Building Skills to Foster Resilience

Program staff can incorporate strategies for supporting skill-building for survivors in their settings on a regular basis. The Attachment, Regulation, and Competency or “ARC” framework is useful for supporting skill-building. Providers focus on integrating practices for supporting relationship-building, self-regulation, and a range of concrete skills that promote survivor success.

Regardless of the skills to be developed, educating survivors about trauma and its effects is an important service component.

Skill-Building Checklist

Use this checklist to consider how the program supports survivor attachment, self-regulation, and competency. Put a check next to the strategies that you believe the program regularly integrates and put an X near the items that you believe are areas for further growth.

#### Attachment

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | The program strives to maintain safe and respectful relationships with survivors that are informed by an understanding of the effects of trauma on attachment. |
|  | The program identifies and trains staff on core strategies for fostering trusting relationships with survivors. |
|  | The program has a process for monitoring quality of engagement with survivors. |
|  | Staff work to repair relationships with survivors when disruptions occur. |
|  | Survivors receive support in building new relationships/connections. |
|  | The program incorporates community-building rituals where applicable. |
|  | Where applicable, programs work to foster parent-child attachment (e.g., parent education, modeling healthy interactions, formal interventions and informal activities) |
|  | The program supports survivors in strengthening identified cultural connections. |
|  | Survivors have opportunities to share their cultural backgrounds and experiences. |
|  | Program staff demonstrate respect for cultural differences among survivors. |
|  | The program assists staff in identifying internal biases that may skew how they engage with survivors. |
|  | Program staff model positive and respectful relationships with survivors. |
|  | The program environment/culture supports relationship-building among survivors and between survivors and staff. |

#### Regulation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | The program educates survivors (and their children) about the effects of stress and traumatic stress on the brain and body. |
|  | The program teaches survivors (and their children) self-regulation techniques such as breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, journaling, other mindfulness practices. |
|  | The program encourages nonverbal means of expression such as music, art, dance, and yoga. |
|  | The program helps survivors expand their emotional vocabulary and their capacity to identify physical sensations related to particular feelings. |
|  | Survivors receive positive support when having difficulties with self-regulation (e.g., trauma-informed crisis prevention and de-escalation techniques are employed). |
|  | The program helps survivors identify potential situations or experiences that lead to feeling overwhelmed and struggling to manage emotions. |
|  | The program provides opportunities for survivors to practice ways of coping with potentially stressful experiences. |
|  | The program fosters an environment that supports self-regulation for survivors (e.g., calm, respectful, attuned to survivor’s needs). |
|  | The program integrates routines and rituals that are designed to promote survivor self-regulation (e.g., morning or evening rituals in residential programs, opening and closing rituals to meetings, regular use of mindfulness practices). |
|  | The program ensures that survivors (and their children) have access to trauma-specific clinical interventions as needed. |
|  | The program assists staff in managing emotional reactions and behaviors using techniques such as mindfulness strategies. |
|  | Program staff are encouraged to practice self-care strategies. |

#### Competency

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | The program assists survivors in accurately assessing their own capabilities and qualities. |
|  | Program staff regularly acknowledge survivors’ strengths. |
|  | The program provides opportunities for survivors to feel successful. |
|  | The program provides survivors with opportunities to articulate their vision for the future. |
|  | The program ensures that survivors have a decision-making role related to program services and practices. |
|  | Survivors are encouraged to develop their own strategies for achieving a particular goal. |
|  | The program environment is one in which survivors’ thoughts and opinions are valued. |
|  | The program assists survivors in building competencies in key areas including: interviewing skills, safety planning, building and sustaining healthy relationships, and problem-solving. |
|  | Program staff are aware of the ways that exposure to trauma might interfere with competency-building. (For example, dealing with an authoritative boss at work may remind a survivor of past trauma; finding housing may trigger fears of isolation or safety issues.) |
|  | Providers help survivors to anticipate potential triggers ahead of time and help survivors to navigate situations that may be difficult but are necessary to achieve their goals. |