Children's Home Society of North Carolina

Exploring the "Trauma Lens"

To understand the trauma lens, we need to understand what trauma is, how it manifests, and what to do when a child exhibits trauma symptoms. Trauma refers to experiences that are overwhelming and may leave a person, feeling helpless, vulnerable, or very frightened. For children, trauma is often about more than physical harm. For instance, separation from a caregiver, emotional neglect, and lack of a stable home (such as living in many different foster homes), may be very traumatic. Trauma in childhood is now understood to cause long-term effects on the brain and body.

The trauma lens is a way to help us stop, think, reflect, and ask ourselves: What am I really seeing? What is this child really in need of? How can I best support this child? Looking through the "trauma lens" helps identify and support children and families who are at risk by observing attachment, resilience, and stress responses. When observing these things, more is learned about the child, their family, and their trauma. Knowing the history of the child's trauma ensures that they are

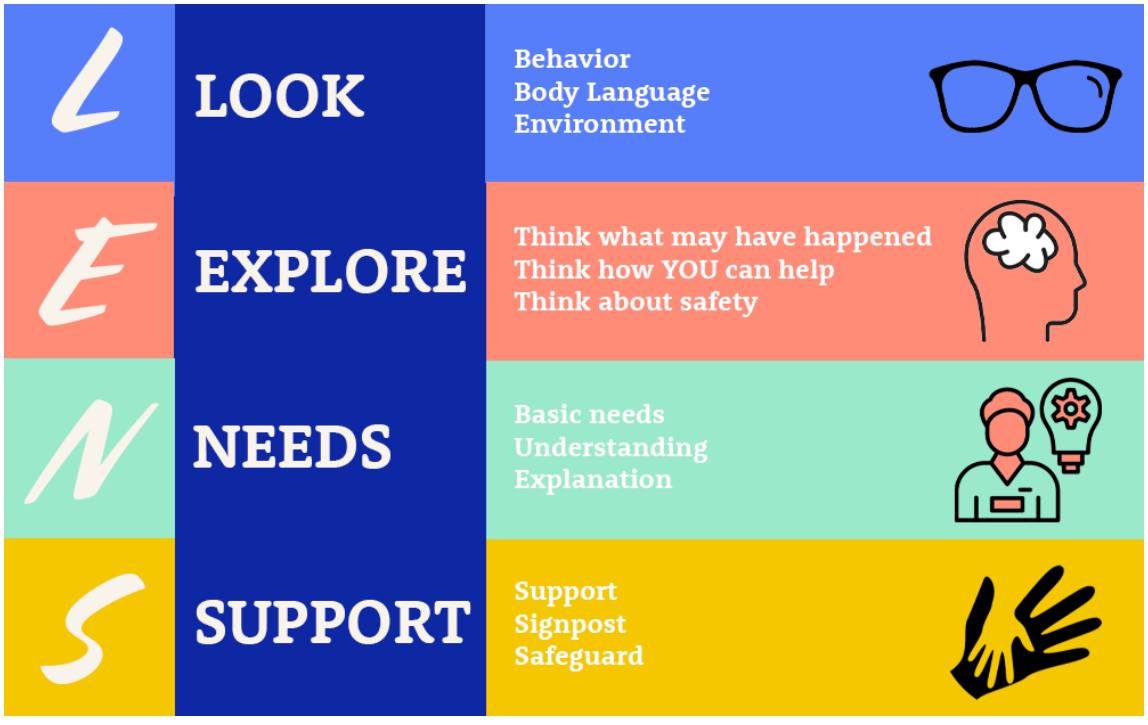
receiving appropriate support. Just as when an explorer discovers something above the surface, they continue to probe, to discover what is underneath before excavating it; those looking through a trauma lens seek to find the underlying cause of the problem, before implementing strategies and/or interventions.

Applying a trauma lens helps us consider an alternative response and encourages us to ask, "*What is really going on here?*" instead of "*What is wrong with this child?*"

Trauma Lens Activate

Here are a few tips for using your trauma LENS

Look, Explore, Needs & Support



Where might YOU *use a trauma lens this month?*