breath



Get some water



Take a short break or a walk



Do what you need to feel centered

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Your well-being matters ♥

Scan the QR Code for a quick resource guide

Tools, handouts, and helpful links
from today's session.

*Safe Children
Stronger Communities
Brighter Tomorrows* ♥

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Brighter
Safer
Together* ♥

GFNF Sign-In Sheet 2026



Scan here! ♥

Mindfulness Practice

A Moment Just for You



Let's take a few breaths and connect to the present moment.

1



Breathe In

Slowly through
your nose
(4 counts).

2



Hold

Pause
(4 counts).

3



Breathe Out

Slowly through
your mouth
(6 counts).

4



Repeat

3–5 times,
or as many as
you need.

You are here. You are enough. ♥

*Take a breath.
You matter. ♥*

*A
Calmer You
Creates a
Brighter
Tomorrow*



Self-Compassion Practice

Talk to Yourself Like Someone You Care About

*You
Matter
Here* ♥

1



NOTICE

"This is hard
right now."
Name the feeling
without judgment.

2



SHIFT PERSPECTIVE

What would you say
to someone you love?

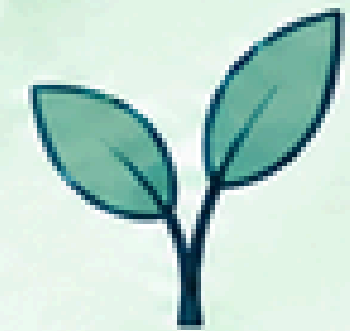
3



OFFER KINDNESS

Say those same
words to yourself.

4



CHOOSE WHAT YOU NEED

Breathe • Move
Rest • Connect



 **tykes&teens**
CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

You deserve the compassion you give others. ♥

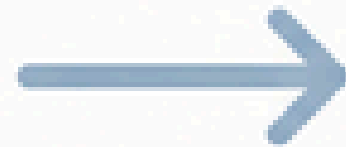
Today We'll Cover Three Sections

We'll move through a pathway of support, from preparation to response, so you feel confident and equipped.



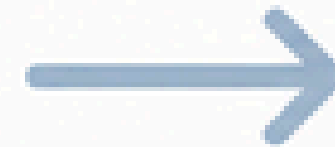
BEFORE

Build capacity and set the foundation.



DURING

Use trauma-informed approaches in the moment.



WHEN NEEDED

Recognize and respond when additional support is needed.

BEFORE:

Build safety before it's needed.

Safe
Children
Stronger
Futures
♡



CONNECT

Know
the child.



LISTEN

Make everyday
sharing safe.



RESPECT

Honor voice
and boundaries.



SHOW UP

Be consistent
and predictable.

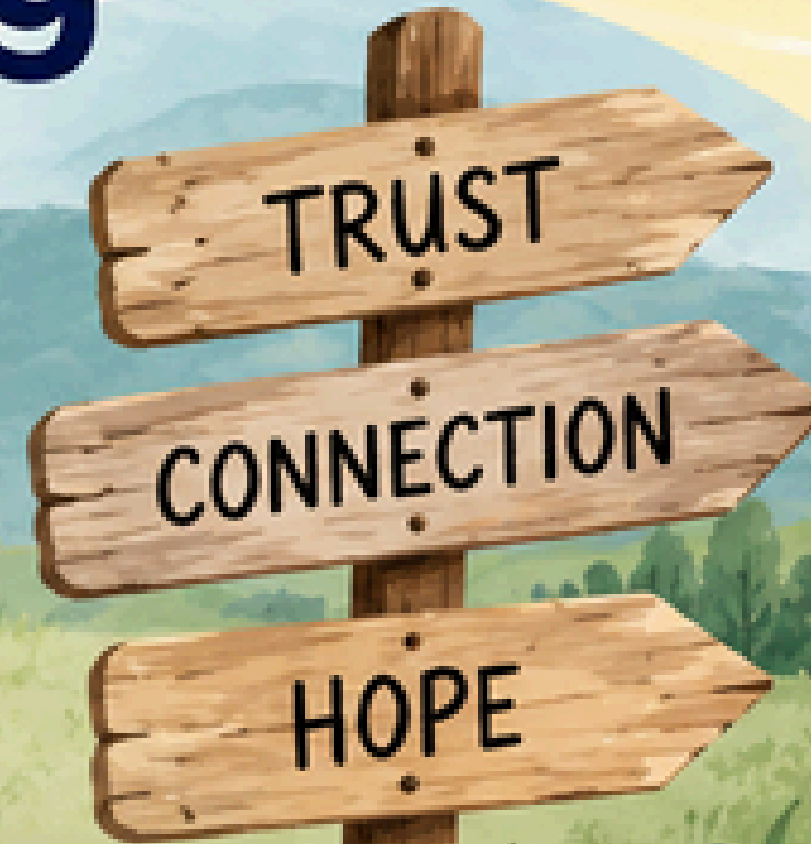
When children experience us as safe in everyday moments, they know where to turn when something doesn't feel safe.



