

Dealing with difficult situations.

Children process stressful and difficult situations differently than adults. As a mentor, it can be hard to form a relationship with a mentee who seems closed off or distant. While that may be part of the mentee's personality, it may also be indicative that something else is going on in the child's life.

Understanding Trauma

"Little T" Trauma
Embarrassed by peers
Losing a pet
Stress at school
Divorce

"Big T" Trauma
Domestic Violence
Sexual Assault
Acts of Terrorism/War
Witnessing a death
Community Violence

Triggers

An event or thing that takes a person back to the moment when the difficult situation or traumatic event occurred.

For example:

Driving through an intersection where you were previously in an accident could trigger memories of the accident itself.

Stress Busters:

- Take a long walk
- Play with a pet
- Keep a diary/journal
- Set daily goals for yourself
- Do a good deed
- Break big jobs into smaller tasks
- Laugh, a lot!
- Read the comics
- Find a hobby, like reading or playing a sport
- Believe in yourself.

Ways Children Display Stress:

Difficulty sleeping
Separation anxiety
Physical reactions, like a stomachache
Withdrawal from people and/or activities
Lack of interest in fun activities
Trouble concentrating
Very high activity level
Constant fidgeting
Aggressive behavior
Angry feelings

Age Appropriate Responses:

Toddlers:

Difficulty bonding
Disinterested in play or mimic anger/aggression

Preschool:

Easily confused by conflicting messaging
Difficulty developing independence
Begin to internalize feelings

School Age:

Overly concerned with safety
Become distracted from school
Internalize feelings



Amachi Mentors can make a difference!

Let your mentee be a kid.

Help them feel secure, safe and not alone.

Help them understand they are not to blame.

Encourage involvement with peers and activities.

Show them it's okay to feel the way they feel.

Listen!

Let them tell their story.

Let them express their feelings.

Ask them about their family and community.

Get to know your mentee and their interests.

Build Self-Esteem

Help them find their own strengths.

Reaffirm their positive attributes.

Help develop a healthy sense of self.

Let them know they are loved and cared for, no matter what.

Applaud them after completing a new challenge.

Tips & Tricks:

Acknowledge the "Feeling, Thinking, Doing" Triangle.

Event:

A kid is bullied in school.

Thought:

They think they aren't good enough to have friends.

Feeling:

They feel anxious, sad, lonely.

Behavior:

They remove themselves from social situations.

Changing the way the child thinks can change behavior.

Are those thoughts helpful?

How can you reverse your thoughts to focus on something positive?

What can I do to make you more comfortable?

Create "coping" cards for stressful situations. The card could read:

1. I'm feeling anxious right now.
2. I'm in control of my own feelings.
3. I should try some deep breathing to calm myself down.

Take care of yourself.

The mentor/mentee relationship can be so rewarding, but it can also be frustrating.

Take the time to relieve your own stress—it will help!

Use the self-esteem cheat sheet to discuss your mentee's strengths:

Have them answer these questions:

1. My best qualities are:
2. I am proud of myself because:
3. A recent success was when:
4. I have dealt with difficult things by:
5. I know I am good at:

Use a feeling wheel to talk about emotions.

