

The Advocate

Trauma Assessments: What Volunteer Advocates Need to Know

Trauma screening is designed to be able to be administered to every child within a given system (such as child welfare) to determine whether he or she has experienced trauma, displays symptoms related to trauma exposure, and/or should be referred for a comprehensive trauma-informed mental health assessment. Trauma screening can include a particular tool or a more formalized process. Trauma screening should evaluate the presence of two critical elements: (1) Exposure to potentially traumatic events/experiences, including traumatic loss, and (2) Traumatic stress symptoms/reactions.

Not all children who experience negative events suffer post-traumatic or trauma-specific reactions as a result. Trauma screening should measure a wide range of experiences and identify common reactions and symptoms of trauma (e.g., PTSD, dissociation), as well as other commonly reported difficulties (e.g., anger, behavior

problems, depression, anxiety). With proper training, professionals or paraprofessionals from various child-serving systems—healthcare, schools, home visiting programs, and domestic violence shelters—can administer the screening.

Screening typically covers the following types of traumatic stress reactions:

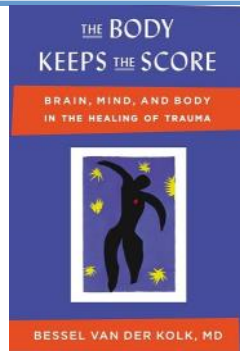
- Avoidance of trauma-related thoughts or feelings
- Intrusive memories of the event or nightmares about the event
- Hyper-arousal or exaggerated startle response
- Irritable or aggressive behavior
- Behavioral problems
- Interpersonal problems

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CASA Day @ The TinCaps!



Mark your calendars! **CASA Day at the TinCaps** is set for **Sunday, August 20, 2023 with a 1:05 pm game**. We will be taking over the Parkview Sports Medicine Treetops area, an area that provides an experience reminiscent of the famed Wrigley Field rooftops - but with a better view and no travel. Lunch is served throughout the game starting at 12:30 pm as guests enjoy a Treetop view of all the action. Domestic draft beer and wine is included through the 7th inning along with water and soft drinks. The menu includes hot dogs, pulled chicken, hamburgers, mac & cheese, baked beans, and apple crisp for dessert. You'll enjoy high-top seating with food rails plus table top seating. As a bonus, for our under 21 crowd, we'll also have fun zone vouchers! As in the past, we'll also have t-shirts for those attending. Look for an invitation to come and be sure to RSVP with all pertinent information and t-shirt sizes by the deadline. Each volunteer can bring three (3) guests. It's just our way of saying, "Thank You for all YOU DO!"



"Trauma is a fact of life. Veterans and their families deal with the painful aftermath of combat; one in five Americans has been molested; one in four grew up with alcoholics; one in three couples have engaged in physical violence. Such expe-

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma

riences inevitably leave traces on minds, emotions, and even on biology. Sadly, trauma sufferers frequently pass on their stress to their partners and children.

Renowned trauma expert Bessel van der Kolk has spent over three decades working with survivors. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, he transforms our understanding of traumatic stress, revealing how it literally rearranges

the brain's wiring—specifically areas dedicated to pleasure, engagement, control, and trust. He shows how these areas can be reactivated through innovative treatments including neurofeedback, mindfulness techniques, play, yoga, and other therapies.

Based on Dr. van der Kolk's own research and that of other leading specialists, *The Body Keeps the Score* offers proven alternatives to drugs and talk therapy—and a way to reclaim lives.

Have a title you want to share? Send me an email with the title and author & I'll include in future columns.

In this column each month, I will share a book that has been recommended by professionals to help us better understand some of the issues that surround child abuse and neglect. Reviews are provided by Goodreads.com.

Trauma Assessments Continued

Types of Screening Tools

Providers may administer trauma screening in a number of ways depending on the age and developmental stage of the child and on the child's relationship with the caregiver and other collateral informants in his or her life. For example, with very young children, it is difficult to screen specifically for "trauma symptoms." Rather, a provider may screen for exposure to traumatic events and social and emotional difficulties, such as attachment difficulties or mood dysregulation. As the child gets older, it may be more appropriate to screen specifically for trauma symptoms.