Build the safe relationship **BEFORE** there's something difficult to tell.

PREVENT. PROTECT. EMPOWER.

Safe
Children
Stronger
Futures



STRONG
RELATIONSHIPS
CREATE
SAFER
TOMORROWS



Where do children exist

IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Safe
Children
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Futures
♡

1

Use the **paper**
at your table.



2

Write **ONE** place children
spend time on **EACH** piece
of paper.



3

Think beyond traditional
child-serving settings.



One place. One paper.

Examples:

Playgrounds

Classrooms

Churches

Sports
fields

Libraries

After-school
programs

Community
events

Parks

Neighborhoods
♡

More
places.
Brighter
tomorrows.
♡

CHILDREN EXIST IN MORE PLACES THAN WE MIGHT THINK —
AND EVERY PLACE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE SAFETY, CONNECTION, AND BELONGING.

Time to move!
♡

Sort the Paper

Where Do Children Feel Safe to Speak Up?

Safe
Children
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Futures
♡

- 1 Take the **paper** you wrote at your seat.
- 2 With a friend at your seat, create **two piles**.
- 3 If you're not sure, go with your **best understanding**.

Your perspective
matters!
♡



LISTEN
SUPPORT
BELONG
ADVOCATE
BELIEVE
♡

Every place a child exists is an opportunity to create safety, connection, and belonging. ♡

Safe
Children
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Futures



Teach kids how to **Speak up**

in a world that tells them
to be quiet.

Their
voice
matters.



Support
Listen
Believe
Include
Empower



Safe
Children
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Futures
♡

Positive Experiences

AS PREVENTION

Every
positive
interaction
matters.
♡

PCEs – Positive Childhood Experiences

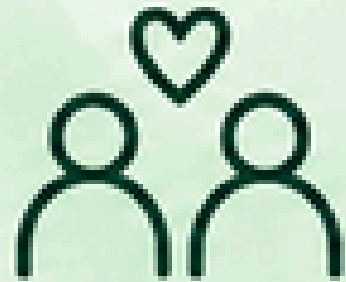
help build the relationships, belonging, and support children can draw on when something feels wrong.

Children should routinely experience adults who are:



LISTEN

Make space
for their voice.



CONNECT

Show genuine
interest and care.



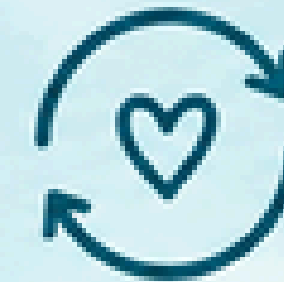
RESPECT

Honor boundaries
and “no.”



REGULATE

Respond calmly
and predictably.



REPAIR

Apologize and
reconnect
after conflict.



SHOW UP

Remain available
and consistent.

Positive experiences today can build the trust children may need tomorrow. ♡

Safety is built in ordinary moments.

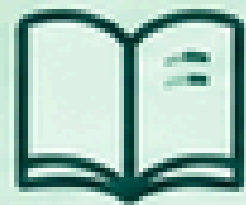


Small moments.
Big impact.
♡

A child learns whether you're safe when they:



spill
something



get an
answer wrong



become
dysregulated

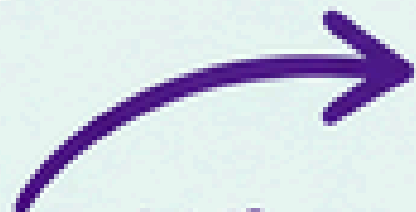


say
"no"



admit
a mistake

Those small interactions
become data.



The child is learning:

What happens when I tell this adult
something they don't want to hear?

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Trust Is Built Before It's Needed



I listen to you.



Your feelings matter.



You aren't punished for telling the truth.



Your boundaries matter.



You can talk to me about uncomfortable things.



