

Trauma-Informed Care for Kinship/Grandfamilies

May 11, 2026

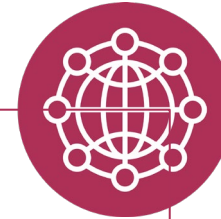
- Welcome, we will begin at the top of the hour
- Please type in the **chat** box - your name, state, tribe (if applicable), and role
- Type questions in the **chat** box at any point during our time together
- **We will provide a separate meeting link for a 30-minute Q&A with our presenter, starting in an hour, at 3 PM ET**
- By the end of the week, all participants will receive a link to the slides and the recording

Who We Are & How We Help



Learning Collaboratives and Information Dissemination

The Network hosts webinars and facilitates learning collaboratives.



A Centralized Hub

The Network is elevating exemplary kinship/grandfamily practices and programs from around the country.



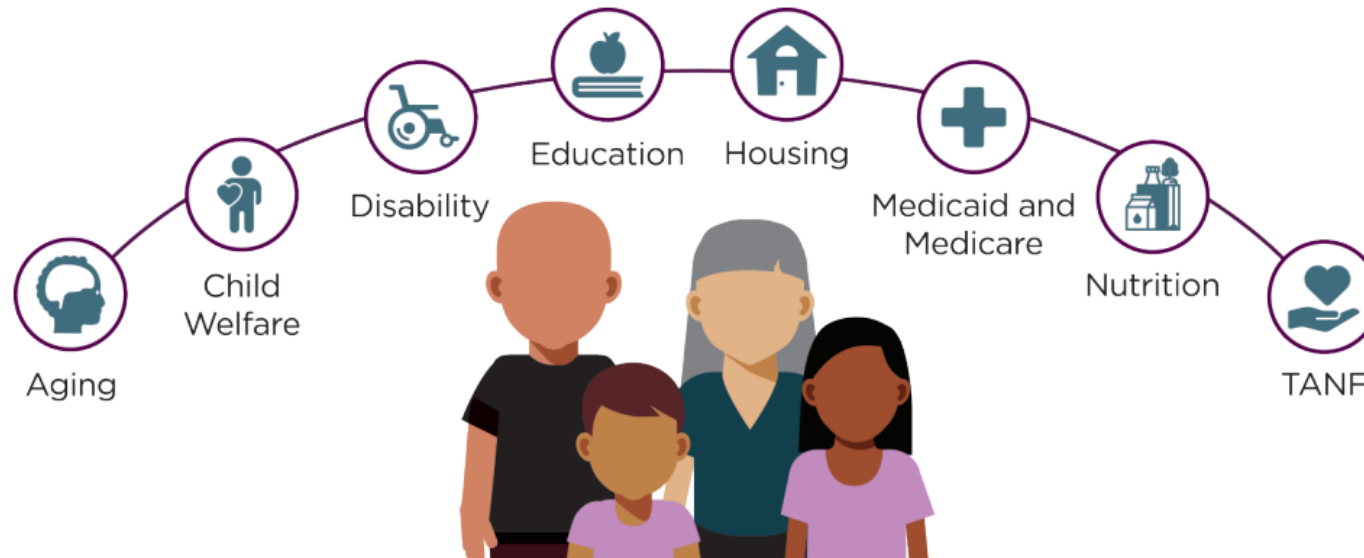
Bridging Systems for Kinship Families

The Network is helping Idaho, San Diego County, and Oneida Nation of Wisconsin optimize their collaborative approaches and improve their services. Solutions will be replicable for others.



Individual Assistance

We respond to individual requests for help from government agencies and nonprofit organizations.



Join Us for our Upcoming Learning Community Sessions!

Case Studies with Dr. Mike Sherman

Wednesday, June 3, 2026
3:00-4:00 p.m. ET

[Register Here](#)



Panel Discussion with Dr. Joseph Crumbley

Wednesday, June 17, 2026
2:00-3:00 p.m. ET

[Register Here](#)





Trauma-Informed Care for Kinship/Grandfamilies

Mike Sherman, Psy.D.

