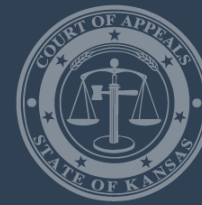


Best Practices in Child Welfare Law

Session 2

Trauma in the Courtroom

April 15, 2025



Welcome

Your panelists:

Hon. Penny Moylan, 3rd Judicial District

Hon. Timothy Woods, 25th Judicial District

Morgan Hall, Shawnee County Attorney's Office

Grant Brazill, Morris Laing Law Firm, Sedgwick County



Addressing Trauma in the Courtroom

- Identifying trauma (what does it look like?)
- Why should courts try to reduce trauma responses?



Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

- Prepares practitioners for working with trauma impacted youth and families
- Empowers victims of trauma with sense of control through choices, opportunities to make decisions and fostering a safe, predictable environment



TBRI Strategies in the Courtroom

- Engage parents to feel some sense of control from the very beginning
 - Shared-Power concept
- Clear communication and expectations
 - Purpose
 - Help/resources
 - Accountability



Engaging Key Players

- Open communication with case team
- Talking with parents in hearings
 - What we say AND how we say it
 - “Is there anything else you need to help you?”
- Division 7 Protocol (Resources)
 - Creating a Culture of Compassionate Collaboration



Environmental Shifts

- Child-friendly environment
- Minimizing wait times
- Eye-contact and speaking directly to parties in the case
 - Addressing people by their name



Secondary Trauma

- What does this look like?
- Focusing on holistic well-being
 - Spiritual
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Intellectual
 - Career/Social
- Setting boundaries
- Developing supportive connections
- KLAP
- Well-Being Week in Law: May 5-9, 2025



Client-Side Trauma Informed Practice

- Empathy and trust building
- Avoid making assumptions
- Clear communication
- Manageable tasks
- Non-judgmental language
- Realistic expectations



Example 1: Emily (resources)

- 12 years old
- Living with adopted family post-TPR
- Meth exposed, non-verbal upon entry into care at 2 years old
- Separated from sibling
- Significant MH concerns
- Lack of access to services



Emily con't.

Things that went well

- Supportive foster home
- Getting services into place

Areas for Improvement

- Improved access to services (and earlier on)
- Support for the foster home
- Understanding that trauma looks different for everyone
- Improved relationship with the agency



Example 2: Rita (resources)

- Removed at age 7, placed with grandparents
- Grandparents passed away, returned to mom
- Came back into care after a year
- Multiple foster homes
- Failed attempt at adoption
- Aged out of system
- homelessness



Rita con't.

Things that went well

- Positive support worker
- Close relationship with former foster home
- resilience

Areas for Improvement

- Continuous access to MH services
- MH services to identify long term impacts of trauma and develop coping skills
- Homelessness help for aged out youth
- Tailored services from the court
- Avoiding judgmental language