

# epworth moments

## Being **TRAUMA INFORMED**

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## **ENABLED** By Technology

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#### ABOUT US

Epworth Community Services is a Social Service Agency (SSA) that helps at-risk children and youths from needy and disadvantaged families. We want to create a better world for them so that they can develop their potential. Our work focuses on promoting the mental well-being of children and youths by building strong families and imparting skills for resilient living.

#### VISION

Strong Families, Resilient Living, Beautiful Minds.

#### MISSION

To reach out in Christian love, by providing quality programmes and services to all children, youths, parents and their families, of all language, race and religion, and nurturing each family member in body, mind and spirit.

#### EPWORTH MOMENTS

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## EPWORTH E-FLAG DAY

By Shalom Fung, Senior Community Relations Executive

Epworth E-Flag Day 2021 was launched on 8 March 2021. Given the existing restrictions, street collection for fund-raising has been suspended. As such, a majority of our efforts will be anchored on the utilisation of digital platforms such as Giving.sg, Facebook and Instagram.

The focus for this E-Flag Day is to share the message of Epworth's vision statement, 'Strong Families, Resilient Living, Beautiful Minds', through meaningful online resources including stories, activities, discussions and sharing. Thereby, increasing community engagement and awareness.

The main motif of our E-Flag Day is depicted by a jar filled with a diversity of families. It conveys that your giving and support for this E-Flag Day will go towards Epworth's commitment and effort to build up the lives of people in the community that we serve and belong to.

**Together, we can**  
*build Strong Families,*  
*impart skills for Resilient Living,*  
*and nurture Beautiful Minds.*



Scan to give via PayNow.



Scan to give via Giving.sg.





# BEING TRAUMA INFORMED

By **Chow Kit Seen, Senior Social Worker**  
at **Epworth Family Welfare**

Trauma is an emotional response to painful and distressing situations that overwhelms a person's usual coping abilities, causing feelings of helplessness and powerlessness. It can have lasting adverse effects that impedes one's daily functioning, resulting in a deterioration of physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.

## BIG "T" TRAUMA

Big "T" trauma is often associated with life-threatening events such as natural disaster, terrorism or sexual assault. As a result of such encounters, the person might feel a loss of control over the situation, evoking feelings of anxiety and fear.

## SMALL "t" TRAUMA

Small "t" trauma is the accumulation of less pronounced everyday events. Such traumas are

often overlooked as they do not seem overtly life-threatening.

Nonetheless, the accumulative effect of multiple small "t" trauma events can eventually incapacitate one's emotional functioning. Some examples are divorce, interpersonal conflict, or loss of employment. For children, small "t" trauma events could include cyberbullying, going through a minor medical procedure, and experiencing loss and grief.

## Types of trauma

**Acute Trauma** is an exposure to an overwhelming single event that lasts for a short period of time. For example, experiencing a car accident or the sudden loss of a loved one.

**Chronic Trauma** is when one experiences many traumatic events over a prolonged period of time. These can be recurrent traumatic events of the same kind. For example, being physically abused by a parent for many years.

**Complex Trauma** refers to children who have been repeatedly exposed to chronic abuse and/or neglect at a young age (below 5 years old) over a prolonged period of time. Complex trauma usually involves multiple recurrences of the same traumatic event, or

multiple occurrences of different traumatic events. These events often happen early in life and are usually caused by a caregiver. Hence, this negatively impacts a child's ability to form a secure attachment, emotional coping mechanism and a healthy sense of self.

**Developmental Trauma** includes neglect, abandonment, physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and witnessing violence. Every child is dependent on his parents for care. When left unattended, it will affect the child mentally, emotionally, and socially. Such adverse impacts are worsened when his parents are the cause of his negative feelings.



## Trauma responses

**YOUNG CHILDREN WHO EXPERIENCED TRAUMATIC EVENTS WILL HAVE LEARNT CERTAIN TRAUMATIC RESPONSES AS A MEANS FOR SURVIVAL. ORDINARY SITUATIONS MAY BE PERCEIVED AS THREATS AND TRIGGER TRAUMATIC RESPONSES.**

The four Fs of trauma response describe the different ways in which one may react when faced with threatening situations. The goal of these stress responses is to minimise, end or avoid the danger, allowing them to return to a state of calm and control.

When one believes that the threat he is facing can be overpowered,

the **FIGHT** response will be engaged. Signs would include clenching of fist and glaring.

When one believes that the danger cannot be overcome, the **FLIGHT** response will be engaged by running away or leaving the situation.

