

Trauma-Responsive Practice for Child Welfare Professionals

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AdoptUSKids Consultant

Before we begin



This webinar will be recorded and shared with you.



Submit your questions via Q & A. Engage with panelists and attendees using the chat feature.



Please complete our survey after the webinar.

Our mission



Raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children in the public child welfare system



Assist US states, territories, and tribes to recruit, engage, develop and support foster and adoptive families

Goals for this webinar

1

Describe the difference between trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practice.

2

Describe opportunities for leaders to develop and sustain a trauma-responsive workforce.

3

Define 3 core concepts staff need to know to become trauma-responsive.

4

Provide 3 concrete strategies for all staff to become more trauma-responsive in their work.

Type into chat:

What is your job or role in child welfare?

What are you hoping to get out of today's webinar?

What's the difference?

“Trauma-informed” versus “trauma-responsive”



What needs to change?

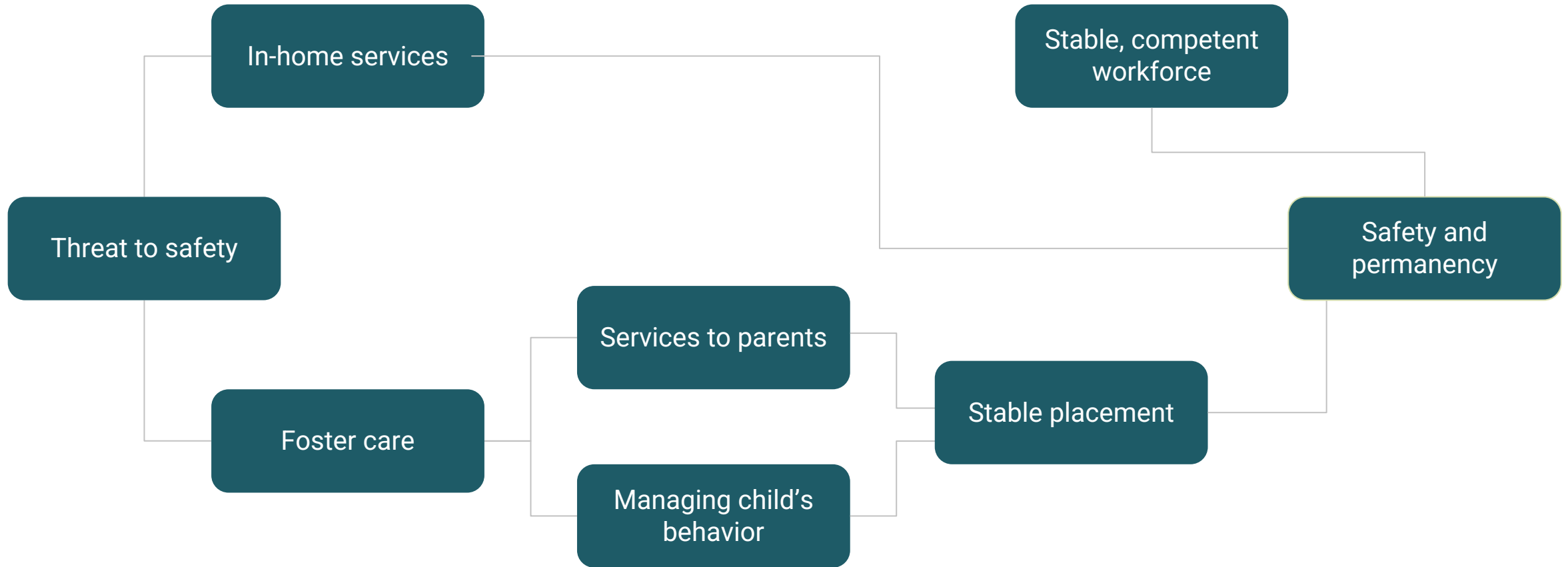
Developing a trauma-responsive system takes vision, leadership, and a plan for action.