I can handle difficult information.



I will help you figure out what happens next.

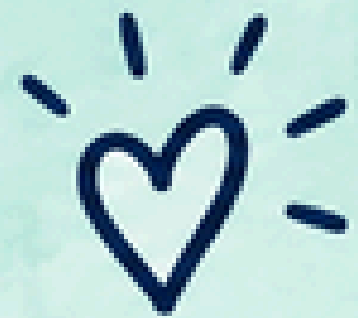
...then when something concerning happens,
the child isn't approaching a completely untested adult.

People
Belong
Here
♡

KINDER
SAFER
BRIGHTER
STRONGER
TOGETHER
♡

Trust
grows in
everyday
moments.
♡

YOU MATTER



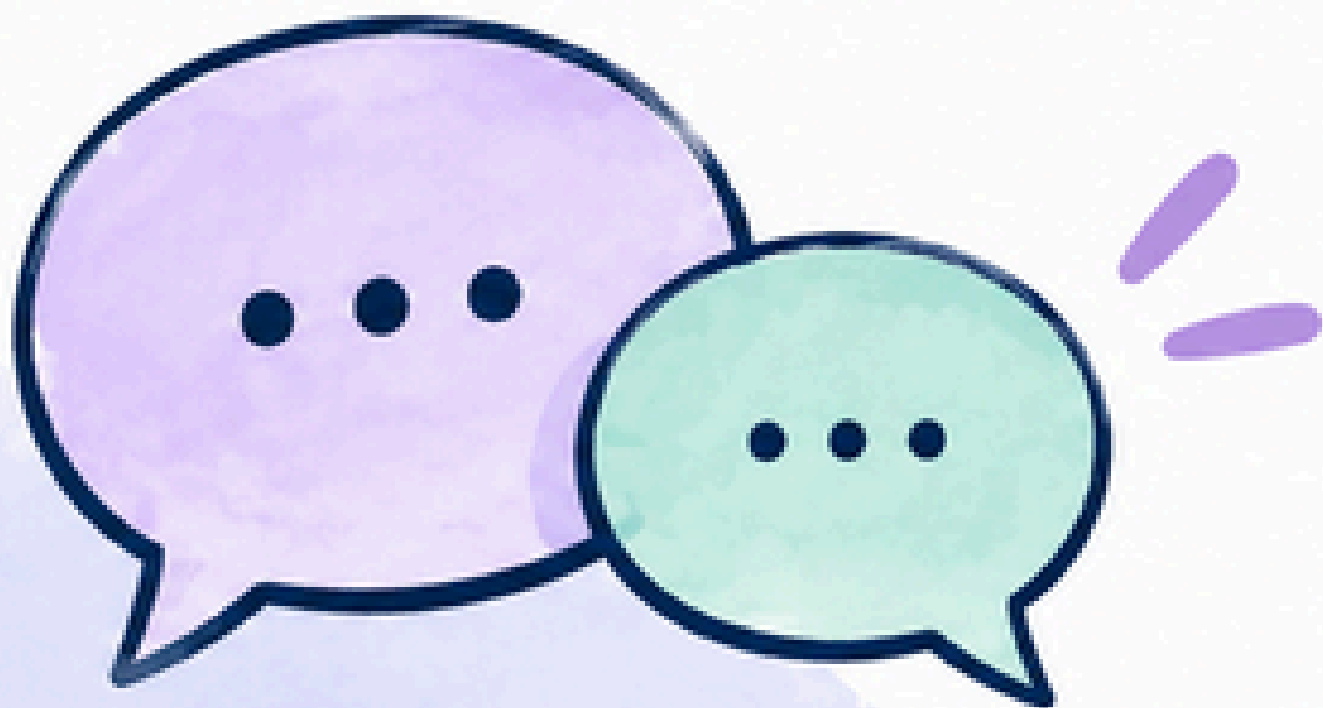
Their
voice
matters.

DURING:

Safe
Children
Stronger
Futures



**Help children recognize and
communicate discomfort**



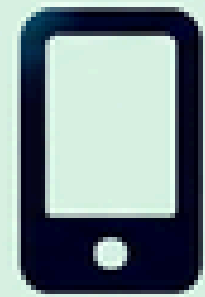


**Children don't need
to label it as abuse
to talk about it.**



**A safe adult doesn't
need them to say
“I'm being hurt.”**

When children feel safe, they share the small stuff that could lead to significant trauma.