In situations when one believes

that neither fighting nor fleeing would alleviate the threat, the **FREEZE** response may be engaged. The signs include numbness in the body, significant changes in heart rate, and withdrawal.

When the above traumatic stress responses are not effective, the **FAWN** response may be engaged. The person learns to comply with and appease the abuser so as to avoid aggravating the situation. True emotions towards the abusive situation and/or the abuser will be denied and suppressed.

Although not many people may have experienced big "T" trauma in their lives, small "t" trauma may be more common to everyone. Some would be able to recover on their own, while others may require professional help.

By seeking help from counsellors and therapists, they can face the trauma events that they experienced, identify appropriate stress responses and learn effective strategies to cope with stressful situations.





# WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD REFUSES TO LISTEN?

By *Elijah Chin, Counsellor at Epworth Family Welfare*

Becoming a parent is one of the greatest joy in life. Parents work tirelessly to bring up their child, giving their all to build a loving parent-child relationship. But as soon as their child starts to disobey, the ideal loving relationship that they dreamt of starts to crumble. They have always lovingly tended to their child. How did their little angel become a little menace who wilfully refused to listen; and, whose tantrum spiral out of control?

Here, we explore a few possible reasons, and some ways that will help children listen to parents' instructions.

## PHYSICAL EMOTIONAL SITUATIONAL

A child's Physical, Emotional and Situational (PES) status can affect his behaviour in different ways.



## Physical status

There are times when children's physical discomfort puts them in a bad mood. Therefore, they are more likely to behave poorly and ignore instructions. Some common examples are hunger and tiredness.

Children may also get too engrossed in playing that they may not be aware of these physical symptoms, which consequently affect their behaviour. Meeting the children's physical needs first may yield some surprising results in getting them to listen.



## Situational status

Children's behaviours are often affected by the situations that they are in. In environments that are too noisy or overstimulating, children may not have the capacity to respond appropriately. Unfamiliar environments may also arouse feelings of insecurity that may impair them from following instructions.

By anticipating such situations, parents can give their children instructions beforehand. However, if that is not possible, calming down the child or taking him out of the situation might be the most helpful.

## What can I do?

Despite best efforts by parents to consider and maintain a good PES status for children, they may not always follow instructions. There will be situations where parents' actions or responses will affect their child's behaviour negatively. Some possible reasons include: not providing consistent rules and boundaries, and not providing clear instructions. Below are some helpful strategies that parents can employ to manage their child's behaviour.

### ROUTINES AND SCHEDULES

Routines and schedules are always helpful to manage children's behaviour. They help children learn what to expect. In this way, they will be less likely to show resistance when they have to move on from an enjoyable activity to a less interesting but

necessary one. By being aware that there is a time limit to having fun, it helps children to manage their disappointment. As children are less able to keep track of time, it is important to give reminders that their play time is ending in 5 to 10 minutes. This prepares the children to stop their games. As such, they will show less resistance when time is up. Parents should be mindful about letting children negotiate for extra playtime. By allowing this, children may expect parents to give in to them whenever they negotiate for it in the future.

### GIVE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

Giving specific instructions will help children to obey. Vague instructions are confusing. Specific instructions help children to understand what they should be doing instead.

## Emotional status

When children refuse to listen to instructions or throw tantrums, parents would naturally see them as being disobedient but often fail to see the reason behind the misbehaviour. Sometimes children may have experienced a fearful event at school, or might be feeling upset for various reasons.

Unlike adults, children are not able to articulate their feelings clearly and seek help. Instead, they may behave in certain manners to soothe their feelings. Such behaviour may be the child's cry for help.





For example, instead of simply yelling at children to stop when they are running around the house, parents can use short, simple and specific instructions instead, like: "Stop running" or "Sit on the sofa". This is best done when parents have intervened to stop their children from running and have their children's total attention. Additionally, children are more likely to listen to instructions if parents model the behaviour for them.

### PRACTISE, ENCOURAGEMENT, TIME (PET)

It is important to remember that it takes practise, encouragement and time (PET) for children to develop a habit. Be it learning to follow a new schedule or doing a household chore, with practice, children will be able to maintain the new behaviour or habit for a longer period of time.

Encouragement and praise also motivate children to behave better. When children demonstrate good behaviour or listen to instructions, use positive words of affirmation to acknowledge them. Then, children will be eager to repeat the good behaviour in the future to please their parents.