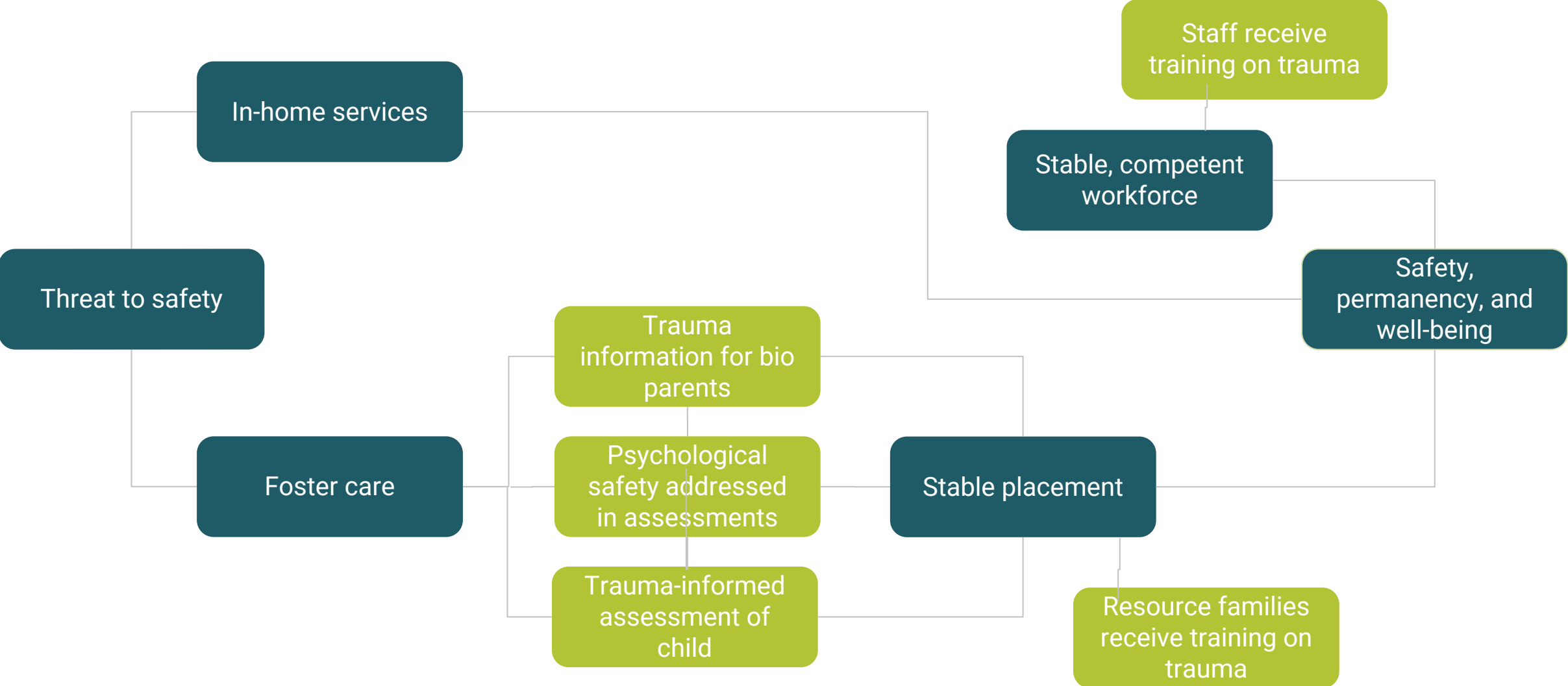
Overarching vision example

To create a community where all children and families are nurtured, honored and afforded the opportunity to heal from trauma while achieving their own unique potential by building and sustaining a trauma-informed system of services for all children, youth, their families and those who work with them.