“He keeps
texting me.”



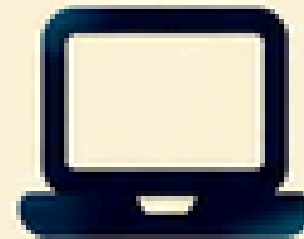
“She told me
not to tell
Mom.”



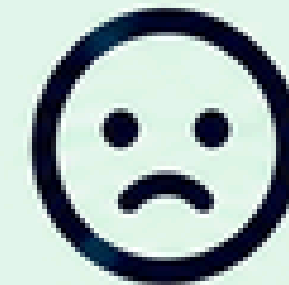
“Coach gives
me a weird
feeling.”



“He comments
on my body.”



“Someone online
wants to meet me.”



“I don’t want
to hug him.”



*Small conversations
today can prevent big harm
tomorrow.*

Safe
Children
Stronger
Futures
♡

Connection
Happens
Everyday
♡

Secrets vs. Happy Surprises

BOTH KEEP INFORMATION HIDDEN — BUT THEY'RE DIFFERENT.

Safe
Children
Stronger
Futures
♡



Secrets



Feel uncomfortable



Stay hidden



May involve pressure
or threats



Keep you from talking
to safe adults

"She told me not to tell Mom."

VS.

When in
doubt...
**TALK
ABOUT IT.**



Happy Surprises



Are temporary



Bring joy



Feel fun and exciting



Can be talked about later

*"Don't tell Dad about his
birthday present!"*

You can always tell a safe adult.





Let them know:

Safe
Children
Stronger
Futures
♡

If something feels confusing,
uncomfortable, scary, or different
— you can tell me.



Your
voice
matters.
♡



♡ This is a developmentally appropriate
way to prevent harm.





**How we react to the
small stuff
is how kids predict
we will react to the *big stuff*! :-)**



**How safe they feel
is greater than how safe
they are told they are.**

**It's how we show up
that matters. ♡**

Safe
Children
Stronger
Futures



Spaces We Can Show Up With Kids

(Without It Feeling Forced)

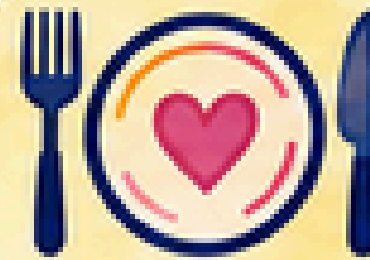
IT'S EVERYDAY MOMENTS THAT BUILD CONNECTION.

Safe Children
Stronger Futures
♡



Car Rides

Talk. Listen.



Meals & Snacks

Be together.



Errands

Everyday time matters.



Outside Together

Move. Explore.



Bedtime

Calm. Connect.



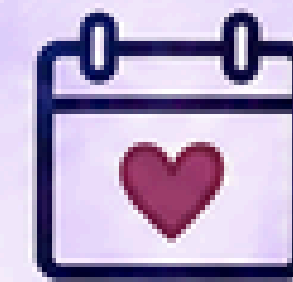
Daily Routines

Side by side.



Shared Interests

Do what they enjoy.



Transitions

Be there.



Just Being Together

Your presence matters.