## most importantly, be patient.

Consistently apply these strategies even if they do not seem to work at first. In a world of quick fixes and fad diet, changing a child's behaviour requires a considerable amount of time and consistency. Parenting is a lifelong endeavour, and children are gifts of a lifetime.



**we are active on  
social media!**

Follow us on our social media platforms to get free resources, engage in fun activities and keep posted on what's happening.

Scan this QR code to learn more!

# ENABLED BY TECHNOLOGY

By *Angie Lee, Management Executive*



## From good to great

Led by our Assistant Director, Ms Tan Bee Leng, Epworth Community Services held its first virtual townhall session of 2021 amidst much anticipation. The session kicked off with the inspiration for a vision for change – from good to great.

Our dedicated staff have been serving disadvantaged families and at-risk children and youths over the past 19 years. To serve our beneficiaries better, we have been constantly reviewing and improving our programmes and services while exploring new ways to realise our vision – to build strong families, impart skills for resilient living and nurture beautiful minds.

The townhall session served as a great opportunity to identify and realign staff's goals and vision with that of the organisation, and to address staff's enquiries and needs.



## Adopting the trauma-informed lens

During our organisation-wide quarterly learning practice, staff from Epworth Foster Care and HomeSweetHome shared their knowledge and skills on trauma-informed practices with other colleagues from various departments. Through this session, staff from other departments gained new insights about the different kinds of trauma; how trauma affects the individual; and, how they can relate to others who might be affected by it.

1 of 10

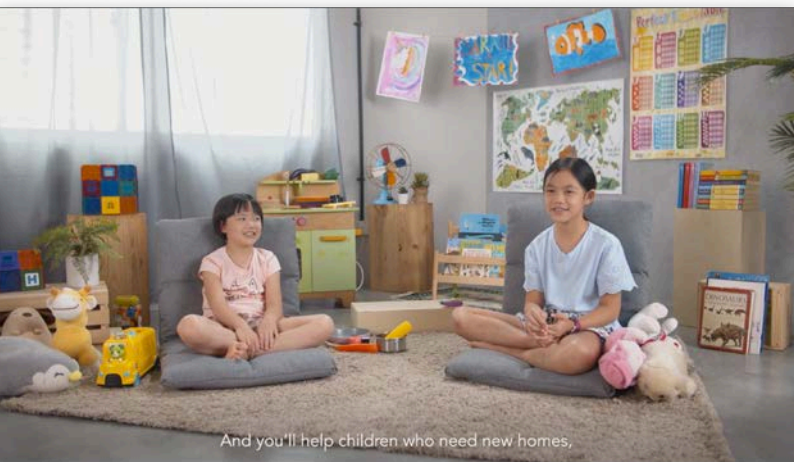


True or false

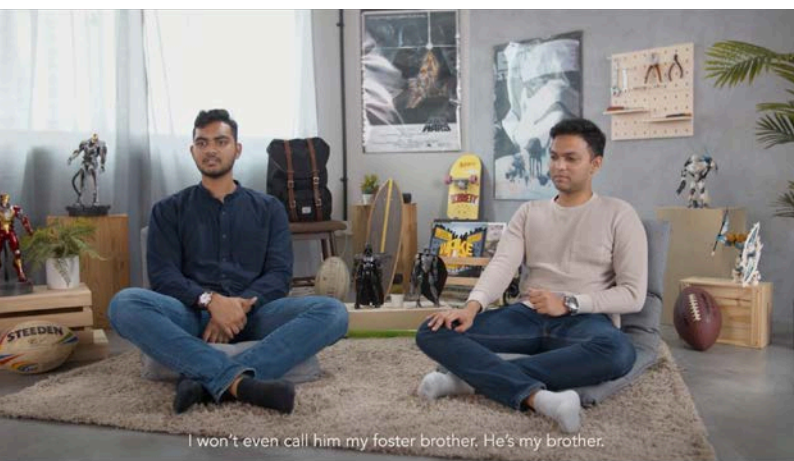
People who are emotionally strong will not be affected by trauma.

A fun quiz to test how much the staff knows about trauma.