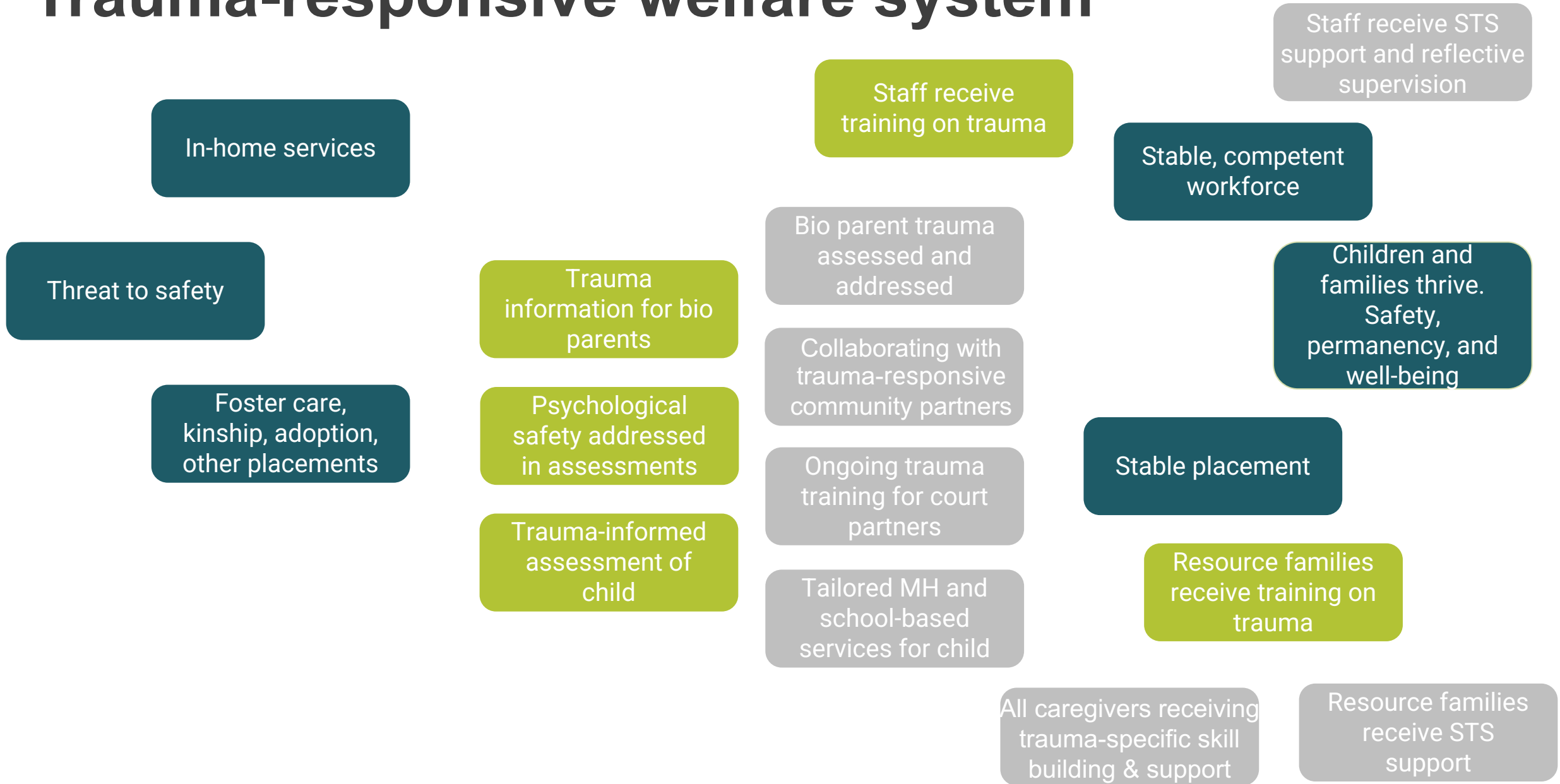
Typical child welfare system



Trauma-informed welfare system



Trauma-responsive welfare system



Leadership

Leaders do not need to know all the answers. They do need to ask the right questions.

