



Partnership
with Children

Courageous Conversations Series
Addressing Trauma During Times of Crisis
Part 1: Young People Experience Trauma Too

Post-Webinar Q&As

- 1. I teach at risk youth between the ages of 16-24. One of my student's passed away last week. How do I deal with this traumatic experience not only as a teacher (workforce developer and trainer) but also in terms of talking about it with my students?**

Deepest condolences to you and the school community. First, be sure to access the supports that you need for yourself. Whether it be to seek out counseling support, or that you have someone in your network that can support you. We cannot take care of others if we have not taken care of ourselves. Next, it is important to be able to "join" the students in their shock and pain, meaning to acknowledge the difficulty of the situation without trying to "make it better" or "cheer them up". Also, have referrals ready for students to access if there is a need for additional counseling support. Lastly, remember to include parents and caregivers in this work. It will be important for them to be able to support their children as they grieve the loss of their friend and/or classmate.

Scholastic has a great [resource page](#) for teachers that speaks about helping children who experience grief. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) also has some [resources](#) for teachers and administrators when someone in the school community dies.

- 2. Can we get some resources on how to conduct virtual trauma-centric groups with young adults? What are some useful ice-breakers that create safety virtually? I am struggling with keeping them engaged and getting them to participate.**

It sounds like the youth may not be ready to focus on trauma and it will take some time to develop trust to want to become vulnerable to share their trauma. Perhaps they don't know the others in the group; perhaps they do not like the video format (some thoughts

were shared in the live broadcast on how best to accommodate and be sensitive to the varying issues and feelings youth are experiencing now in regards to privacy and appearance). If it is an engagement issue, there will be some suggestions in the resources. You can also utilize stories from [this website](#) as a way to discuss similar or adjacent experiences that youth have written about. Once trust is built in the group, you can move on to reflecting how the presented topic is similar to their experiences.

You can also do fun intro activities such as home scavenger hunts, sharing a favorite item on screen that has a memory attached, or creating a playlist together that helps express how they are feeling that day, week or during the pandemic shut down, etc.

- 3. I work for a UPK center previously owned by ACS. We have not been guided or given resources to support families in this transition in remote learning. Our director has been trying to get in contact with the department of education to see if we have permission to go live or host video chats... We are practically in May and all the information we have received is how to keep safe and healthy from the virus. We need more guidance and support. I feel like we have been left in the dark.**

This sounds incredibly challenging and I'm sorry you all are experiencing these on-going challenges. I would continue to reach out to the DOE for guidance on this. That being said, I consulted with another early childhood provider and [here's](#) some information they have received from their instructional coordinator. [This one](#) was referenced in the most recent bulletin.

As for Google for Education, here's a portion of the information from the most recent e-mail:

"The DOE will be providing NYCEEC teachers with access to DOE's Google for Education Suite by creating Google accounts under the DOEexternal.nyc domain. With this Google account, NYCEEC teachers and leaders will have access to Google Classroom, Google Meet which allows for conferencing with 150 users, and many other applications. They will also be able to communicate with early childhood families who have DOE google accounts. It is up to the program leader to decide if your program uses these accounts to support children and families with remote learning.

The Google for Education accounts will be distributed on Monday to all NYCEEC teachers and leaders who have Protraxx professional learning accounts and have attended at least one professional learning session this year.

If you need assistance with Google resources, please find some below. We will be providing more information next week on how to add students to your Google Classroom.

Intro to Google Classroom

<https://teachercenter.withgoogle.com/first-day-trainings/welcome-to-classroom>

Google Classroom 101 Video

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VGNCWxqNmhvzlyPcWXM7WxMeEmo09L2/view>

Google Meet Training Agenda

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NYbv3RkCgY3HVuU8k8GSKSIMSJe145_yBl_oSIJPFtg/edit

Google Meet Training Video

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/116kDng0wlAhMEV2kFLmmdCj5OA5FzI1X/view>

If you do not receive an email by next Tuesday with your Google account information, please use this link to sign up for a Protraxx account: <http://bit.ly/ProtraxxRegistration>.

If you have additional questions, please email earlychildhood@schools.nyc.gov."

There was a lot more information shared in this email from EarlyChildhood@schools.nyc.gov. Be sure to reach out to them for the rest of the information, including surveys on technology for families and important dates for accessing learning devices. We hope this helps!

4. Do you have any best practices that you have used during the crisis directed to different age groups?

Thank you for this question. I think this depends on what the role of the person is and the goal(s) of the service(s). In regards to general support during this time, being understanding and recognizing that this time is a challenging one for all and that we all may respond differently, creating space for others (any age group) to share & explore where they are, their understanding, what they are feeling/experiencing, and what they need. This will inform how best to support each person. There are also some resources (included in follow-up materials) that have some guidance regarding age-appropriate language and some content regarding age development context.

Please check the resources distributed with the slides. The interventions will reflect the type of interactions you are intending to have. If it is counseling/therapeutic in focus, for younger kids (think 10 and under) you can research videos on creating and engaging with sock puppets. For kids in older elementary and up, you can create stories together, play an online game together (Uno, Chess, Checkers, Mancala), or you can assign meanings to colors of Uno cards and each color means you have to share a particular thought or do a

fun movement. For middle school and up, art activities, journaling, writing, creating a song together, creating a video/movie and then sharing it, create a music playlist. [Youth Communication](#) is a great resource for true stories written by youth that you can read together and discuss.

5. What are the best practices/strategies for addressing elementary youth who are experiencing nightmares regarding death (some related to COVID-19 and some not)?

It sounds like this child might benefit from talking about their feelings, worries/fears and getting some factual information about those worries that may help reduce the intensity of their anxiety/fear about death/illness. If these nightmares persist, getting some professional support for this child may be needed.

A great book to read about this is "Play Based Interventions for Childhood Anxieties, Fears and Phobias" edited by Athena Drewes and Charles Schaefer. There is a chapter on nightmares. [Here](#) is a great article on interventions with nightmares.

It's important that you validate that someone did die that they were anxious about dying and that even though it has happened, and they were anxious about it happening, you can work with them using CBT to come to the understanding that they did not cause the death. Please also take into consideration what the cultural and religious beliefs the child may have about death and dreams. Your approach should be sensitive to (and do some research to understand) the meaning their family holds for these occurrences.

6. What are some ways to be aware of possible new triggers developing while working with young people who might be suffering from COVID-19 related grief that you might be dealing with as well? What should we be looking for within ourselves?

I think you bring up an important factor to consider—reflecting on what you as the "helping professional" are experiencing on your own and how that is finding its way into your work and practice. I think you have to be really proactive in noticing what you are finding challenging and triggering and finding the support you need to be ok and work through your feelings and experiences to be fully present for your client, or knowing whether you need to pass that client on to someone else at your agency.