



**Indiana**  
**Department**  
**of**  
**Health**

# HEALING THROUGH GROWTH: YOUTH GARDENING, GENERATIONAL TRAUMA, AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

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OUR MISSION:

**To promote, protect, and improve  
the health and safety of all Hoosiers.**

OUR VISION:

**Every Hoosier reaches optimal health  
regardless of where they live, learn,  
work, or play.**



# Introductions

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**Megan Paskey**  
Community Food Systems  
Coordinator, IDOH  
Division of Nutrition and  
Physical Activity



**Jenna Sperry**  
Child Wellness  
Coordinator, IDOH  
Division of Nutrition and  
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**Victoria Beaty**  
Executive Director,  
Growing Places Indy



# Introduction to Trauma-Informed Care



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# What is Trauma?

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## Individual Trauma:

- Event(s) or circumstances that are perceived as physically or emotionally harmful to an individual
- Has lasting adverse effects on functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual wellbeing

## Community Trauma:

- Affects social groups that have been long subjected to interpersonal violence, structural violence, and historical harms
- Caused by "root causes of social inequities, including poverty, racism, sexism, oppression and power dynamics, and the erasure of culture and communities" - Urban Institute



# Impacts of Trauma

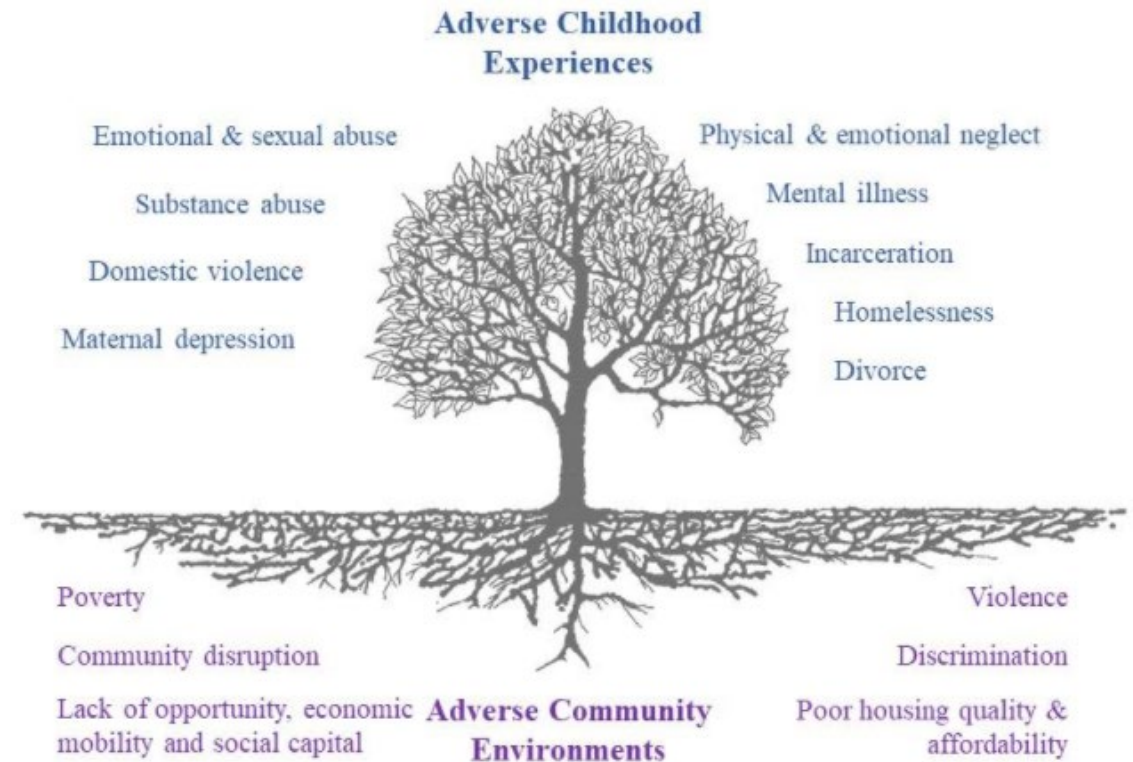
## Individual trauma can increase the risk of:

- Depression
- Maladaptive coping strategies (e.g., substance misuse, unhealthy eating, etc.)
- Chronic health conditions (e.g., heart disease)

## Community trauma can:

- Create conditions that contribute to individual trauma
- Be passed down through generations
- Limit available resources
- Impede communities from flourishing

### THE PAIR OF ACES TREE



SOURCE: ELLIS, W. & DIETZ, W. (2017). A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING ADVERSE CHILDHOOD AND ADVERSE COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES: THE BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE MODEL. ACADEMIC PEDIATRICS, 17(7S), S86-S92.