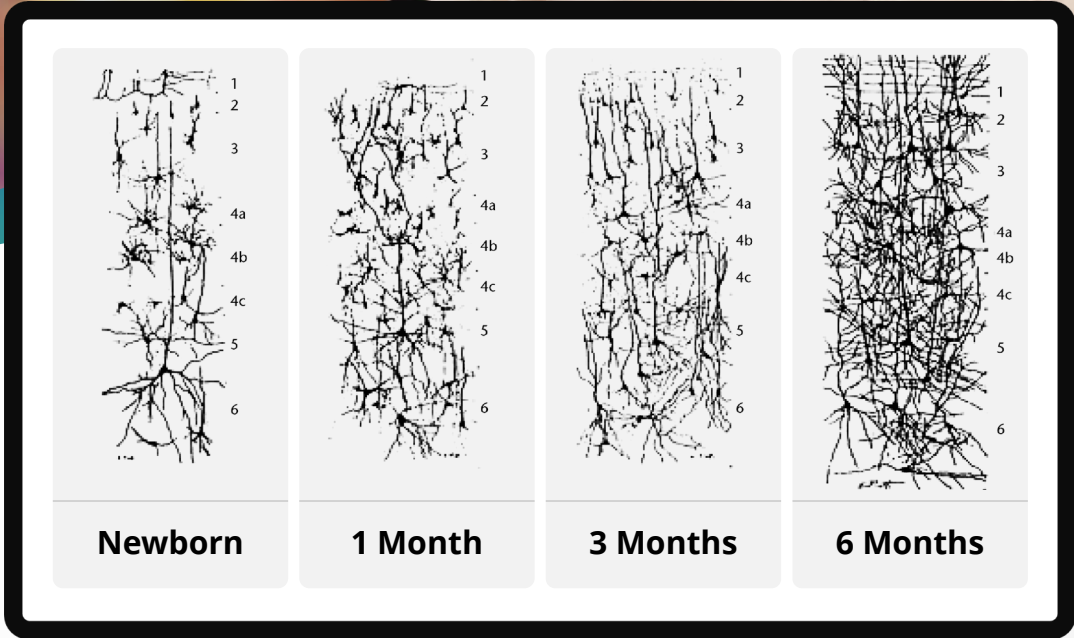
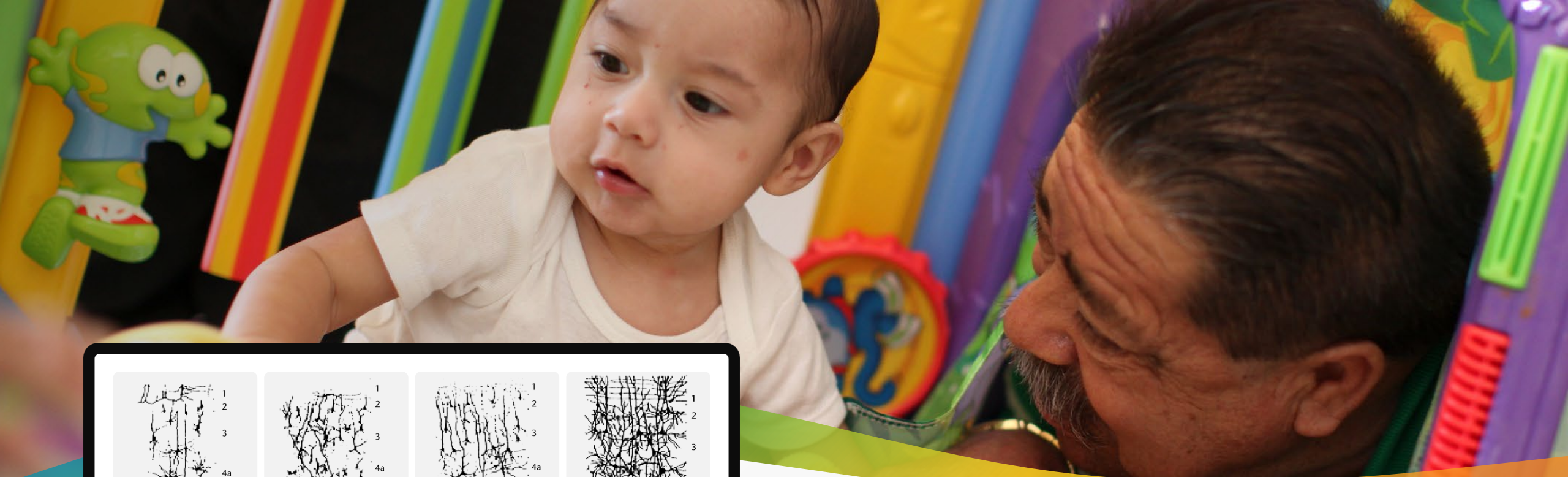
May 11th, 2026



