



TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES include:

- Staff training on childhood maltreatment
- Safe and nurturing environments
- Trauma screening and assessment
- Praise and encouragement to empower youth and families
- Life skills training and development to promote self-efficacy

RESULTS FROM STUDIES have shown:

- Types of childhood maltreatment impact brain function differently
- Trauma symptoms are associated with emotional problems and self-injurious behavior
- Youth with higher levels of trauma have greater treatment needs overall
- Youth with varying levels of trauma show favorable responses to services, with decreases in disruptive and self-injurious behaviors

BOYS TOWN

TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES

Boys Town uses a trauma-informed approach that considers past youth trauma exposure in order to prevent further trauma. To better detect the impact trauma can have on youth, Boys Town developed a screening instrument to identify possible symptoms youth may have that are related to past trauma. Boys Town staff use this information to determine the supports and services youth need to help them heal.

Boys Town also conducts ongoing research to better understand: the impact trauma has on youth and families; how youth and families respond to trauma-informed services; and how to develop strategies that can help youth recover from trauma exposure. This research is translated into practice so that our direct-care staff can better understand and provide appropriate services to youth and families that have experienced traumatic events.

TRAUMA-INFORMED COMPONENTS

- **STAFF TRAINING**
 - Boys Town staff are trained to identify and understand the different types and effects of traumatic events, which can include abuse, neglect and other types of interpersonal and community violence.
 - Boys Town staff are trained to promote nurturing environments that ensure youth are physically and emotionally safe.
- **TRAUMA SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT**
 - Youth and families are screened for exposure to traumatic events and the presence of trauma symptoms.
 - Youth and families are screened for suicidal ideation and self-harm risk that can be related to trauma.
 - Further assessment for and referrals to additional services and supports for trauma, suicidal ideation and self-harm are provided when needed.
- **PROGRAM STRATEGIES THAT HELP YOUTH AND FAMILIES**
 - Praise and encouragement are used to empower youth and families and promote self-advocacy.
 - Service Plans for youth and families include the assessment of trauma exposure and symptoms to identify goals, objectives and strategies.
 - Life skills such as problem-solving, coping skills and emotional regulation are taught and reinforced to promote self-efficacy.
- **HOTLINES FOR SAFETY AND SUPPORT**
 - Youth, caregivers and staff have access to a confidential and anonymous Safety and Ethics Line to report alleged rights violations or unethical behavior. Direct access to the Boys Town National Hotline® for crisis support is also available.



OUR MISSION

Changing the way America
cares for children and families.

ABOUT THE BOYS TOWN CHILD AND FAMILY TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER

The Center conducts and disseminates applied research and provides clinical data support to promote Boys Town's Mission and advance knowledge and practice in child and family science.

Our goals include guiding the development, evaluation and implementation of evidence-based interventions for preventing and reducing social and behavioral problems in children and families, as well as promoting their positive development on a large scale to promote public health.

What is translational research? Embedded within partnerships between researchers and practitioners, translational research draws from and informs practice. It involves multiple research activities, including basic research and the development, evaluation and scale-up of evidence-based interventions, for the benefit of children and families.

Visit us online at boystown.org/trc

CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION

531-355-1255

TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES RESEARCH SUMMARY

At Boys Town, we continually measure the effectiveness of our child and family programs to ensure those we serve actually get better. The Boys Town Child and Family Translational Research Center conducts applied research to help understand the nature of problems children and their families face today and identify the most effective ways to help them. For additional information about our research, go to www.boystown.org/research/publications/Pages/Publications.aspx.

- Boys Town researchers developed and tested a self-report screening tool called the *Brief Trauma Symptom Screen for Youth*SM (BTSSY) with 572 youth to detect symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).¹ The BTSSY can be used by staff to quickly detect symptoms related to traumatic exposure in youth so they can determine the need for further assessment.
- A neuro-imaging study conducted at Boys Town using functional MRI looked at the relationship between different types of childhood maltreatment and brain responses in 116 youth.² Researchers found differences based on the type of childhood maltreatment. Physical abuse was related to heightened response to threat and sexual abuse was related to disruptions in emotional responding. These results are used to understand the impact maltreatment has on child brain development.
- A study of 1,096 youth in the Boys Town Family Home ProgramSM was conducted to determine if trauma exposure, symptoms and the clinical impression (used to develop youth Service Plans) were related to youth response to services.³ Trauma symptoms were related to emotional problems and self-injurious incidents in youth. Girls were also more likely to report higher rates of trauma symptoms and emotional problems and display self-injurious behavior. Overall, youth in low- and high-trauma groups and boys and girls made progress in the program at similar rates based on decreases in disruptive and self-injurious behaviors and caregiver reports of youth conduct problems. However, youth who were deemed by staff to have lower levels of trauma showed greater decreases in emotional problems. These results help staff understand the relationship between trauma and youth service needs.
- Ongoing research is being conducted to identify strategies, such as skills training, that may help youth with high levels of trauma make greater improvements.
- A research brief, *Trauma-Informed Care is Critical for Youth Needing Residential Services*, can be found at <https://www.boystownhospital.org/news/trauma-informed-care-critical-for-youth>.

References

1. Tyler, P.M., Mason, W.A., Chmelka, M.B., et. al. Psychometrics of a Brief Trauma Symptom Screen for Youth in residential care. *J. Trauma. Stress.* 2019; 1-11. doi:10.1002/jts.22442.
2. Blair, K.S., Aloji, J., Crum, K., et. al. Association of different types of childhood maltreatment with emotional responding and response control among youths. *JAMA Netw Open*; 2019;2(5):1-15.
3. Tyler, P.M., Patwardan, I., Ringle, J.L., et. al. Youth needs at intake into trauma-informed group homes and response to services: An examination of trauma exposure, symptoms, and clinical impression. *Am J Community Psychol.* 2019; 1-12. doi: 10.1002/ajcp.12364.