# Trauma in Children & Adolescents

## Prevalence:

- More than two-thirds of children experience at least one traumatic event by age 16
- At least one in seven children have experienced abuse and/or neglect in the past year

## At school, children with three or more ACEs are:

- Five times more likely to have attendance issues
- Six times more likely to have behavior problems
- Three times more likely to experience academic failure

## Some behaviors of trauma-exposed students:

- Inability to regulate emotions (may seem impulsive, defiant, and/or aggressive)
- Appear disconnected or disinterested
- Perfectionism
- Delays in developing social skills



# What is Trauma-Informed Care?

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“Trauma-informed care understands and considers the pervasive nature of trauma and promotes environments of healing and recovery rather than practices and services that may inadvertently re-traumatize.” – University of Buffalo

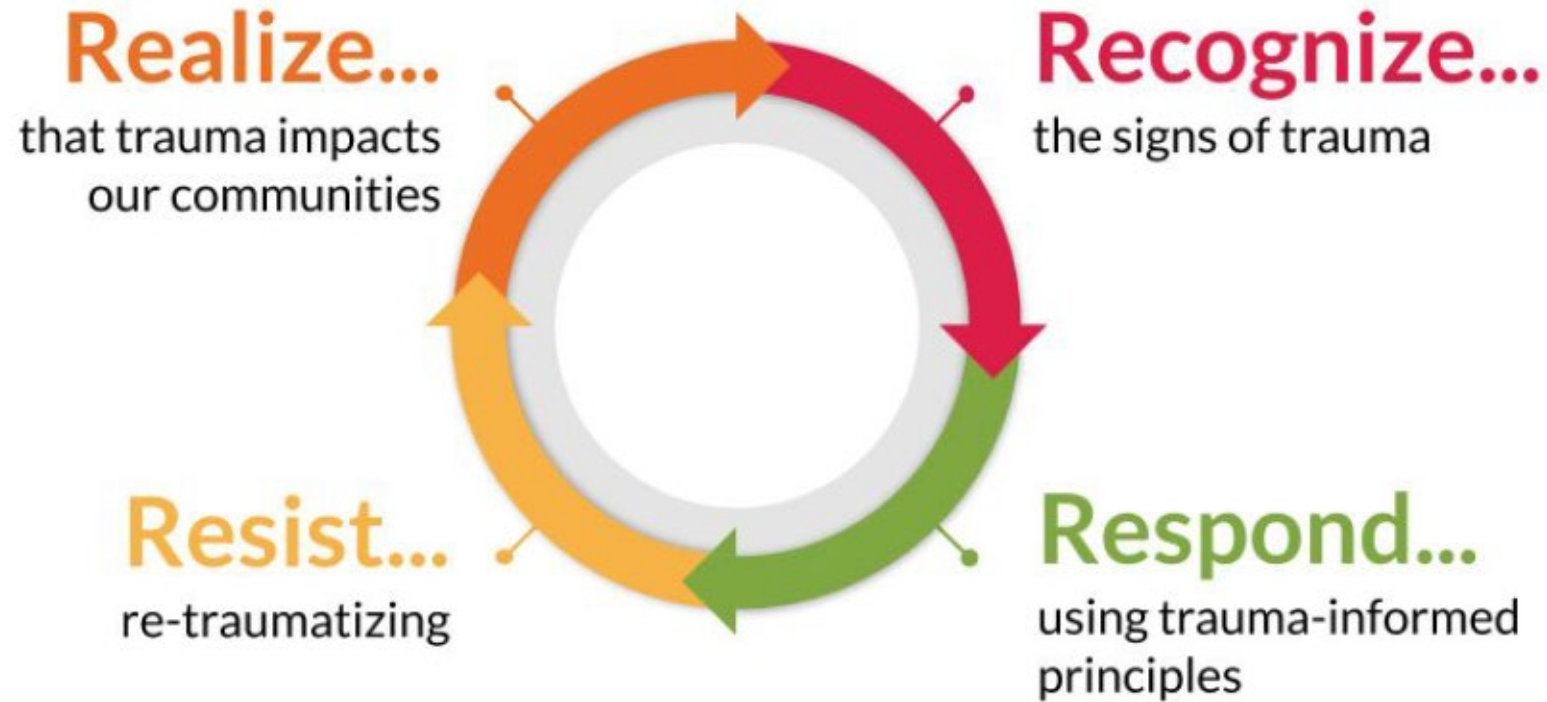
## **Trauma-informed care (TIC):**

- Assumes people are more likely than not to have a history of trauma
- Strives to understand the whole individual
- Recognizes the symptoms of trauma and the role it can play in someone's life
- Changes organizational culture to emphasize respect
- Requires systems change (i.e., policy, procedure, and practice change)
- Does not treat symptoms of abuse directly, but provides support in an appropriate way as to not retraumatize



# Key Assumptions of a Trauma-Informed Approach

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# What Can Retraumatize?

## Systems:

- Being treated as a number
- Being labeled
- Having no choice in services
- Having no opportunity to provide feedback



## Relationships:

- Use of oppressive language
- Does things *for* rather than *with*
- Violating trust
- Noncollaboration
- Punitive treatment
- Use of coercion



# Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach



## 1. SAFETY

*Is my wellbeing at risk?*



## 2. TRUSTWORTHINESS & TRANSPARENCY

*Are the people who say they will help me, actually helping me?*



## 3. PEER SUPPORT

*Am I alone in this?*



## 4. COLLABORATION & MUTUALITY

*Are you "with me" rather than directing me and having power over me?*