ZERO TO THREE



Child Development



In a child's early years, every second counts—

1 million new connections are made every second!

Why the Early Years Matter

Early experiences guide how our brains develop...
...and our brains inform how we see ourselves, others, and the world around us throughout our lives.



Stress vs. Trauma

UNDERSTANDING STRESS vs. TRAUMA



NCTSN
The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

- Stress and trauma are related, but are not the same thing
- Understanding the difference helps us provide appropriate support

How Stress Shapes Development

Positive Stress

- Moderate, short-lived stress response
- Normal and necessary part of development

Tolerable Stress

- More severe, long-lasting stress response
- If time-limited and buffered, brain and body can recover

Toxic Stress

- Strong, frequent, prolonged exposure to adversity
- Disrupts brain development, alters stress response system

Remember, relationships matter!

What *is* trauma?

An exceptional experience in which powerful and dangerous stimuli ***overwhelm*** the child's developmental and regulatory capacity (including the capacity to regulate emotions) ***AND*** the child has **insufficient resources to cope** with the event.



Types of Traumatic Experiences

Acute

- Single distressing event in a short time period

Examples:

- Natural disasters
- Car accident
- Medical emergency
- Burglary

Chronic

- Repeated or ongoing exposure to distressing events

Examples:

- Ongoing bullying
- Homelessness
- Ongoing community violence

Complex

- Repeated exposure over an extended period, **interpersonal**, often beginning early in life

Examples:

- Emotional, physical, sexual abuse
- Intimate Partner Violence



Reactions to Trauma

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE RESPONSES

AGE-RELATED REACTIONS TO A TRAUMATIC EVENT



How a child experiences a traumatic event and how they respond or react depends on:

- Age
- Developmental level
- Available support

Early Childhood (0-2)

- Over/under reactive to people and environment
- Difficulty being soothed
- Difficulty forming secure, positive relationships with caregivers
- Impacts on sleep, eating, and toileting
- Delays in meeting developmental milestones



Preschool (2-5)

- Hypervigilance
- Losing a previously developed skill
- Changes in behavior patterns
- Sleep challenges
- Reenacting trauma through play
- Increased fearfulness
- Increased separation anxiety



School Age (5-12)

- Overwhelming sense of worry
- Experience of guilt and shame / self-blame
- Headaches / stomachaches
- Difficulty concentrating
- Social challenges
- Trouble sleeping



Adolescence (12-18)

- Self-conscious about emotions
- Anger / feelings of revenge
- A significant shift in beliefs
- Fear of being vulnerable
- Increased engagement in higher-risk behaviors



Trauma in Kin Caregivers

- Feeling of being overwhelmed
- Anger/resentment
- Depression
- Hypervigilance
- Defensiveness
- Multi-generational effects





Reminders of Trauma and Loss

WHAT ARE TRAUMA & LOSS REMINDERS?



NCTSN
The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

- Reminders can show up in unexpected ways
- Those who experienced trauma or those who care for them may be unaware of the connections between a current reaction and the original event

Trauma Reminders

Things our brains connect to a traumatic event and can include sounds, smells, situations, feelings, or people.

