

# Webinar Series



## Working with Vulnerable Youth Online *A Trauma-Informed Approach*

This webinar presented for the Community of Practice by Dr. Faye Mishna, Professor with the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work and Margaret & Wallace McCain Chair in Child & Family at the University of Toronto, discusses ways service providers can assess for barriers to access and ensure that online services for youth are safe and confidential. [Click here to view webinar](#) | [Click here to read the literature review](#) | [Click here to view presentation slides](#)

### Strategies to Applying Trauma-Informed Principles to Online Context

#### Trauma Awareness

- Maintain an awareness that the home environment is **not** a safe space for **all** youth (Dimond et al., 2011).
- Recognize that youth may not have access to a **private space** in their home in which they can participate in online services.

#### Safety

- Help youth **identify safe places** where they can participate in the online intervention (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2017).
- Inform youth that e-mails, messages, or browser history can be **viewed by anyone** with access to their personal device (e.g., parent(s), friend, or partner (Finn & Banach, 2000).
- Recommend that youth use a **trusted device** and provide them with resources about safe internet use (Glass et al., 2015).
  - e.g., open a website in '**incognito mode**' and delete the browser history afterwards (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2017).
  - Include a '**quick escape**' option on the website to allow users to immediately exit and return to a homepage, such as Google (Hegarty et al., 2015).
- Demonstrate predictability by collaborating with youth to develop a **back-up plan** in case connection is lost during online service delivery, (i.e. establish understanding that the service provider will phone service user on secure line) (Hassija & Gray, 2011).
- In reviewing confidentiality:
  - Inform youth about the **limits to confidentiality**
  - **Reassure** youth that their sessions will not be posted online, recorded or shared with their caregivers (Seager van Dyk et al., 2020).



- Provide **options** for service delivery to promote collaboration:
  - Perhaps service providers can offer **asynchronous intervention** (e-mail or text) for youth who cannot identify a safe space to participate in a real time intervention; or they can use the chat option on Zoom.
- Incorporate a **debrief** at the end of sessions, seek feedback and collaborate to adapt intervention as necessary (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2017).
- Use a **desk-sharing** feature to share psychoeducational materials (Goldstein & Glueck, 2015); promote drawing by the youth.
- Using the **picture-in-picture** function can be helpful in-service providers monitor their own responses and expressions (Goldstein & Glueck, 2015).

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