## 5. EMPOWERMENT VOICE & CHOICE

*Can I have a say in what happens to me?*



## 6. CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, & GENDER ISSUES

*Will you acknowledge my experiences and beliefs and treat me with respect and dignity?*

# Trauma-Informed Schools

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## 10 Core Areas:

1. Policies to identify and assess traumatic stress in students
2. Supports for prevention and intervention related to trauma
3. Trauma education and awareness (routine and for all)
4. Partner with students and families
5. Create a trauma-informed learning environment
6. Cultural responsiveness
7. Create an emergency management or crisis response system
8. Staff self-care training and support for secondary traumatic stress
9. Prevention-based school discipline policies and practices
10. Cross-system collaboration and community partnerships





# Farm to School & Trauma-Informed Care



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# What is Farm to School?

***Kids Win, Farmers Win, Communities Win!***

Farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and early care and education sites. Students gain access to healthy, local foods as well as education opportunities such as school gardens, cooking lessons and farm field trips.



# What is Farm to School?

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Farm to school implementation differs by location but always includes one or more of the following:

**Procurement:** Local foods are purchased, promoted and served in the cafeteria or as a snack or taste-test

**School gardens:** Students engage in hands-on learning through gardening

**Education:** Students participate in education activities related to agriculture, food, health or nutrition

**Farm to ECE:** Farm to Early Care and Education applies the above topic areas to children ages 0 to 5 years old

# Benefits of School Gardening

- Fosters hands-on learning environment
- Allows for student movement and enables sensory exploration
- Provides a setting of responsibility
- Increased frequency of positive emotions
- Development of social emotional skills such as cooperation, sharing, and empathy
- Can explore diversity of diets, culture, traditions, and more
- Increased nutritional awareness
- Increased understanding of science-based concepts