Examples:

- **Smell** of smoke from a fireplace reminds a child of a house fire
- **Rapid heartbeat** during exercise reminds a child how they felt when they were involved in a car accident
- Visiting a **location** where a past incident of abuse occurred

Loss Reminders

Things that bring up memories or feelings regarding someone / something that has been lost.

Examples:

- **Parent's absence** at a graduation or performance
- **A scar** on their body reminding them of a car accident they survived, but lost a loved one
- **A holiday or birthday** of loved one who has died

Trauma-Informed Care

Tips for Caregivers

- Match expectations to developmental age, not chronological age
- Focus on underlying needs beneath behavior
- Acknowledge the child's feelings, give them language to say how they feel
- Reassure the child that you will keep them safe
- For young children, co-regulate by staying close and speaking calmly
- For older children, model and teach self-regulation such as mindfulness

Resources:

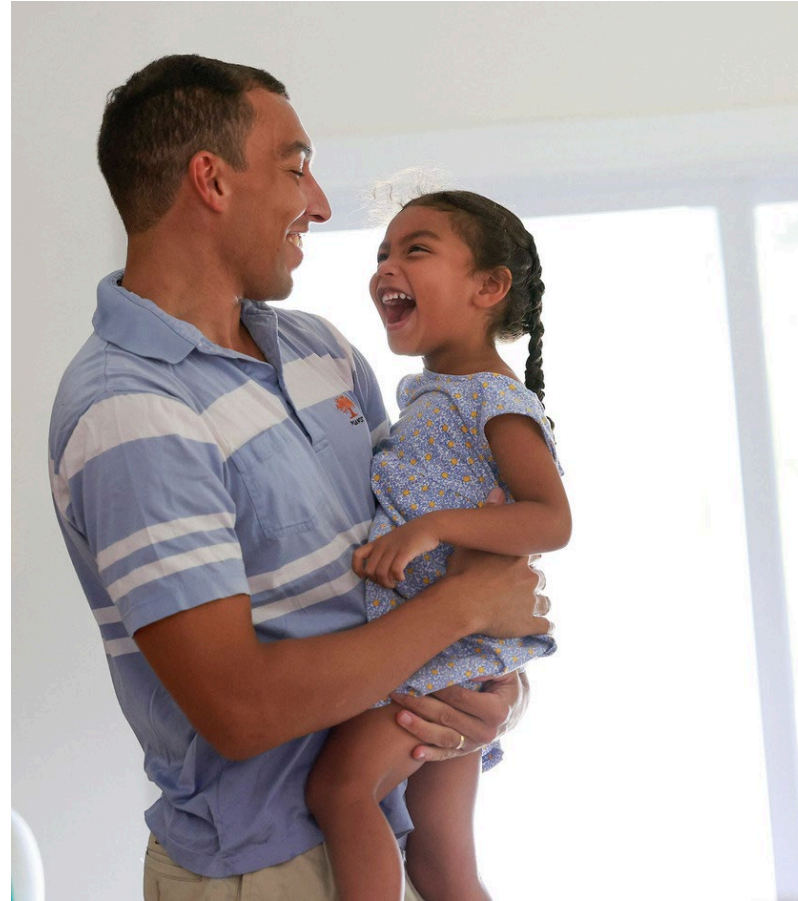
National Child Traumatic Stress Network:
www.nctsn.org

