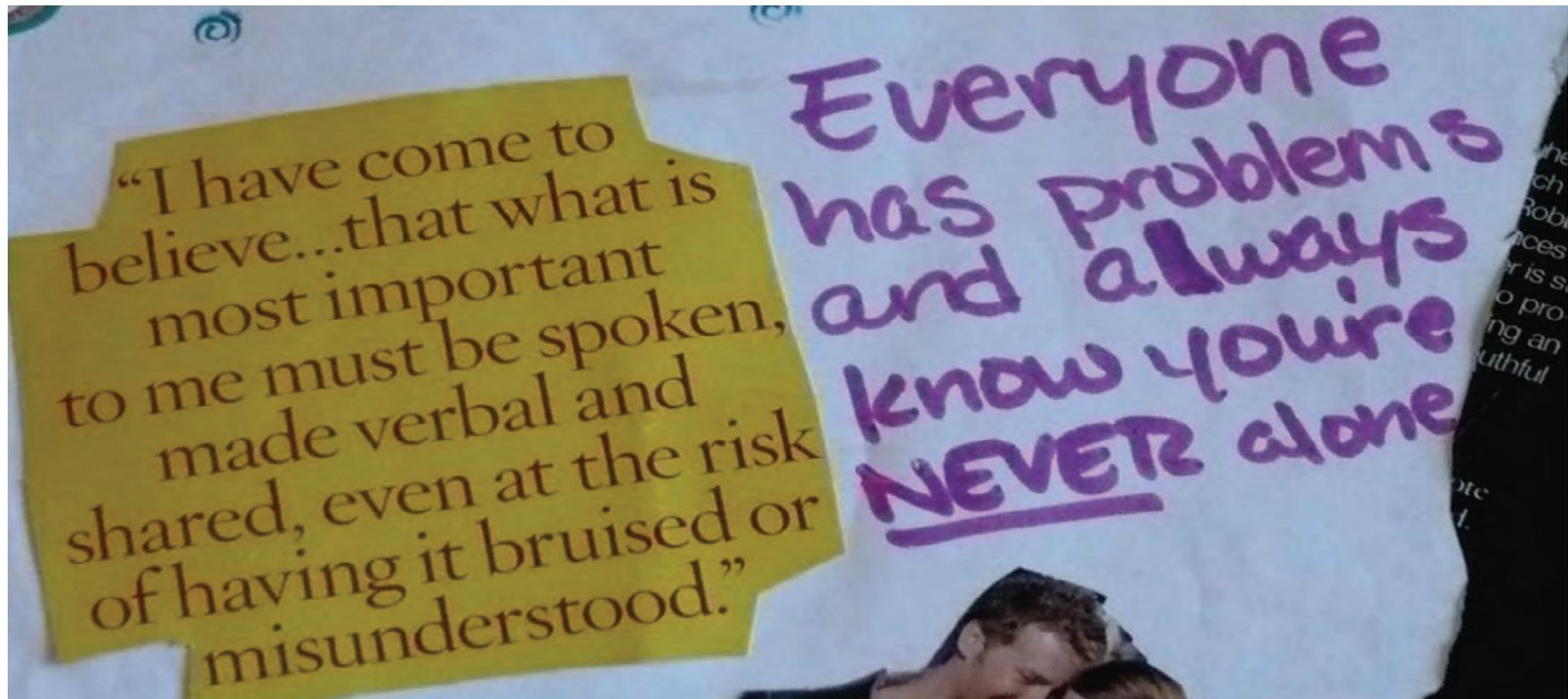


Youth Speak!



Partnering with Youth and Families Committee (PYFC) of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network

This project was funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or HHS.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Established by Congress in 2000, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) is a unique collaboration of academic and community-based service centers whose mission is to raise the standard of care and increase access to services for traumatized children and their families across the United States. Combining knowledge of child development, expertise in the full range of child traumatic experiences, and attention to cultural perspectives, the NCTSN serves as a national resource for developing and disseminating evidence-based interventions, trauma-informed services, and public and professional education.



“Youth want to hear from other youth—they especially want to hear another youth’s story, what they’ve been through, how they’ve overcome challenges, how mental health services have helped them, etc.” (July 2008).

Introduction

This booklet began with youth participants at the Face-to-Face Meeting of the Partnering with Youth and Families Committee (PYFC) of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) in July 2008. Youth were invited to be part of a two-day meeting to discuss how to involve and partner with youth and families in trauma settings. The agenda included a discussion about the history of family and youth involvement in the NCTSN and the PYFC, ways to develop peer-to-peer support groups at the NCTSN center level, the development of Community Advisory Boards, and ways to increase the involvement of youth in all of these activities. During youth-specific sessions, youth created artwork to reflect their experiences of being in services and offer messages of hope for other youth, caregivers, or professionals. This booklet represents the words and voices of the youth participants and youth who are affiliated with NCTSN sites.