Heifetz & Laurie

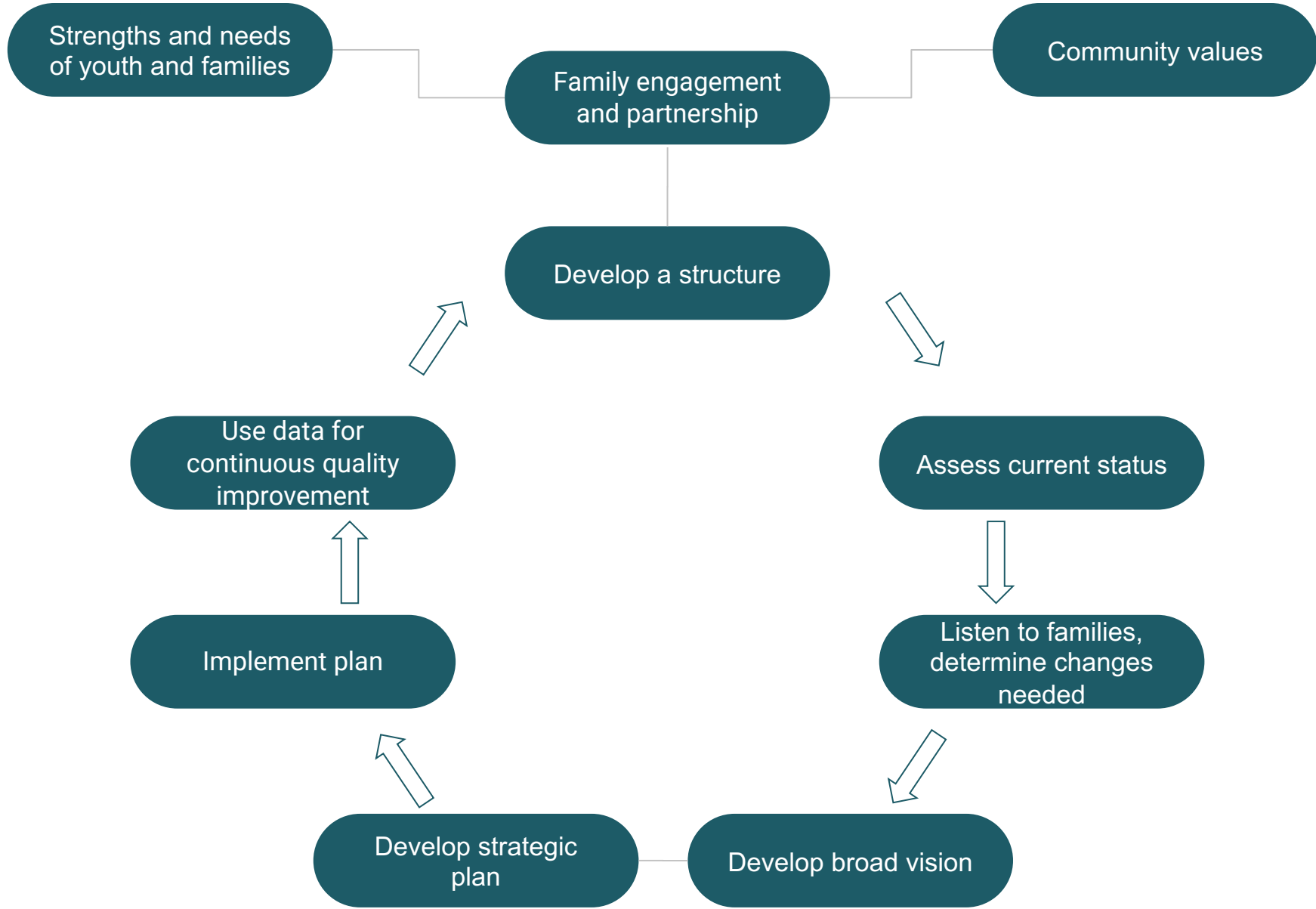


What do leaders do?

- Ignite
- Develop
- Sustain

Leadership

- Get on the balcony
- Identify strengths and challenges
- Manage distress
- Maintain focus
- Nurture, reward, and protect voices and actions at all levels



When communities work together to become trauma-responsive



- Use and understand data
- Common language and respectful communication
- Awareness and exploration of multiple approaches
- Trauma-responsive services available and accessible to everyone in the family and all staff
- Children and caregivers have a voice
- Lifelong, multigenerational understanding of trauma, healing, and resilience and their relationship to safety, permanency, and well-being



Universal precautions

Take steps to make your entire system welcoming and safe for everyone it touches.

- Families and youth
- All staff
- Professional partners

Shared knowledge and collective action





Benchmarks, measurement, and evaluation

How will you know when your system is more trauma-responsive?

- Child outcomes
- Family outcomes
- Workforce outcomes



3 core concepts provide a foundation for trauma responsive practice.

1. Define basic trauma-related terms.
2. Recognize how trauma impacts behavior.
3. Believe and communicate that healing and resilience are possible.



Core Concept 1: Define basic trauma- related terms.

Trauma exposure: Who experiences trauma?