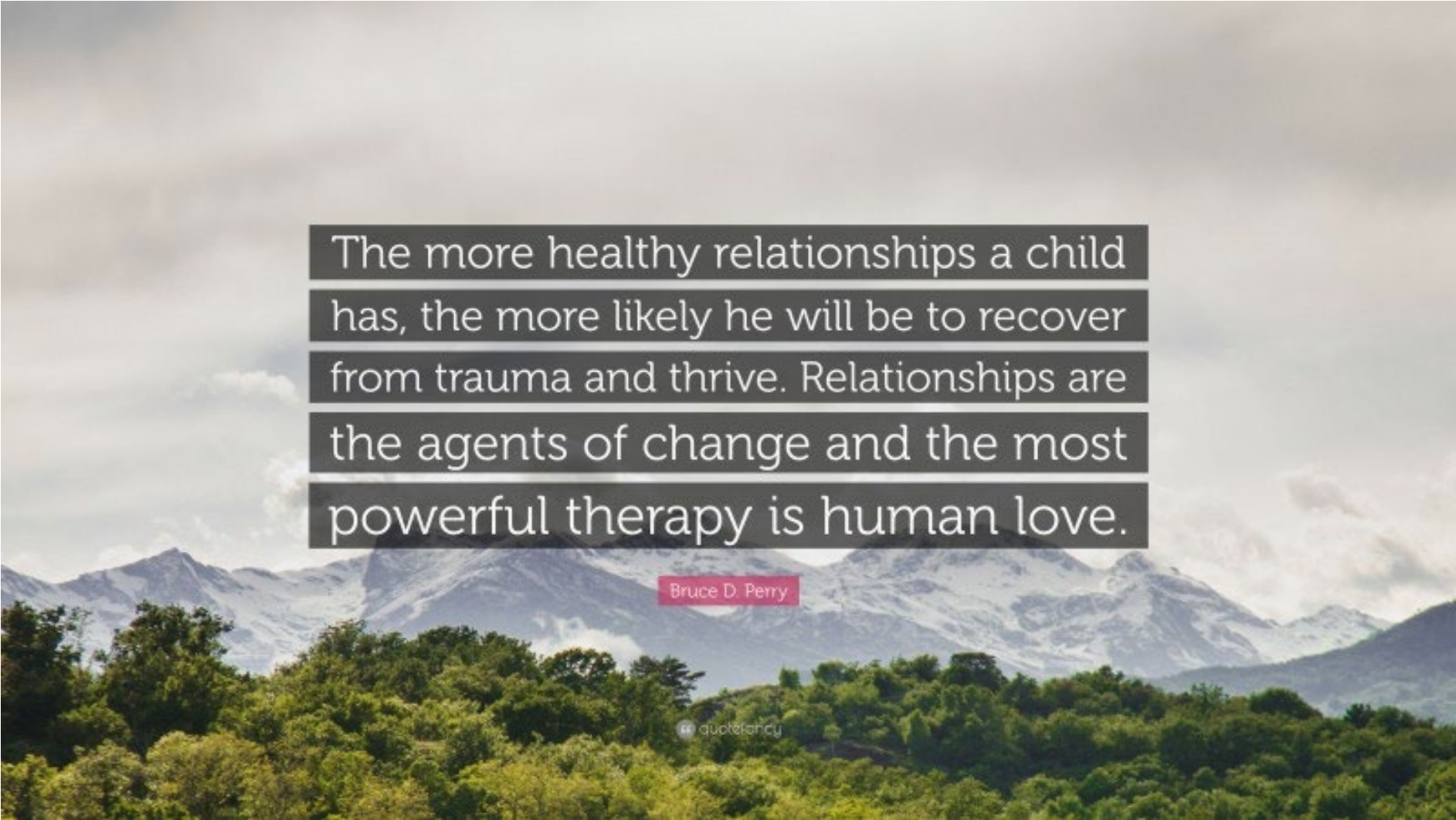
Association for Training on Trauma and
Attachment: www.attach.org

Urie Bronfenbrenner:

“In order to develop normally, a child requires progressively more complex joint activity with one or more adults who have an irrational emotional relationship with the child. Somebody’s got to be crazy about that kid. That’s number one. First, last, and always.”

*(National Scientific Council
on the Developing Child,
Summer 2004)*





The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love.

