Mentoring Youth Who May Have Experienced Trauma

Strategies for Building Strong Mentoring Relationships

- Understand mentee through a trauma-sensitive lens
- Provide authentic empathy and attunement
  - "No-matter-what" caring
- 5:1 ratio for relationship “deposits” to “withdrawals” (ratio of affirmations to criticisms/confrontations)
- Do not take mentee’s behavior personally
- Provide student with a different response than the one they typically get
  - Listening, attempting to understand vs. judgment and admonishment
- Avoid blaming
  - Reframe current situations as relational/contextual factors vs. personal failure
- Convey hope and empowerment
- Acknowledge mistakes when they happen and find healthy ways to move on
- Connect with student’s other caregivers
- Be a strong advocate for your mentee

Quick Tips Supporting Yourself Throughout the Day

- Do not take things so personally
- Have realistic expectations for yourself
- Simplify things when possible
- Give yourself a brain break
- Drink water
- Treat yourself to something you enjoy
- Address the positive
  - Acknowledge and savor something positive that happens in your sessions
- Check in with yourself when you feel "your rider falling off your horse"
  - Stop and ask yourself, “What is happening here?” “What do I need?”
- Decompress at the end of the day
  - Participate in everyday rituals
  - Listen to music
- Know that you are doing the best you can, given the deck of cards you have been handed at any moment
  - This self-compassion can help you do better next time

Healing Resources

- Greater Good Science Center  https://ggsc.berkeley.edu
- Collaborative Problem Solving  https://www.livesinthebalance.org

Adapted from J. Dorado & L. Dolce (2012), UCSF HEARTS, Child & Adolescent Services, UCSF/SFGH
L. Vargas, San Francisco Unified School District, MFS, 2015