Adults



Families and communities



Children



Across generations

Trauma exposure: Kinds of trauma



Acute



Race-based trauma



Chronic



Historic or generational
trauma



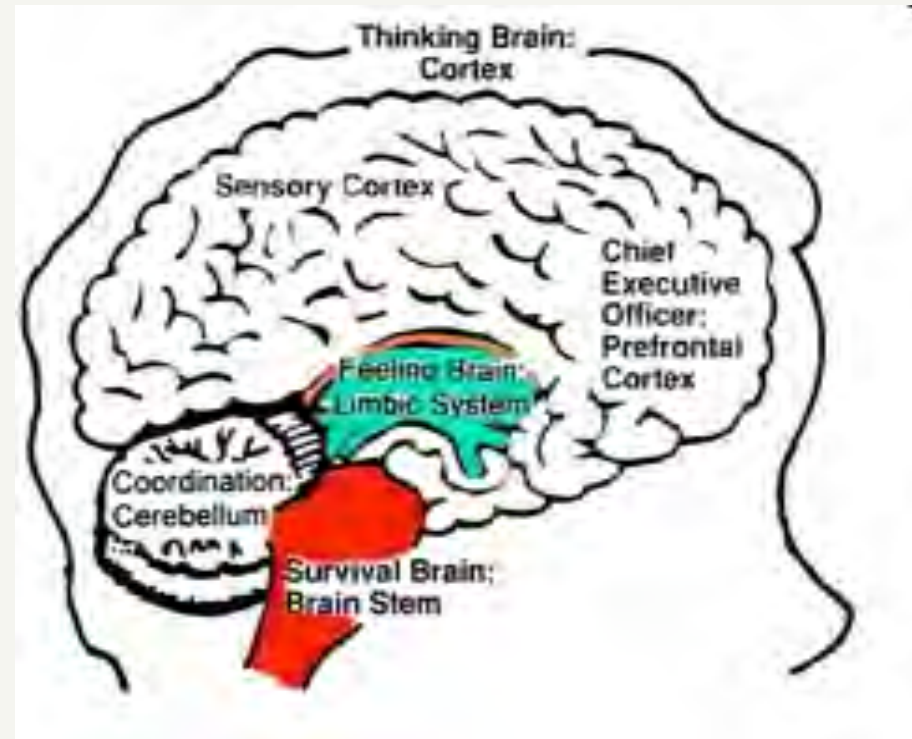
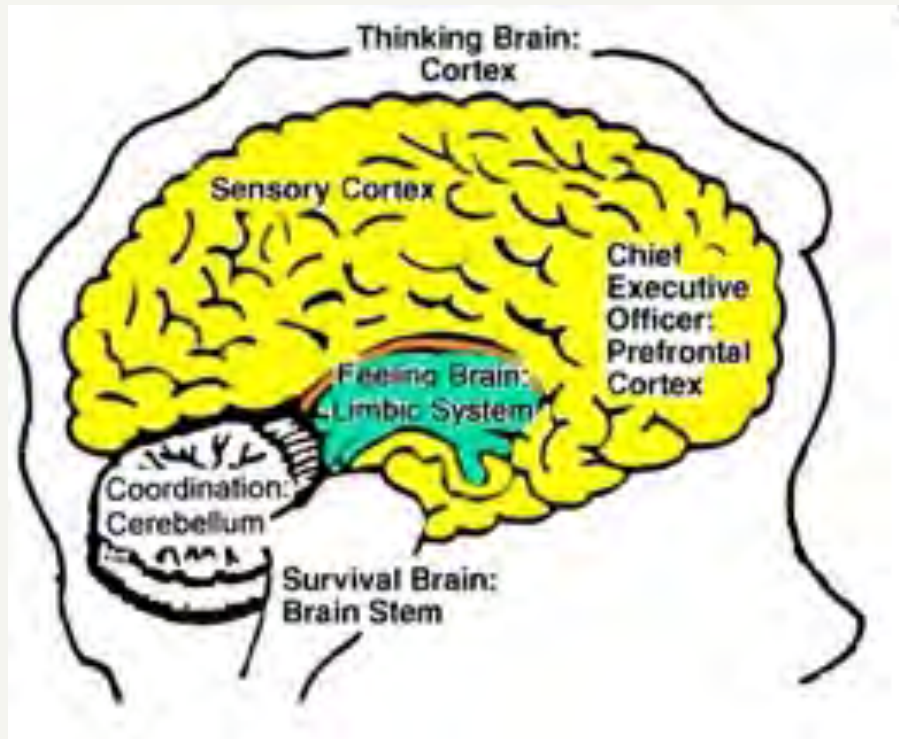
Complex



Secondary or vicarious
trauma



It's complicated!