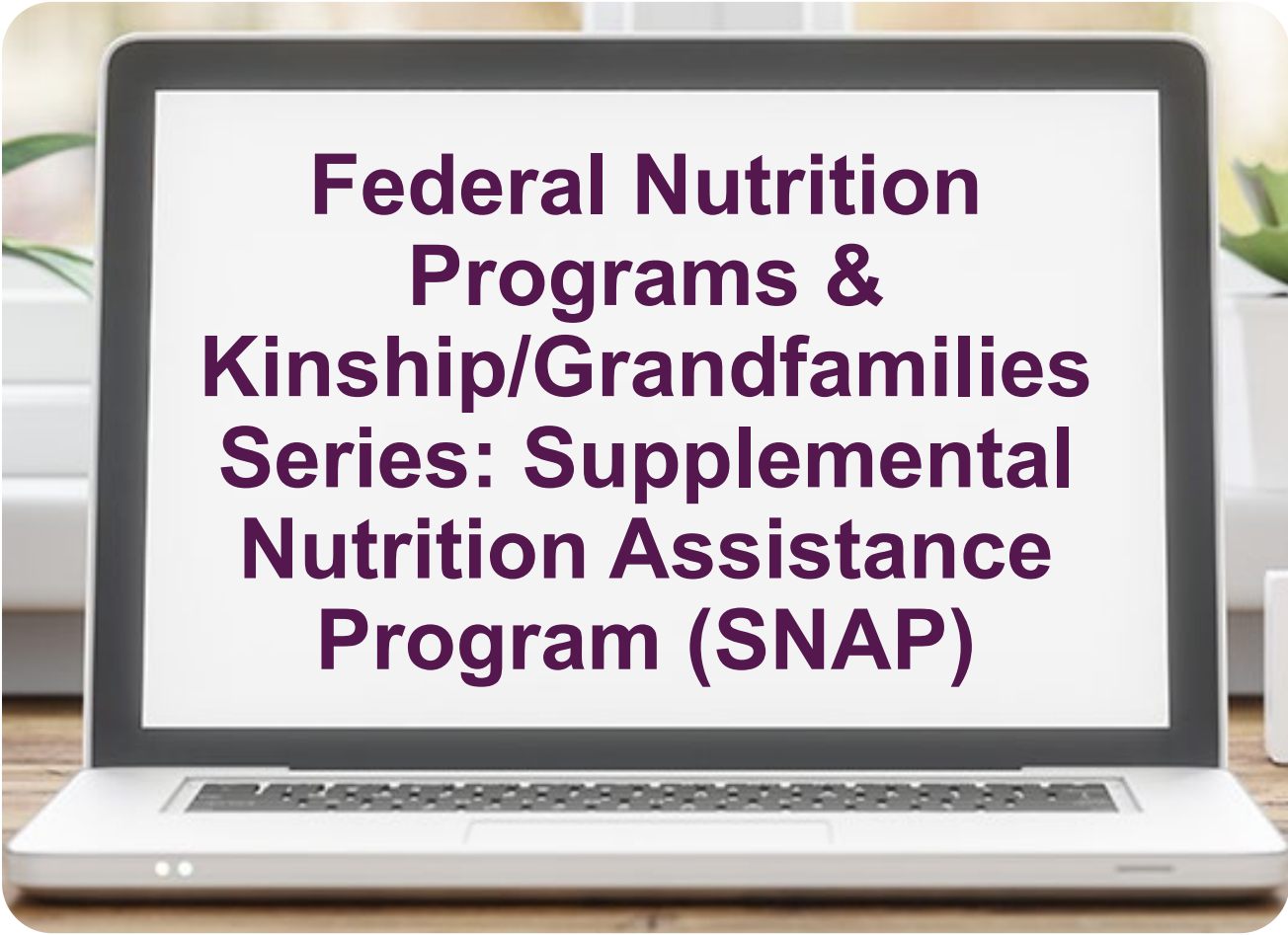
Bruce D. Perry

quote fancy



ZERO TO THREE

Join Us for our Next Webinar!



Wednesday May 19, 2026

2:00-2:45 pm ET

Register Here



Connect & Access Support

Request assistance

We will add you to our monthly newsletter list, unless you ask us not to. To see past issues: www.gksnetwork.org/the-network-connection-newsletter/

For the latest updates, follow the Network on [LinkedIn](#)





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