Most screening tools are developed for use by professionals with a range of training and experience. Providers using a screening tool should consider (1) factors such as the child's age, language skills, and cognitive capabilities; (2) whether the child is among the populations for which the tool has been validated and normed; and (3) if there are other factors that might affect the reliability and validity of the tool for this particular child.

While not all of the children in our cases here in Allen County will need a trauma assessment, if you have concerns, feel free to talk with your supervisor, who will be able to provide you with additional information.

Celebrate June Advocate Anniversaries!

Congratulations to our June Advocates with Service Anniversaries! Please join me in congratulating and thanking them for their service.

Nicole Arivett

Larry Braden

Rebecca Barrand

Geoff Gephart

We hope you will join us for Domestic Violence 101

June 27, 2023

6:00 pm—7:30 pm

Omni Room Citizen's Square

200 E. Berry Street, Ft. Wayne, IN 46802

<http://www.allencountycasa.org/forms/domestic-violence-101> to register

I Scream, You Scream, We all Scream for Ice Cream!

As an Allen County Volunteer Advocate, you are invited to attend all the great events put on by The Volunteer Center, all free of charge! The Volunteer Center is a trusted partner that connects those looking to volunteer with opportunities to volunteer with local organizations, like the Volunteer Fair we attended on April 27, 2023!

If you know of someone who's interested in volunteering, please be sure to share Cindy's contact information!

Cindy.Verduce@allensuperiorcourt.us
260.449.7190



Save THE Date

volunteercenter

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

JUNE 15, 2023 | 2:00-4:00 PM

Lakeside Park Pavilion #2

1401 Lake Ave. Fort Wayne, IN 46805

Wander Lakeside Rose Garden with an ice cream treat!

For Existing & Potential New Volunteers! Bring a friend!



Looking for a fun summer activity with your CASA kids? Summer is the perfect time to celebrate reading and discovery with the help of the Allen County Public Library's summer reading challenge. Join thousands of other readers in their annual SPARK Summer Learning Program. You are invited to track your reading and complete activities to win prizes.

SPARK reading challenges & engages readers to read every day. With a focus on **science, play, arts, reading and knowledge**, our SPARK program includes activities, challenges and tai-

prizes tailored to fit any age. Throughout the year, the Allen County Public Library hosts SPARK reading challenges where participants can earn free books and prizes!

Last year, 96% of caregivers reported that their child maintained or increased their reading skills, and 89% said they became more confident readers.

You can track your progress in the Beanstack app or visit any ACPL branch to grab an official Bingo card.

Go to acpl.lib.in.us to register.



**Child Mind
Institute**

How to Help Kids With a Learning Disorder Build Confidence

Looking for a great resource in working with children in the system who have either mental health or learning disorders? The Child Mind Institute has a great newsletter with valuable information that can help Advocates better understand and work with their CASA kids. In this week's newsletter, there was a great article on helping kids build confidence, especially those with a learning disorder. Want to read the article? Go to <https://childmind.org/> and search for "How to Help Kids With a Learning Disorder" or to sign up for their weekly newsletter online.

Happy reading!

June Training Opportunities

Early Childhood Mental Health: How to Shift our Minds and Bodies to Support our Youngest Learners and their Caregivers

Wednesday, June 14, 2023, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM - Allen County Public Library

[Register Here](#)

Top Ten Tips for CASA Volunteers

June 23, 2023, 1:30-3:00 PM EST

[Registration Coming Soon](#)

How to Unlock Your Child's Resilience & Confidence with Mindfulness

Wednesday, June 14 · 2 - 3pm EDT - Virtual Via Zoom

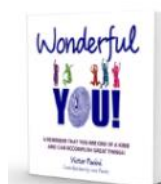
[Register Here](#)



Overcoming Adversity with Children

Victor Pacini is one of the most sought after speakers and trainers on the topics of sexual abuse for children. Victor Pacini understands the delicate nature of abuse. Not only is he a survivor of sexual abuse, but his sister was murdered in 2001 due to domestic violence. His dynamic curriculum has been delivered to over 750,000 children and parents. He's been referred by school administrators as, "The most unique and effective presenter of sexual assault awareness."