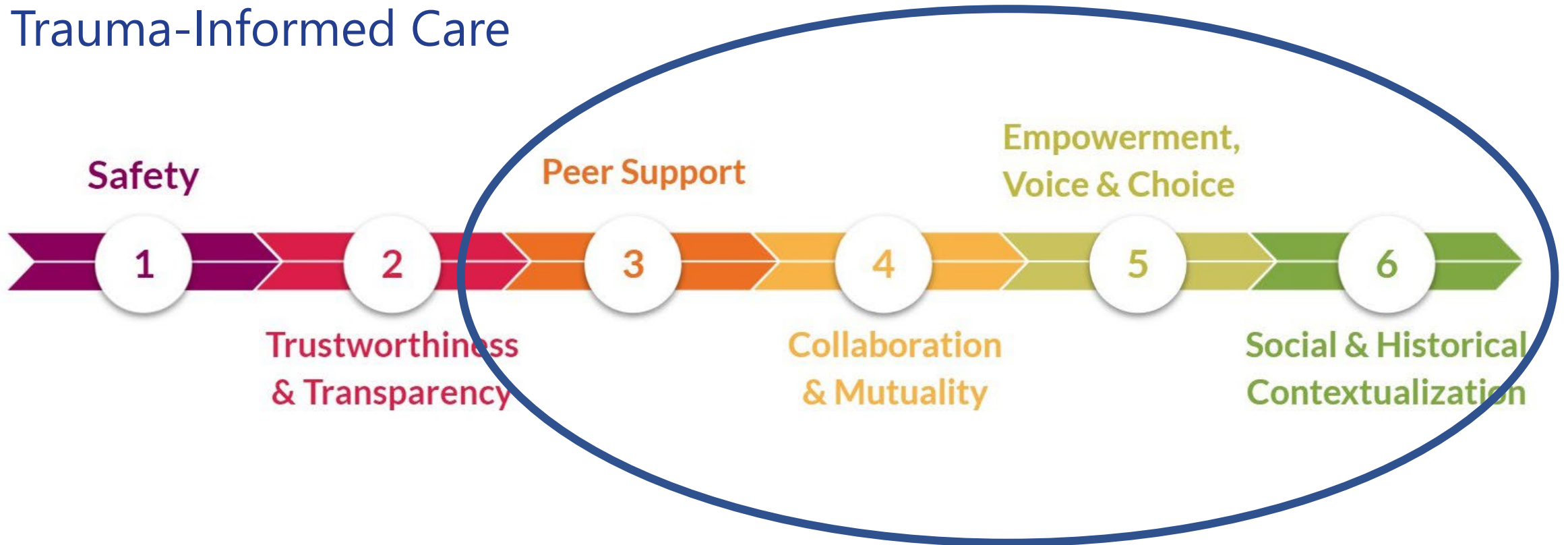


Source: Kid's Place Childcare, Gary, IN

# Farm to School + Trauma-Informed Care

## What is missing in traditional school garden settings?

### Trauma-Informed Care





# What is Peer Support?

- Support participants to build connections with each other and share strategies, skills, and resources
- Use peer support and mutual self-help as key program vehicles to establish safety and hope, build trust, enhance collaboration, and center lived experience





# What is Collaboration and Mutuality?

- Recognize that people are the experts of their own lives
- Recognize that health and well-being require quality relationships and meaningful power-sharing and decision-making
- Build partnerships with co-workers and colleagues, along with participants
- Level power differences between staff and participants

Children are the experts of their experiences and lives! This concept is not reserved for adults.

# Developing Peer Support & Collaboration and Mutuality

- **Establish community and social connections**
  - Remove competition
  - Use community building language
  - Team building activities
  - Routine
  - Appreciations
  - Food sharing
- **Intentional structure**
  - Remove ownership
  - Establish communication strategies



# What is Empowerment, Voice, and Choice?



- Recognize all people as wise, creative and resourceful
- Incorporate an understanding of how individual and community voice and choice have been historically diminished, then seek to mitigate that impact
- Support everyone's dignity and ability to shape their own lives by emphasizing strengths, autonomy, and self-advocacy

# Empowerment, Voice and Choice

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- Leadership Opportunities and Highlighting Strengths
- Building and Using Empowering Language
- Avoiding Power Struggles

Children thrive when feeling a sense of belonging, ownership, and that they are succeeding!



# What is Social and Historical Contextualization?

- Seek to move past cultural and gender stereotypes and biases
- Be responsive to community needs and experiences and leverage the healing value of cultural traditions and communities of belonging
- Incorporate policies, protocols, and processes that are responsive to people's gendered, ethnic, and cultural needs, while recognizing and addressing historical trauma





# Social and Historical Contextualization

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- **Understanding the history** of growing and caring for land within the United States and how the resulting trauma impacts students, families, and communities
- **Honor the work** of farming and land working
- **Recognize your implicit bias**
- **Invite the whole person**

Multi-generational trauma impacts students through their environments, epigenetics, and more.

# Overlap in Activities

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## Farm to School Activities with Gardens

- Taste testing
- Reading diverse books on agriculture and nutrition topics
- Dedicated time in the garden space
- Teamwork environment

## Trauma-Informed Activities in Gardens

- Food sharing
- Exploring culture in the garden and classroom
- Intentional "opening" and "closing" of time in the space
- Community environment through language, leadership responsibilities, and shoutouts

# Positive Outcomes of Trauma-Informed Gardening

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- **Traditional:**
  - Increased attention span due to increased physical activity
  - Increased accommodation of diverse learning styles
  - Development of social emotional skills
  - Foundational understand of nutrition and agricultural and other science-based concepts
- **Additional Outcomes from Trauma-Informed Care:**
  - Empowerment
  - Belonging
  - Ownership



# GROWING PLACES INDY

Our mission is to empower people to cultivate individual, family, and community wellness through urban agriculture, access to fresh local food, and mind-body education.