A Youth Introduction: “As a youth partner at La Rabida Children’s Hospital’s-Chicago Child Trauma Center, I have encountered many influential people throughout my journey, but the most influential people were the children and youth who I encountered through the face-to-face meetings. Most of the youth have been through some of the most horrific events a child can face but have the greatest outlook on life and feelings of hope. Throughout our struggles, we have faced many hard things but with the right person to talk to and a different view of ourselves, we were able to overcome the long hard road we had been living and be able to surround ourselves with the love and support of people whom we knew cared. The messages shared throughout this book really mean a lot to us, and we hope our words of encouragement can help you too.” **Rachel Wax, Chicago, IL**



BE TRANSFORMED

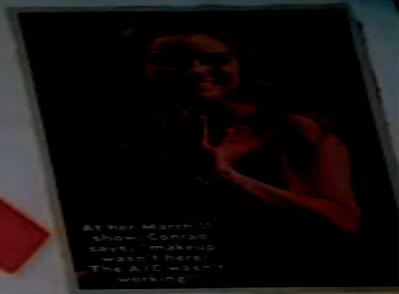
SEE WHAT WE SEE.

What would you tell a peer about going for services?

- I personally have been through services so I have been in your shoes and honestly it may not be easy but give it a chance, you might not believe it but regardless of what everyone needs that one someone to talk to, and you are now given that chance take full advantage and get past the pain.
- Have faith in each other and in yourself.
- You can talk to someone you don't know instead of someone you do know which may make it more comfortable.
- You need it.
- Write how you feel.
- Even if counseling doesn't work, you can write it down.
- Talk to someone you trust.
- It is healthy to tell people how you are feeling. You will want to tell someone how you are feeling because you will feel 100% better because of it.
- Encouragement is really important. If told you can't make it, you begin to believe it. Need to encourage kids that they can be better, they can take charge and make their lives better.
- There's always room for growth and change—even if you can't believe that right now.



KIDS



grow up strong.

BE FRESH

Music is the greatest thing for youth.

Smile and hold your head high



Happy kid.



JOY!

GREAT MOMENTS IN SELF-ESTEEM



What money can buy!

friendships.

Believe

Money can buy you A doctor but money can't buy you health!

Money can buy you Makeup but money can't buy you BEAUTY

Money can buy you a trip to the gym but money can't buy you Strength

Music

Soul

i dream

Money can't buy you love but at the same money can't buy you a friend.





On Stigma Related To Using Services:

- Kids are intimidated about going to counseling. Teens want to be *normal* in front of peers and not appear different from other kids.
- One stigma is that people may deem you a "nut case" cause people hear “mental health” and you’re automatically crazy so that’s one big one, that’s about the only one I can actually come up with.
- Youth, parents, and families need more education about what therapy is. Some kids think that a therapist is like having another parent. Some kids believe that you’re weak if you’re in therapy. They don’t realize that many kids may show one side of themselves at school but have a different life outside of school. Peers often judge and don’t understand the purpose of therapy which can really help a person get better.
- Get a youth panel to speak to a school assembly or other group of kids to provide information about therapy and start dealing with the stigma. We need to make therapy a good thing, not a sign of ‘craziness’.
- Going for help is a good thing, not a bad thing. Kids need to find an adult who they can trust and to care for them. Many kids don’t have an adult who cares. Even if a person has a parent who they can talk to many kids still have some things they just won’t share with their parents.
- Medication /mental health issues doesn’t mean that one is insane. Kids need acceptance of friends and family.
- “No, it[stigma about going for counseling] didn't bother me at all. You said you didn't think I was a nut case and somehow that made coming here O.K. If you had acted like I was crazy, that might have made me feel funny about coming but you were up-front about everything and that made it O.K.”

JUDGING

THE REAL STORY

Opens Up

AGONY

Torture



DYING TO BE

ALIVE!

happy.



Are lives and careers
are shape by events we
endure as an child and an
adult. — Jessica

**AMAZING
JOURNEY**



'How I See It'

There's relief for pain like this.

The Devastation, The

Hope, The Recovery

...So listening to sad music, crying all day,
not wanting to get out of bed...
It's a grieving process.
You have to feel the pain in order to process it.
A big part of that is also forgiving the other person
and forgiving yourself for feeling like you failed

Was there anything you learned about going for services?