Connection lives in the everyday. ♡

Real Moments
Real Change
♡

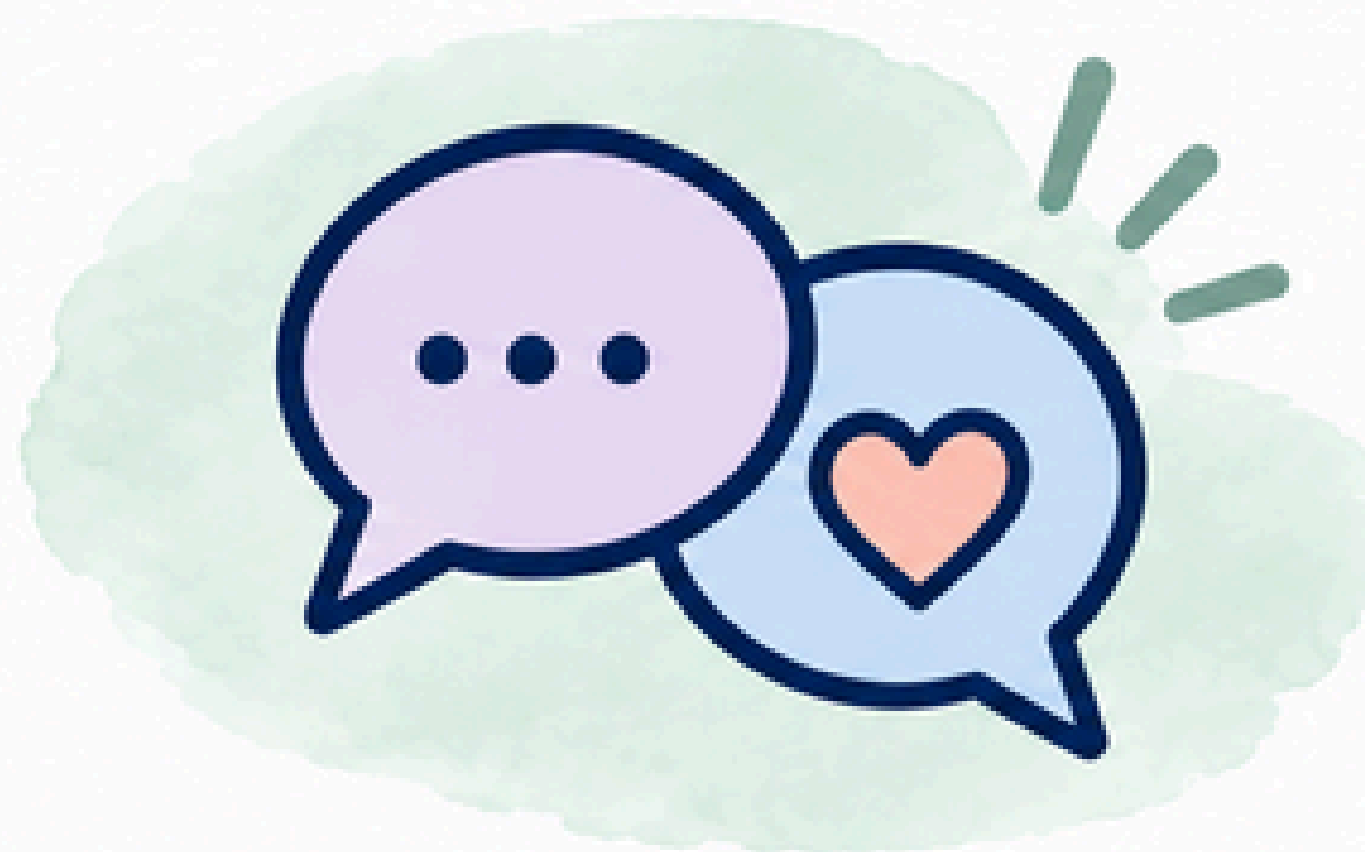
Small Moments

Big Impact

Brighter Tomorrows

WHEN NEEDED:

**Make disclosure an extension
of an existing relationship**





The Safe to Share Framework

Children Speak Up When They Experience:

S.A.F.E.

Brave
Conversations
Brighter
Tomorrows
♡

People.
Connection.
Change.
♡

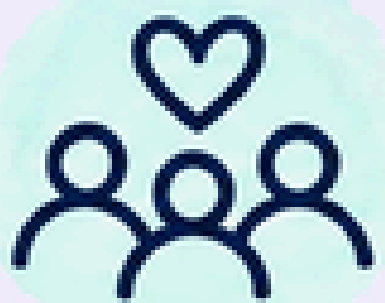
Safe Children
Stronger Futures ♡

S.A.F.E.

Children speak up when they experience:

S =  **Safety**

A =  **Adults Who Listen**

F =  **Felt Belonging**

E =  **Empowerment**

Brave
Conversations
Brighter
Tomorrows
♡

Safe
Children
Stronger
Futures
♡



S = Safety

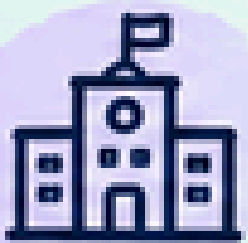
Safer
Children
Stronger
Futures
♡

Children need:



- Physical safety
- Emotional safety
- Psychological safety

Practical Strategies



In Youth-Serving Organizations

- Predictable routines
- Consistent expectations
- Calm responses to mistakes
- Private opportunities to talk



In Homes

- Daily check-ins
- Emotion coaching
- Conflict without humiliation
- Repair after disagreements

Small
Moments.
Big Impact.
♡



A = Adults Who Listen

Listening
builds
safety.
♡



Research and experience consistently show that trusted adults play a significant protective role.

