



TIPS FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA

Thank you for showing up for Utah's vulnerable youth in foster care. Your affirming support and connection will help build resilience, strength, and belonging, which helps foster healing and hope for the future. As you spend time with the youth, here are a few tips to help make this a great experience for everyone!

- Celebrate small achievements and encourage self-esteem.
- Take a stance of "not knowing" and remember youth are the experts on their lives and have wisdom to share.
- Practice wondering "What's happened to you?" rather than, "What's wrong with you?"
- Listen. Don't feel the need to respond with answers or solutions. Use open-ended questions that invite curiosity.
- Try to respond rather than react.
- If a youth appears disrespectful, remember they likely aren't trying to be. Practice patience.
- Don't take behavior personally. Without judgement, allow the youth to feel their feelings.
- Limit "Why?" questions.
- Stay in the present moment and respond with compassion and acceptance.
- When you make a mistake—acknowledge and apologize modeling vulnerability, courage, and honesty.
- Food hoarding isn't uncommon. No need to say anything or limit their snack or food intake.
- Physical touch can be uncomfortable or alarming. Avoid physical touch, unless they take the initiative.



QUESTIONS TO ASK FOSTER PARENTS

as you offer physical, practical, and emotional support

Where could you use extra time in your day?

What items on your to-do list can we check off for you?

What household chores or projects can we take off your plate?

Which members of your family need extra support or attention this week?

What could a parent helper do for you today or this week?

Which days are your busiest this week, and would food, errands, or help with children be best?

How can we give you and your spouse time together this week?

How can we give you time for yourself this week?

What can we do to help you spend less time in the car this week?

What does support look like for you today? A listening ear, words of support, time back in your day, a physical burden taken care of, time together as a family, etc...

What needs do the children in your home have that we can understand better?