# Who is Victoria Beaty?

- For five years, I worked for one of the largest brands in the world, McDonald's.
- In 2018, I quit my job in my leadership position and decided to immerse myself in the Indianapolis food system.





# Who is Victoria Beaty?



- Selected Growing Places Indy Apprenticeship Program summer of 2018
- Enrolled in Purdue Extension Urban Agriculture Certificate program, 2018
- Hired as Market Manager end of 2018
- Started as the Executive Director of Growing Places indy in December 2019

# History of Growing Places Indy

Growing Places Indy was founded in the fall of 2009 by Laura Henderson. The first growing season began in the summer of 2010 with Laura and three colleges and two high school students; this was the initial programming effort of Growing Places Indy. In 2011, Laura decided to incorporate her training as a yoga instructor into the program.





# History of Growing Places Indy

Since 2009, our operations have expanded to:

- Four urban farms across Indianapolis, equaling nearly two acres, as well as two greenhouses in year-round production.
- A summer farm stand, the Indy Winter Farmers Market (IWFM), a CSA program, an on-site farm stand, and an online store.
- Offers free educational for experienced farmers to all ages, including after-school and summer camp programs, family cooking and nutrition classes, hands-on volunteer opportunities, tours, workshops.





# Where We Grow





# Where We Grow





# Young Grow Getters

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# DID YOU KNOW?

One in three Hoosier children ages 10-17 are overweight or obese (33.9%). While childhood obesity presents a concern nationally, this issue is especially relevant in Indiana.

Hoosier children are 14.9% more likely to be obese than their peers nationwide. This ranks Indiana as the 9th highest rate of childhood overweight and obesity. In comparison to all neighboring states, Indiana has the highest rate.

# YOUNG GROW GETTERS



Young Grow Getters is a paid, six-week intensive hands-on youth agriculture program led by industry professionals in sustainable farming, culinary arts, food production, and technology, offering real-world experience and career-readiness skills through urban agriculture.



# YOUNG GROW GETTERS

The program is created specifically for high school students ages 15-18 years old in Marion County interested in urban farming and STEM. Our program is open to all high school students, but we give priority to those students who come from underserved communities.





# YOUNG GROW GETTERS



The program is structured as a paid, 6-week intensive hands-on experience that offers real-world experience and career readiness skills. Students are immersed in STEM-based curricula through this program as they learn about the critical relationship between agriculture and science.



# **FARMING WHILE BLACK**

## **LEAH PENNIMAN**

**“STEWARDED OUR OWN LAND, GROWING  
OUR OWN FOOD, EDUCATING OUR OWN  
YOUTH, PARTICIPATING IN OUR OWN  
HEALTHCARE AND JUSTICE SYSTEMS,”  
PENNIMAN WRITES, “THIS IS THE SOURCE  
OF REAL POWER AND DIGNITY.”**





# YOUNG GROW GETTERS





# How You Can Help

- Volunteer with us
- Share our story
- Donate







QUESTIONS?





# Main Takeaways

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- Trauma can occur on the individual and community levels and can have a range of negative effects on children and adolescents.
- Trauma-informed care is an approach that can create an educational environment that promotes healing and prevents re-traumatization.
- Gardening, specifically community gardens, can play a role in individual and community level healing.
- Trauma-informed gardens, even through small changes, can support students' social emotional well-being.

# Questions?

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# Resources

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- Indiana Grown for Schools Network: <https://www.ingrown4schools.com/>
- National Farm to School Network: <https://www.farmtoschool.org/>
- Leah's Pantry: <https://www.leahspantry.org/>
- SAMHSA: <https://www.samhsa.gov/childrens-awareness-day/past-events/2018/child-traumatic-stress-resources>
- Thriving Schools: <https://thrivingschools.kaiserpermanente.org/>
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <https://www.nctsn.org/>
- University of Buffalo: <https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/social-research/institutes-centers/institute-on-trauma-and-trauma-informed-care/Trauma-Informed-Organizational-Change-Manual0.html>