- I didn't want to come, but I needed it. I would cry a lot and I'd be mad all the time. I wanted to talk, but I didn't want to talk to someone I did know. I was afraid of being judged. They don't know you who they gonna tell?
- For my mom, I guess she was glad that I was talking to somebody. I am not as sad as I used to be. I express myself more, and I speak up.
- I guess it was good for me for what I was going through. It helped me talk to my dad. To me, I don't think mans understands what females goes through.
- The first time I came I was in 5th grade, and I was mad. I was getting mad about stuff, and I did not know what was the reason. I didn't feel like I need it. It helped me with my problems, so I would not be so mad.
- I didn't want to go. But just go because you may really make a connection with the therapist. It just helped a lot make everything way better. It was really hard to talk to a therapist the first time because you don't feel like you can open up. They say things that you feel like you can open up to and that you are protected by them.
- I learned that "shrinks" aren't all that bad, but seriously I can't speak for every clinician cause I only had one but and even though the clinician who I saw was very professional I felt a sense that he was human and I just wasn't another "client" I felt that he understood me and took in everything I was saying and that helped me ALOT at the time I didn't realize it but as I got older and went through different events out my life I developed a strength that I know I would not have had if I didn't receive services. Counseling is **not** quick and it's **not** easy—but it really is worth it.



LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE

Stress. Less.

Going Strong!

Love the skin you're in.

Psychologist

Love is blind, it
will take over
your mind. What
you think is love
is truly not, you
need to elevate
and find. - Eve

By Rachel Wax 2008



Stripper Mechele Linehan, now a doctor's wife and
is found guilty of plotting a murder 11 years ago

What is important about the relationship between you and your counselor?

- What's important about treatment provider and the youth is that the therapist should know his/her patient and not just look at this child as a "patient" but as someone that has been through something tragic whatever the situation. I'm not saying get emotionally attached but understand that [he or she is] a human and not a "patient" or a "victim".
- Trust can be a huge issue between treatment provider and youth, and it can take a while before the youth trusts a provider.
- Playing games with the provider is helpful in treatment.
- Youth appreciate a provider who does not judge.
- The age of the therapist is helpful—a youth may feel more comfortable with a younger therapist
- A provider who is able to get on the youth's level and make them feel comfortable
- It is important to youth when they can get a sense of the therapist's life too—it helps with building trust and healing
- People need to have a choice of therapists. This information needs to be provided at the beginning of treatment, so the youth knows that if their first therapist is not a good fit, they can ask for someone else. It is necessary to feel a connection in some way with a therapist. Youth may want to find a therapist with 'my style'.
- It is important for many youth to feel that a therapist has been through some of the same experiences because that makes it easier to trust a therapist with details. That helps build trust. Youth want therapists to truly care and not to look down on their clients. Youth also know whether a therapist is faking it. If a therapist isn't into it that day, might as well call it off for the day, because we will know.
- Sometimes therapists have to set boundaries (for example, if telling a therapist that one is thinking about killing oneself, this information might have to be passed to someone else). In some situations, counselors have to refer kids to another therapist if they receive certain information. This situation can break trust. It may force a youth or child to self-censor what they say in order to stay with the same therapist they know and trust. Sometimes bending the rules may keep a youth engaged.
- Honesty is the most important thing, by far. You have to be honest with your counselor and your counselor has to be honest with you. You might hear things you don't really want to hear, but sometimes those are the most important things. If your counselor isn't honest with you, the counseling is a waste of time, because you know you can't really believe what they say.

Buy
Can money
Love or
Jewelry ?



listening to sad music, crying all day,
not wanting to get out of bed...
It's a grieving process.
I have to feel the pain in order to process it.
A big part of that is also forgiving the other person
for letting yourself for feeling like you failed

Stay Friends
Forever!!!
♥



Happy
kisses
a smile

Love
or
Hate

You Are your



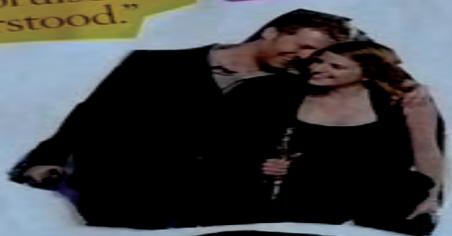
HERO

HAPPINESS IS the greatest gift



"I have come to believe...that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood."

Everyone has problems and always know you're NEVER alone



There is no reason to change yourself because you are BEAUTIFUL



YOU





What words of advice and hope do you have for families?

- Talk to your kid and don't hover over them. Give them space. They will come to you when they are ready.
- Tell them that you love them a lot but don't be like hovering over them and show that you love them and are there for them.
- Don't give up on hope that they are gonna get better. Just believe and trust that they are gonna get better.
- Everything's gonna be ok. There are people who have been through the same thing and they have been ok. Have faith that things will be ok.
- We don't let it take over our life. You can get over it even if it is hard to.
- I would tell the parents that regardless of what has happened what is important is the now, and you made the right decision in getting your child help, it's not only good for the child but it shows your son/daughter that mommy/daddy cares and what happened should not be ignored and this help will help you heal.
- Don't give up. It's easy to think you can't make it—but you gotta keep trying—and you can make it—just don't give up. If you give up, then it's all over.





BE TRANSFORMED

SEE WHAT WE SEE.

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