Trauma changes the brain



Six types of survival brain

Fight

Flight

Freeze

Flock

Flap/Frenzy

Fawn

Sources for Flock & Flap: Dr. Brian Miller
Source for Fawn: Pete Walker

Trauma triggers



Situational

- Places
- Time of day, week, year
- Transitional times
- Specific tasks, activities, events
- Disorder or disruption to routine
- Presence or absence of specific people
- Being confronted or challenged



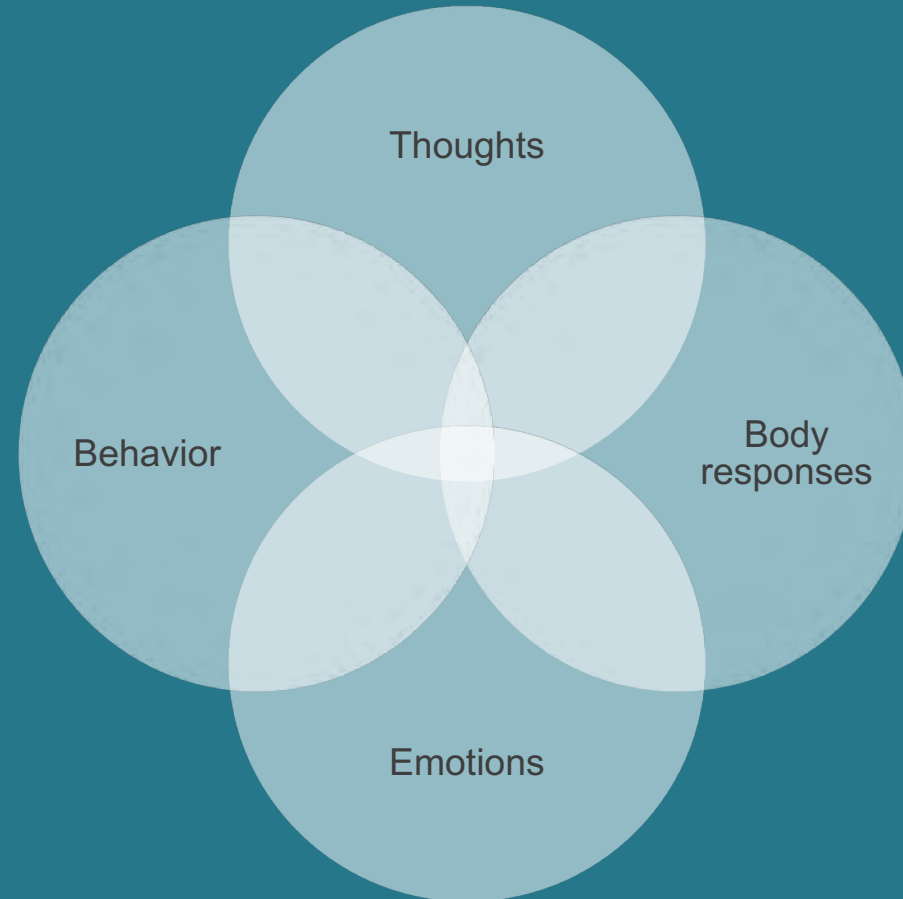
Sensory

- Certain sounds, unusual quiet or noise
- Specific visual stimuli
- Scents, cooking smells, foods
- Hunger, thirst, exhaustion
- Being touched
- Sensory overload
- Sensory deprivation



Core Concept 2: Recognize how trauma impacts behavior.

Trauma influences



Behaviors linked to trauma triggers

Trauma response	Behaviors
Fight	Hitting, fighting, refusing to do a task, arguing
Flight	Stealing, running away, lying
Freeze	Crying, isolating, shutting down
Flock	Congregating, gathering at the scene of a trauma, urgent need to “get home”
Flap/Frenzy	Unfocused energy, incessant talking, repetitive tasks
Fawn	Pleasing, can't say no, codependent behavior
Fatigue	Emotional and social withdrawal, apathy



**Core Concept 3:
Believe and communicate that
healing and resilience are
possible.**

Healing is possible

- It is never too late for healing.
- All healing takes place in the context of relationships.
- Strengthening and promoting healing within existing relationships is nearly always less traumatizing than requiring new relationships.
- Families and frontline staff are the most important elements of a trauma-responsive system and community.



What do we need to do to develop and sustain a trauma-responsive workforce?

Based on 5 essential elements of trauma-responsive care

Tips for leaders and managers

Tips for supervisors

Tips for caseworkers

Elements of a trauma-responsive child welfare system

1. Maximize safety
2. Identify trauma-related needs of children and families
3. Enhance well-being and resilience of children, families, and staff
4. Partner with youth and families
5. Lead and engage in community partnership and collaboration





Do you provide concrete, practical, permanency-oriented, trauma-responsive tools?

- To workers
- To children and youth
- To parents and caregivers

Trauma-responsive practice for workers: 3 core strategies

- 1) Design plan of care to prioritize lasting connections.
- 2) Provide concrete tools to build family resilience.
- 3) Ensure access to trauma-responsive services and interventions.



