



# ***Know Your Triggers™***

## **Understanding and Managing Trauma**

### **Exposure to trauma is a predictor of system-involvement**

Our growing knowledge about the effects of trauma on young people's behavior and coping skills is transforming the field of juvenile justice. The link between exposure to trauma and subsequent system-involvement is so strong that it has set into motion new interventions for vulnerable young people considered at-risk of arrest. "Trauma-informed" care is now an accepted and widely used term for injecting this knowledge into mental health, rehabilitative, and educational treatments.

### **Trauma response puts youth in jeopardy when dealing with authority figures**

Yet, despite the growing use of this knowledge base by adults, young people themselves are often wholly unaware of what trauma looks and feels like in themselves or in their friends.

Many have no idea when or how their fear, confusion, or sense of powerlessness gets activated, or what to do when it does. Rather, their hyper-vigilance and "fight or flight" impulses can put them in extreme jeopardy when dealing with authority figures, particularly police officers, who frequently misinterpret these traumatic responses as belligerence, hostility, and intentional disrespect. This creates a toxic dynamic between law enforcement and young people that can quickly escalate into use of force and arrest.

### **Introducing *Know Your Triggers™***

Strategies for Youth (SFY), an organization with a 12-year track record of successfully improving relations between police and young people, is now offering *Know Your Triggers™* for youth, aged 12-18. Modeled after SFY's successful *Juvenile Justice Jeopardy™* games, this interactive, internet-based game has been carefully designed in consultation with adolescent psychologists and psychiatrists. One of the game's objectives is to give youth

more agency over their understanding of themselves, instead of relying on adults. The game format engages youth by asking questions which elicit young people's understanding and learning about trauma, how it may be triggered in themselves and others, and, most critically, how to recognize and manage distress through adaptive coping skills.

## SFY trains your agency to facilitate the game

Agencies with trauma-informed and trauma-responsive social workers and other mental health providers will be trained to facilitate and to play *Know Your Triggers™* with groups youth. Our ultimate goal is to equip young people with the self-awareness and coping strategies they need to avoid unnecessary engagement with the justice system.

## SFY prepares game leaders by providing:

### Game leader training:

- Adolescent trauma and best practices for supporting youth;
- Best practices for playing *Know Your Triggers™*;
- Strategies and resources to support youth responses to topics.

### Game Leader Guides that explain:

- Each game question and answer, as well as its purpose and prompts for discussion;
- Discussion points and information that anticipate questions from youth.

### Materials for Distribution to youth at the games:

- Trauma information handouts;
- Self-soothing exercises;
- A list of trauma-informed services available for schools and in the community.

### Evaluation of Games' Impacts:

- Pre- and post-game evaluations;
- Summary of evaluations analysis.



Quiz Show			
BLUE TEAM	Defining Trauma	Trauma On Our Minds	Trauma On Our Bodies
0	100	100	100
RED TEAM	200	200	200
0	300	300	300
GREEN TEAM	400	400	400
0	500	500	500
YELLOW TEAM			

## GAME OVERVIEW

### WHAT IS KNOW YOUR TRIGGERS™?

*Know Your Triggers™* is a suite of 4 games:

- Game 1: What is trauma?
- Game 2: Sources of trauma
- Game 3: What are triggers?
- Game 4: Strategies for managing distress

### WHO IS IT FOR?

Youth aged 12-18

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

SFY provides training, a license to the game software, and game leader guides and materials to distribute to youth during the game. You need a laptop and a projector or smart board.

### WHERE CAN IT BE PLAYED?

Programs in schools, after school, therapeutic settings, detention centers and other community-based programs.

## INTERESTED?

Contact Strategies for Youth at 617-714-3789  
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