At-risk behavior among children who are exposed to traumatic events – like domestic violence, abuse, sexual violence, and community violence – and their school performance, academic achievement, and emotional well-being can be profoundly affected. In addition, many at-risk students are prone to traumatic stress, which can be a valuable tool in understanding how they are coping with what they’ve experienced.

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Mentors Can Help Kids Heal from Trauma

Promotes healing and growth in at-risk youth by using everyday gestures.

1. Avoid Trauma Triggers in the Environment

Children need a stable and consistent environment to thrive. Mentors should be aware of environmental factors that may trigger traumatic stress and take steps to minimize them.

2. Promote Healing by Using Everyday Gestures

Small gestures can make a big difference in the life of a child. Mentors can use everyday gestures to promote healing and avoid re-traumatization.

3. Take Care of Yourself

Mentors need to take care of themselves to be effective and avoid burnout. It’s important to prioritize self-care and seek support when needed.

WHAT CAN MENTORS DO?

- **LISTEN** to your mentee by being present, taking the time to understand their perspective, and validating their feelings.
- **INSPIRE** your mentee by setting examples of resilience and healthy coping strategies.
- **COLLABORATE** with your mentee by involving them in problem-solving processes, encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions.
- **CELEBRATE** successes together to reinforce positive behaviors and encourage continued growth.

HOW TO USE EVERYDAY GESTURES TO PROMOTE HEALING

- **Establish a safe and consistent environment** by maintaining a stable routine, creating a calm space, and ensuring that youth feel safe and supported.
- **Support everyday experiences** by prompting youth to talk about their day, their feelings, and their challenges.
- **Encourage observation and reflection** by asking youth to discuss what they’ve learned from past experiences and how they can apply that knowledge to current situations.
- **Provide opportunities for self-reflection** by allowing youth to express their thoughts and feelings in a safe and supportive environment.
- **Offer guidance and support** by providing youth with strategies to manage their emotions and navigate challenging situations.
- **Foster a positive sense of self** by encouraging youth to celebrate their accomplishments and to identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- **Build a relationship of trust** by being honest, open, and genuine in your interactions with youth.
- **Encourage youth to set goals** by helping them to identify clear, achievable goals that can help them develop a sense of purpose and direction.
- **Promote resilience** by helping youth to develop the skills and strategies they need to cope with adversity and overcome challenges.
- **Support youth in making healthy choices** by providing guidance and support as they navigate the complexities of their lives.
- **Build a network of support** by connecting youth with other mentors, family members, and community resources.
- **Foster a sense of community** by encouraging youth to connect with others and to feel a sense of belonging.
- **Encourage youth to express gratitude** by recognizing the positive aspects of their lives and expressing appreciation for the support they receive.
- **Promote healing and avoid re-traumatization** by understanding how violence impacts a child’s health and development.