Strategy 1:
**Develop a plan of care as
road map to trauma-
responsive care.**

**Prioritize connections
with the “family plus”
approach.**



Tools for nurturing meaningful connections





Strategy 2: Provide concrete tools to build family resilience.

- In daily life
- In times of crisis



Building family resilience: Daily life

4 characteristics of a resilient family:

- Hope, optimism, shared beliefs or values
- Communicate about a wide range of feelings
- Balance of consistency and flexibility
- Capacity for problem solving

Building family resilience: Times of crisis

Be present

Be available, have a crisis line or crisis plan

Identify

Help families identify strengths

Support

Continue to support family resilience

Offer options

Offer options and resources without judgment



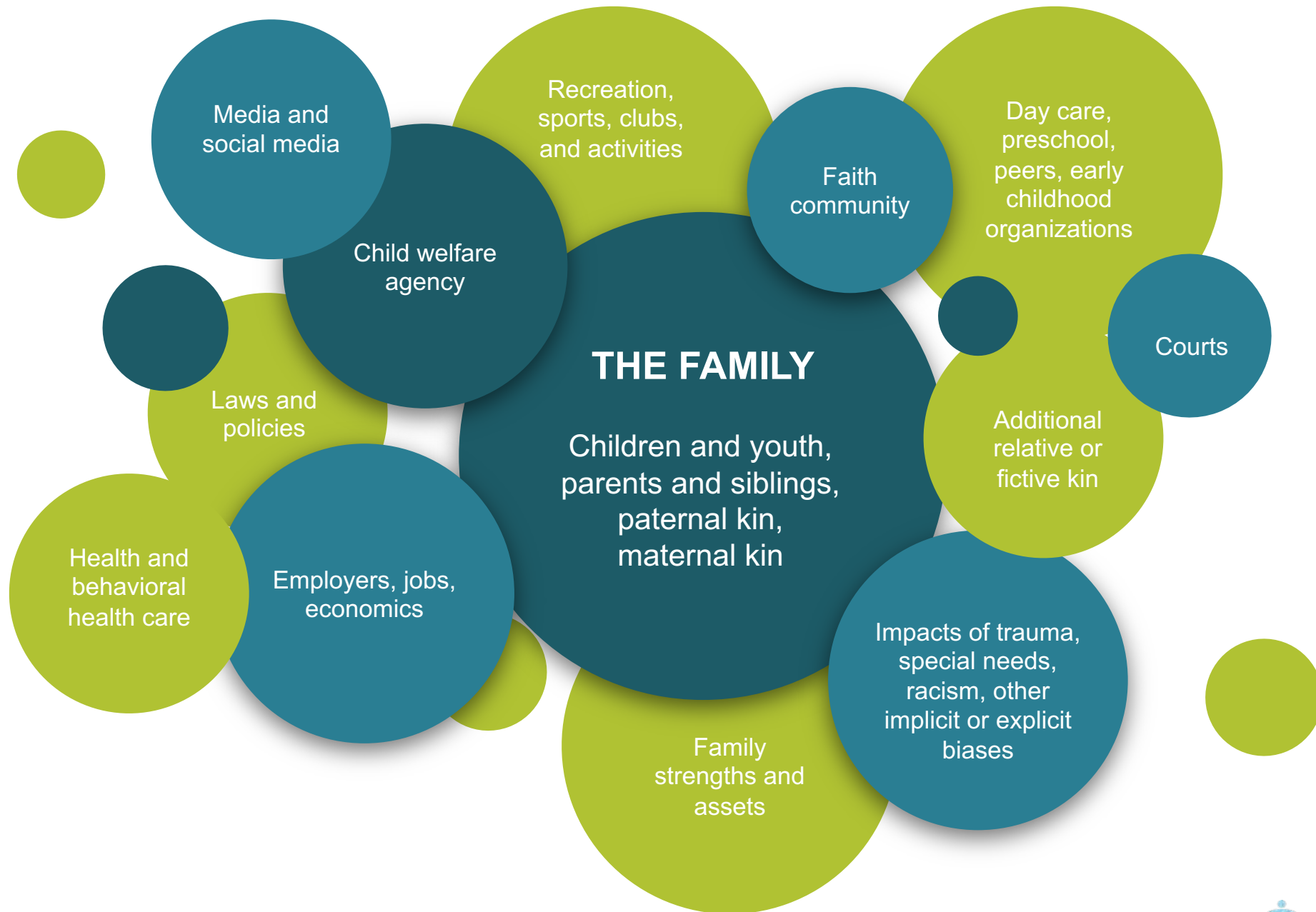
Strategy 3: Ensure access to trauma- responsive services and interventions.



