REACH HURTING KIDS
INSTITUTE

THE REACH HURTING KIDS WORKSHOP

MODULE 3

Reaching and Teaching Hurting Kids

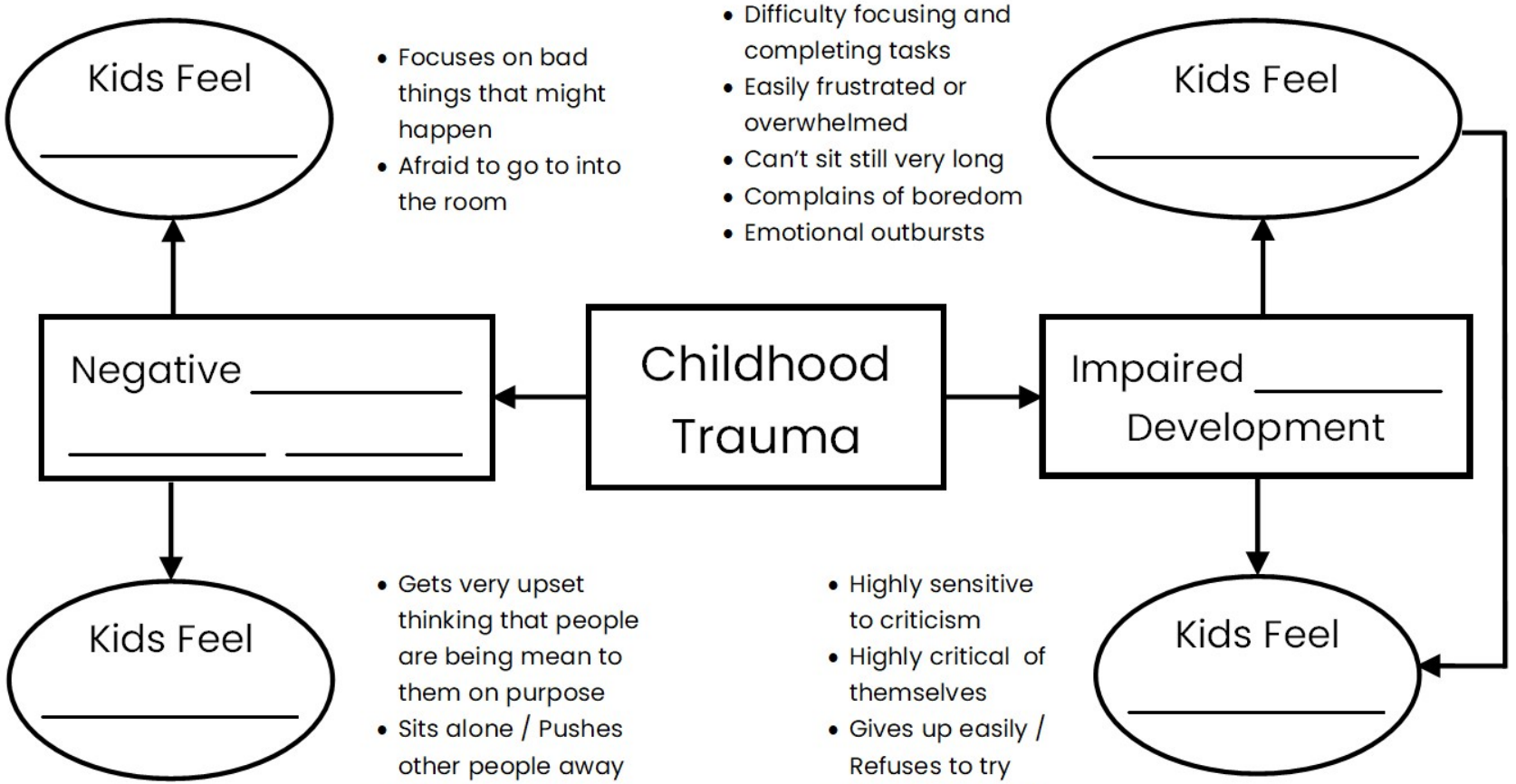
"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

- 1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)

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How Trauma Affects Learning



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Focus Group Interview Transcript

INTERVIEWER: Are the adults here at church different from the adults at your school?

CHILDREN (ALL): Yes!

DIEGO: Here at church, they're really nice. When you do something wrong, they are like, "Hey, it's okay." Instead of rubbing it in your face.