Several volunteers had the opportunity to hear Victor speak in April at the Summit on Child Abuse in Auburn. These are just two of his books, and copies are available, along with his journal "Your Voice," to be "checked out" in the CASA Office.



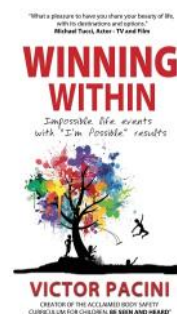
Wonderful You! A Reminder that You Are One of a Kind & Can Accomplish Great things

Victor's goal with this little book of quotes is to remind you that each of us is unique. That includes YOU!

Winning Within

In our culture we are taught that winning is the only way to get ahead. Victor puts a spin on our conventional ideas on winning and leaves you with many possibilities that have been within you all along.

"Winning Within" offers you: 1) A new view on the idea of competing with others, 2) suggestions on how to live a productive and happy life, and 3) a variety of strategies to overcome all adversities.



4 Ways to Calm Your Stress Hormones

From Parkview Health's
Dashboard Blog

What's happening in the body? When your children aren't following the right path, or you get pulled over for speeding, or receive an unrealistic deadline at work, or have to take care of an elderly parent, or are facing financial uncertainty, the body turns on its **stress response**. Your nervous system is triggered to release a wave of the stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline. This results in several recognizable sensations—the pounding heart, laser-sharp senses, loss of breath and tight muscles.

If you're facing an ongoing stressor, or repeatedly getting into situations that stimulate your anxiety, you could be experiencing this reaction more often than you realize, and your blood pressure could be elevated.

Tips for coping with stress

Unfortunately, we can't escape all of the stressors in life. That's why it's important to have some tricks and tactics for managing our

body's response. Here are some of my favorites and, bonus, they're all completely free!

Cloud breathing

1. Imagine a white puffy cloud on a sunny day. Name that cloud the thing you need in that moment—peace, tranquility, love, acceptance, etc.
2. Imagine a black smokestack billowing out of a chimney. This represents your stressors.
3. Picture yourself breathing in the white puffy cloud—peace—and breathing out the black smoke—stress.
4. Continue until the feelings of stress have passed or as time allows.

4-7-8 breathing

There's a lot of research behind this method, which is touted as beneficial for combatting stress and **insomnia**.

1. Breathe in for four slow counts.
2. Hold for seven full counts.
3. Breathe out for eight full counts.

Guided or meditated imagery

A restorative environment could look very different to different people. For this method, think about what a relaxing space might be for you. Maybe it's the woods, or a beach. Perhaps you have fond memories at a family cabin or Lake Place. Open your

laptop and search for a guided meditation based on that location and the amount of time you have available. If you're doing a video, follow the prompts. If you're doing it alone, get comfortable and picture yourself there, including every detail you can. The goal is to let yourself go on a mini mental vacation.

Move your body

When it comes to taming stress, never underestimate the power of **exercise**. You don't have to join a gym or lift insanely heavy weights, either. Take some time alone or grab a friend (yes, four-legged furry ones count) and get outside for a **walk** to release those feel-good hormones. You'll be amazed how quickly your mood can shift.

What Are Family Preservation Services?

We will hear from Ashley E. Fisher, Regional Manager of Family Preservation at Josiah White's about these innovative, evidenced-based practices to help parents build stronger, safer environments allowing them to keep their children in the home.

Join us for
CASA Connections
Wednesday, June 7, 2023
12:00 noon – 1:00 pm