How do we define help?

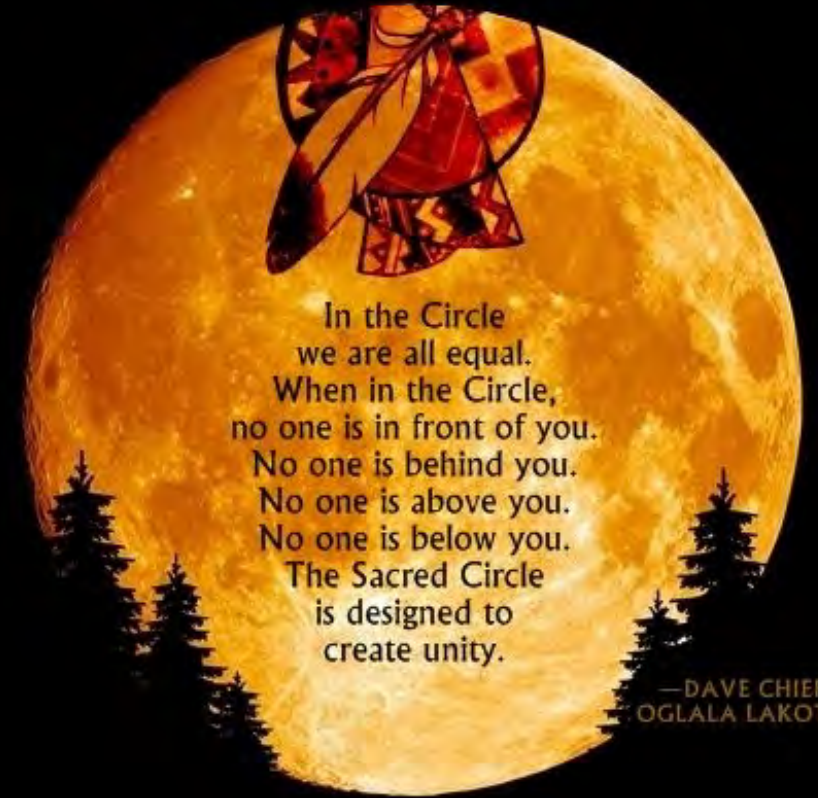
What helps alleviate the effects of trauma?

- Strong lasting relationships
- Education on normal responses to trauma
- Parent support, conjoint therapy, or parent training
- Emotional expression and regulation skills
- Anxiety management skills
- Cognitive processing or reframing
- Multi-sensory approaches
- Tools for both day-to-day and crisis situations
- Personal safety training
- Resilience and self-determination



Embrace cultural healing practices

THE CIRCLE HAS HEALING POWER



In the Circle
we are all equal.
When in the Circle,
no one is in front of you.
No one is behind you.
No one is above you.
No one is below you.
The Sacred Circle
is designed to
create unity.

—DAVE CHIEF
OGLALA LAKOTA

DAVE CHIEF | THE SACRED CIRCLE

"A Touch of Inspiration" from Heather O'Hara | www.QuantumGrace.net



Be a mirror.



Questions?



Upcoming webinars

- Data-driven diligent recruitment: Using data to recruit and sustain the pool of families you need for children in foster care
February 8, 1:00—2:30 eastern time
- Support Foster and Adoptive Families of Color: Stories and Strategies from Leaders of Color in Child Welfare
February 17, 2:00—3:30 eastern time



AdoptUSKids resources

Available at professionals.adoptuskids.org

- Discussion guide: *The Impact of Trauma on Children's Behaviors*
- Recorded webinar: *Helping Resource Parents and Caregivers Embrace Trauma-Responsive Parenting*
- Discussion guide: *Understanding Parental Grief and Loss*
- Discussion guide: *Understanding Childhood Grief and Loss*
- Recorded webinar: *Understanding Secondary Traumatic Stress for Parent Group Leaders*
- Program profile: *Trauma practice model in Larimer County, Colorado*



Contact information

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We'd love to talk to you about your system's needs! Reach out to consultation@adoptuskids.org to discuss capacity building or other support AdoptUSKids can provide.



AdoptUSKids

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