

Working with Younger Children in Bounce Back

TIPS FROM EXPERIENCED BOUNCE BACK CLINICIANS

Caregiver Engagement

The sharing of the trauma narrative with a caregiver is a key component of Bounce Back. If the caregiver is unable to participate, a clinician may obtain permission for the child to share their trauma narrative with another trusted adult. This person could be another family member or even faculty member in the school. Psychoeducation should be provided to this person before the sharing of the narrative.

Language Modification

When talking to younger children, it's important to keep things simple. They might not yet be able to understand complicated ideas or abstract concepts. Stick to easy words and real-life examples that make sense to them. Instead of "trauma" or "PTSD," try using "stressful" or "scary" when talking about the event to make it more relatable for them. Young minds process information in their own way, so using simple, concrete terms helps them better grasp the concepts.

Group Modification

ADJUST

Since sitting in a group for an hour can be difficult for some age groups, some clinicians choose to **split each session into two shorter 20-30 minute segments.** However, this would extend the overall duration of the group beyond the typical 10 weeks, so it's important to start such a group earlier in the year to accommodate this adjustment.

VISUALIZE

Utilize pictures of people's faces when teaching about feelings. Ensure that materials feature a range of racial and ethnic groups so that **children can see others who look like themselves** in these images.

REWARD

One of our teams has implemented "**Bounce Back Bucks.**" Kids are able to earn these during group for participation and following expectations. They have the option to purchase smaller prizes throughout the program with their bucks or save them to redeem a large prize at the end of the group, with a "prize menu" showing what can be traded in on specific reward days. The prizes can be tailored to the group's interests.