What causes traumatic stress?
- Exposure to violence (domestic, sexual, community)
- Neglect or abandonment
- Serious/life threatening illnesses and accidents
- Acts of physical or sexual abuse
- Natural disasters
- Military family-related stress
- Stressors that overwhelm a person ability to cope (sudden death, loss of job, etc)

SIGNS OF TRAUMA
- Quick to anger
- Feelings of guilt or shame
- Dissociation
- Anxious/high alert
- Reckless, destructive behavior
- Physical symptoms (aches and pains)
- Highly controlling of environment

SIGNS OF ADHD/ADD
- Difficulty staying attentive
- Struggling to follow instructions
- Difficulty with organization
- Fidgeting or squirming
- Difficulty waiting or taking turns
- Excessive talking/blurtting
- Interrupting or intruding upon others

OVERLAPPING SIGNS
- Difficulty concentrating and learning in school
- Easily distracted
- Difficulties in self regulation and impulse control
- Disorganized
- Hyperactive/restless
- Avoidance behaviors
- Difficulty with eating and sleeping

A CHILD WHO HAS EXPERIENCED TRAUMA MAY BE MISDIAGNOSED WITH ADHD, ADD, AND VARIOUS OTHER DIAGNOSIS’ WITHOUT A DIAGNOSIS IN TRAUMA AND/OR PTSD

KIDS WHO HAVE ENDURED FOUR OR MORE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EVENTS ARE 3X MORE LIKELY TO BE PRESCRIBED ADHD MEDICATION

Sources:
https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//is_it_adhd_or_child_traumatic_stress.pdf
http://childmind.org/blog/trauma-can-be-misdiagnosed-as-adhd/
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/07/140723071931.htm
https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/adhd/symptoms-causes/syc-20350889
https://childmind.org/blog/trauma-can-be-misdiagnosed-as-adhd/
**Helping Kids Understand Feelings**

Show your kids how to express and handle emotions, parents modeling their own emotions, work on regulating emotions and behavioral reactions. Example: teach to share, encourage to express emotions, listen when they express emotion.

**Parenting as Children Grow**

Learn skills to support your child’s growth, promote safety and build routines. Examples: try different strategies for managing behavior, look for parenting information and tools, nurture kids as they grow.

**Building Inner Strength**

Stay flexible and calm during times of stress. Teach stress management and relaxation skills. Increase self care. Examples: count to 10 before reacting, take time to recharge, stay flexible when things don’t go right.

**Knowing How to Find Help**

Seek support and accept help in times of need, open and safe communication between child and protective parent. Examples: taking help when offered, search for resources you need, advocate for your family.

**Connecting with Others**

Build a network of people who care about you and your family, build social connections, use positive play with others, ask when you need help. Examples: try something new to make new friends, surround kids with safe and supportive adults, turn off devices when it’s time to connect and give attention.

**Tips to Support Difficult Behaviors**

Recognize the emotion, understand the source, label the emotion, express the emotion - even when negative, teach a specific coping skill.

**Positive Phrases for a Struggling Child**

I am here for you. It is okay to feel ___. Would you like to talk about what’s happening? It’s okay to express your feelings. Do you want a hug? I feel ___ sometimes too.

Sources: fiveforfamilies.org, Instagram @traumainformedparent