

A traumatic event is different from ordinary stress or upsetting events in several important ways:

- 1. It threatens the life or physical integrity of the child or someone critically important to the child*
- 2. It causes an overwhelming sense of terror, helplessness, and horror*
- 3. The body reacts to this threat automatically with an increased heart rate, shaking, dizziness or faintness, rapid breathing, release of stress hormones and loss of control of the bowel or bladder.*

Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice

- Maximize the child's sense of safety.
- Assist children in reducing overwhelming emotion.
- Help children make new meaning of their trauma history and current experiences.
- Address the impact of trauma and subsequent changes in the child's behavior, development, and relationships.
- Coordinate services with other agencies.
- Utilize comprehensive assessment of the child's trauma experiences and their impact on the child's development and behavior to guide services.
- Support and promote positive and stable relationships in the life of the child.
- Provide support and guidance to the child's family and caregivers.
- Manage professional and personal stress.