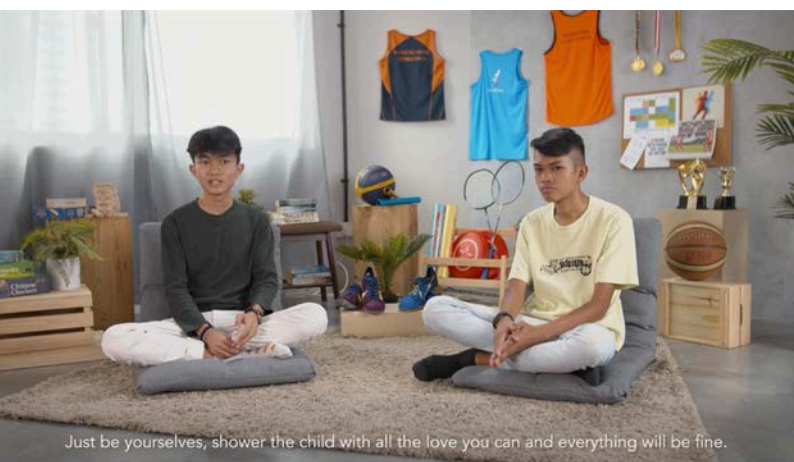




And you'll help children who need new homes,



I won't even call him my foster brother. He's my brother.



Just be yourselves, shower the child with all the love you can and everything will be fine.

## The fostering journey of 3 pairs of foster siblings

By **Cheong Jia Qi**, Recruitment Officer at **Epworth Foster Care**

When a family takes on the responsibility of fostering a child, adjustments in lifestyles have to be made. Every member in the family plays a part when it comes to fostering, even the birth children of the foster parents. Epworth Foster Care has launched a new video featuring three pairs of siblings sharing about their experience on having a foster sibling. Hear their personal stories and thoughts on their families' fostering journey!

“

You'll help children who  
**NEED NEW HOMES.**

I won't even call him my foster brother.

**HE IS MY BROTHER.**

**JUST BE YOURSELVES,**

shower the child with all the love  
you can and everything will be fine.



Visit [www.epworth.sg](http://www.epworth.sg)  
to find out more about  
foster care.

Scan to watch the  
video now!

## THE POWER OF ART

Over the past few months, children from different departments engaged in different forms of art activities. Each of them had their own takeaway, from getting a creative boost to making progress in visual learning! These activities provided the children with the opportunity to express themselves in new ways and gain confidence and perseverance.

### rock-painting



Excitement and full concentration, checked!





# peek-a-boo!



Teacher Joyce teaching the children how to fold a box to store their painted rock.



A volunteer, Tiffany, together with the children and their masterpieces!



To bring some fun to the children at Epworth Literacy, a rock-painting workshop was organised and conducted by our volunteer, Tiffany.

Over the 2-hour workshop, the children exercised their creativity and painted the rocks in hues of colour. Each of their rock was unique and different.

To acknowledge the good work and effort put in, a certificate was presented to each child. They even got to take home a rock-painting kit that contained small rocks and paint for them to create more artwork at home!

## Art jamming

Our students at Epworth Student Care ACS(J) holding up their artwork. We are proud of the pieces they came up with!



Our students smiling from ear to ear.

# A splash of fun



## MARCH SCHOOL HOLIDAYS ACTIVITIES

Meanwhile, our students at SCC ACS(P) reflected on the values they learnt during the school term. They painted trees of different shapes and sizes to represent the strong and sturdy growth that they can experience when they apply these values to their lives.

Our students also conducted their own science experiment – making a lemon volcano! A lemon, some colouring and baking soda made the magic happen. It was a fascinating experience for everyone.

## Art-based social skills programme

By *Chen Ching Hong, Head of Epworth HomeSweetHome*

Epworth HomeSweetHome collaborated with Extraordinary People to hold a new art-based social skills programme for our residents. The programme spanned over ten sessions. Extraordinary People is a multidisciplinary team that specialises in a range of therapies. These include art, music, speech and language, occupational and educational therapy.

The programme complemented the treatment approach – Trauma Systems Therapy – provided by HomeSweetHome. The group art therapy helped our residents to build a positive sense of self and resilience while learning social skills. The weekly participatory programme also exposed them to different forms of art media and increased their repertoire of art expression. Our staff and residents enjoyed the programme and look forward to more of such partnerships in the future.





# JOY IN DIFFERENT FORMS

## We chose them to be our family



By *Madam Rohaya and Mr Jasni, Foster Parents at Epworth Foster Care*

Madam Rohaya and Mr Jasni have been fostering since 2008. They have an adult son and a 12-year-old, whom they have adopted. The couple shared that they became foster parents because they love children.

At present, they are foster parents to four foster children, who are between the ages of 6 to 15. The foster children are from different families and have different developmental needs.

"Being children, they would misbehave from time to time," Madam Rohaya explained. "But we chose them to be our family, so we should guide them to do the right things."