What Trusted Adults Do

- Stay curious
- Listen more than they talk
- Avoid interrogation
- Validate emotions
- Remain calm

Practical Language



Instead of:

“What exactly happened?”



Try:

“I’m glad you’re talking to me.”

“Tell me more about that.”

“Thank you for trusting me.”

Small
moments.
Big impact.
♡



F = Felt Belonging

Belonging
builds
protection.
♡

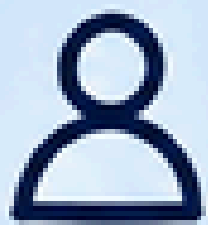
Why Belonging Matters



Children who feel isolated are more vulnerable to:

- Grooming
- Exploitation
- Trafficking
- Manipulation

Practical Goal



Move from:

“Every child has
a trusted adult.”



to:

“Every child has
a trusted network.”

Connection
matters.
♡

E = Empowerment

Empowerment
builds
protection.
♡

Empowerment is Abuse Prevention



Children who understand:

- boundaries
- consent
- body autonomy
- help-seeking

are more likely to recognize concerns earlier.

Teach children:



- They can ask questions.
- They can say no when appropriate.
- They can report uncomfortable behavior.
- They will not get in trouble for speaking up.

Your voice
matters.
♡



“

The goal is not simply
to teach children how to
report abuse.

The goal is to build homes,
agencies, schools, and
communities where children
never have to wonder
whether it is
safe to speak up.

”

Safe
spaces
matter.
♡

Brighter
Stronger
Kinder
Together
♡

SAFE
PEOPLE
KINDER
COMMUNITIES
BRIGHTER
TOMORROWS
♡

Every
voice
matters.
♡



Creating a *Speak-Up Culture*

Four Culture-Building Questions

1



Do children have
regular opportunities
to share concerns?

2



Are adults
approachable?

3



Do we normalize
conversations
about safety?

4



Do children believe
they will be
protected?

Safe
voices
matter.
♡

Stronger
Brighter
Kinder
Together
♡

SAFE
SPACES
BRIGHTER
FUTURES
♡

Connection
builds
trust.
♡



Important Support Contacts

Know the numbers. Share the numbers. Lives and safety matter.



Florida Abuse Hotline

1-800-962-2873

Report suspected child abuse, neglect, or abandonment, and abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults in Florida.



Mobile Crisis Response

New Horizons

Dial 211
24/7

Direct Mobile Response Team:

772-468-3909

24/7 crisis support for mental health, substance use, and behavioral emergencies in St. Lucie County.



988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

988

Call or text 988, 24/7, for free and confidential support for anyone in emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, or a mental health crisis.



Port St. Lucie Police Department

Non-Emergency /
Request a Wellness Check

772-871-5000

Call for non-emergency police assistance or to request a wellness check in Port St. Lucie.



Fort Pierce Police Department

Non-Emergency /
Request a Wellness Check

772-467-6800

Call for non-emergency police assistance or to request a wellness check in Fort Pierce.

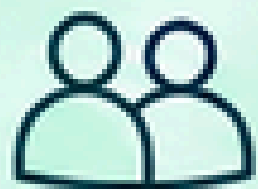
Let's Reflect

Children often begin **building trust** long before they need to use it.

How can you intentionally create the conditions that help children **feel safe enough** to share when something isn't right?



Build Trust



Be Approachable



Create Safety



Listen Well

Safe relationships matter. 

Brighter People
Brighter Futures 

Small steps.
Big change. 



Self-Compassion

Compassion
matters.
♡



May we leave today with more **awareness** than judgment, more **curiosity** than criticism, and more **commitment** than perfection.



Because **every child** deserves a safe adult, and **every helping professional** deserves the compassion needed to keep becoming one.

Before returning to your work, I invite you to consider **one act of care** you will offer yourself in the next 24 hours.



Thank You

Thank you for being part
of this learning.



Your care, curiosity, and commitment
help create safer spaces
for children.

Jessie & Cassey ♥

LEARN ♥ REFLECT ♥ SUPPORT ♥ STRONGER TOGETHER

Same
brighter
tomorrows
for children.
♥

Scan Here



RESOURCES ♥ HANDOUTS ♥ MORE

YOU
MAKE A
POSITIVE
DIFFERENCE
♥



Small
People
Big
Possibilities
♥