ISAAC: That's the reason I like this church. They don't scream at me like a teacher will scream.

NATHAN: The teachers at school are really mean. No matter what I do, I feel like I can't do anything right. So I feel better at church because they don't do that. Instead, they try to encourage you.

DIEGO: For every paper my teacher gives you, he expects you to be done with it a little bit after he gives it to you. Almost every kid gets finished with it. I just . . . it's hard for me. I think the adults here are better than the school adults because the adults here are more patient.

MADELYN: At my school, they kind of rush you. They're just like, give you the paper, blah blah blah, take the test. At school, it's just flat out boring. But here we actually have fun.

ISAAC: I like church because we do activities like going outside for Easter egg hunts. We don't just stay inside.

DIEGO: My teacher at school is legit doodoo. A couple of days ago, I asked, "What if we had a lockdown right now?" You want to hear what he said? He said, "We'll wait in the corner until somebody comes in and shoots us!" I don't see why he doesn't get fired. He shouldn't act like that. That's traumatizing. I despise the teachers at school! I *despise* them!

NATHAN: We all do, Diego. We all do.

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The Implicit Gospel

Every week during the Sunday school hour, you are welcomed to "Breakfast Club." Kids and adults gather around the table to share their lives with each other. Everyone always has a seat at the table. It feels like a real family.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is … peace … gentleness, and self -control ."
- Gal. 5:22-23 (NIV)

You just got in trouble for the *third* time this morning. You go sit by yourself because you think you are a bad Christian and that God doesn't love you anymore. Ms. Alyssa comes and sits beside you. She says that you are very special to her and that she cares about you even when you mess up.

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"
- 1 John 3:1 (NIV)

Mr. Andrew notices that you're having trouble sitting still during the lesson. He invites you to the back of the room to help prepare an activity for the group. Once you're feeling calmer, he offers you a fidget toy to hold and sends you back to your seat.

"For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline ."
- 2 Tim. 1:7 (ASV)

You feel anxious during Sunday school because you're afraid the teacher will call on you and you won't know the answer. To avoid embarrassment, you always fool around and disrupt the class. Pastor Micah invites you to join a Bible study on Sunday afternoons so you can learn more about scripture and feel confident at church.

"For I am convinced that … nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord ."
- Rom. 8:38-39 (NIV)

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Case Study Reflection

How do you think this experience at church affected Ethan's life?

How might this experience have affected Ethan differently if Pastor Tracy had lowered her expectations for him?

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Trauma-Informed Teaching Strategies*

Word Wall	**Multiple Modalities**
Think of the key words you want your kids to know (e.g., "gospel," "reverence," "Trinity"). Post them on the wall with a simple, clear definition. Review the words each week at the start of the lesson and reference them repeatedly as you use them in context.	Instead of just talking, add other types of input, such as music, movements, videos, pictures, or maps. When speaking, try to slow down and use gestures, synonyms, examples, and shorter sentences to make your words easier to understand.
Think, Write, Pair, Share	**Cooperative Learning**
Instead of just raising their hands, kids respond to a question by thinking about it, writing down their answer, and then sharing their answer with he person next to them.	Kids work with partners or in groups. For example, each group could draw a different part of the passage on poster paper and then take turns explaining their drawing.
Graphic Organizer	**Active Reading**
Graphic organizers (like Venn diagrams, flow charts, and mind maps) are diagrams that help kids process and develop ideas visually. Here is an example of a graphic organizer that kids can use to write their own prayer:  	Instead of reading passively, kids engage actively with the text. Try printing a passage in large font on a piece of copy paper. As they read it silently, they put a question mark by anything they don't understand and an exclamation point by anything that surprises them and underline what stands out to them. Afterward, ask them to tell you what they marked and underlined and why. They could also draw a picture of the story at the bottom of the page or predict what will happen next in the story.
Total Physical Response	**Wait Time**
Kids respond with their bodies instead of their words. They answer a question by walking to different sides of the room, giving a thumbs-up or thumbs-down, or standing up to indicate that they have experienced something.	Teachers typically give kids only about two seconds to answer a question. The quickest thinkers end up answering every time. Instead, count to ten slowly in your head before you call on anyone. It feels like a long time, but more kids will participate.

* Adapted with permission from *Trauma-Informed Children's Ministry: A Practical Guide to Reaching Hurting Kids* by Robert and Lori Crosby.

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