Amidst the demands for being parents to six children, Madam Rohaya and Mr Jasni are each other's greatest support. They are incredibly proud of the children for caring and helping one another.

By *Amson Tan, Intern at Epworth Literacy (Jurong West)*

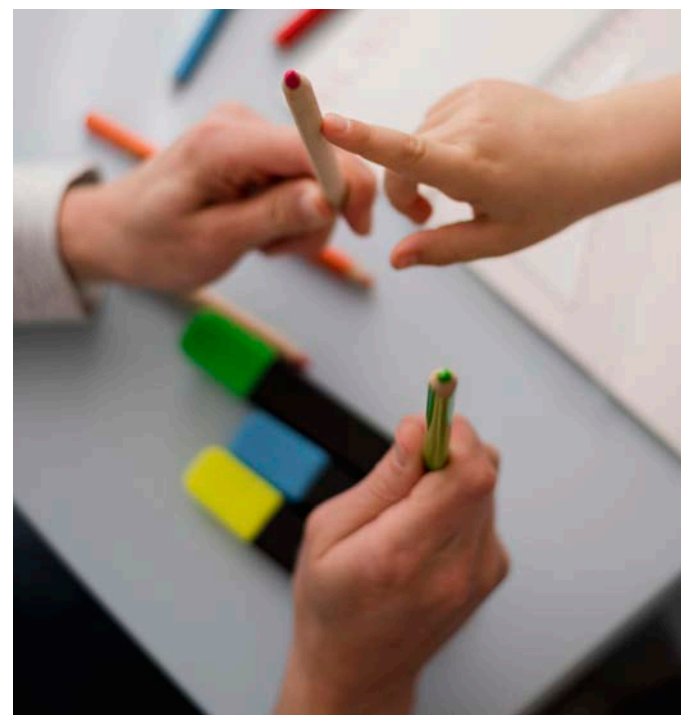
My internship at Epworth Literacy (Jurong West) was a fulfilling one. I was exposed to many working elements and insights on working with children who have learning difficulties. Through observing and interacting with them, I have learnt that despite their learning difficulties, they were truly like any other children, all playful and bubbly.

With multiple prior work experiences, this opportunity was truly one above the others. Teachers here exemplify the values they aim to cultivate in their students beyond classroom contexts – to strive for cooperation. It was heartening to see the teachers work together to deliver the best possible results for their students.

I used to think that being a teacher was easy. However, experiencing first-hand the sheer amount of work needed to be done behind the scenes to curate the best materials and teaching experience for the students has completely debunked my misconceptions.

To the teachers and staff who provided me with this opportunity and guided me along the way, thank you!

## A fulfilling internship



## A big thank you



A parent signing the sponsorship award agreement.



Most parents want the best for their child. While some parents hire private tutors, others might send their child to extra-curricular classes. However, not all parents can afford it.

Epworth Literacy provides literacy programmes and services to children who come from less privileged families. We are very thankful to Teekay Marine (Singapore) Pte Ltd for sponsoring five of our students by covering six months of their school fees. These sponsorship will relieve the students and their families from the financial burden of literacy intervention. This gift will propel the students towards a better and brighter future.

## DID YOU KNOW...



IN A CLASSROOM OF 40,

**1 TO 2**

**CHILDREN WILL LIKELY BE DIAGNOSED WITH DYSLEXIA.**

Children with dyslexia often have trouble reading, writing and spelling. Thankfully, it can be overcome with early learning intervention. Would you consider sponsoring a child in his learning journey? You can give the gift of education.





Community Services

# *How can I make a* **DIFFERENCE?**



## **SUPPORT US**

The important work of Epworth Community Services is funded primarily by generous well-wishers who strongly believe in our cause. We invite you to join us in making a difference in the lives of children and youths under Epworth Community Services.



## **VOLUNTEER WITH US**

Volunteers play an important role in our programmes and services. Volunteers can choose to be engaged in ad-hoc, short- or long-term programmes and are matched to programmes according to their time and interests.

For donation or volunteering enquiries, visit [www.epworth.sg](http://www.epworth.sg) or contact us at [community.relations@epworth.sg](mailto:community.relations@epworth.sg) or call 6562 2211.

In order for us to keep you up to date with Epworth's happenings, contact us at [admin@epworth.sg](mailto:admin@epworth.sg) or call 6562 2211 to update your personal particulars.

**STRONG FAMILIES, RESILIENT LIVING, BEAUTIFUL MINDS.**