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SOPHIE: Please note that *Showing Up* features themes of trauma, mental health, and resilience, which may be triggering for some. So please listen to your body's cues, take breaks, and use self regulation strategies. Don't hesitate to ask for help. No issue is too big or too small.

REBECCA: You can always reach out to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 for support. They will be available to talk with you and connect you to local mental health resources.

SOPHIE: Hi, everyone. Welcome to showing up. I'm Sophie, and I use she/her pronouns.

REBECCA: I'm Rebecca, and I also use she/her pronouns.

SOPHIE: We are both part of the Trauma Informed Care Team at Cultivate Learning at the University of Washington. Welcome to *Showing Up*. This is a time where we talk about trauma informed care practices for Expanded Learning Opportunities or ELO programs. ELO programs include basically any where young people spend time outside of the school day classroom setting like after school care, summer camps, and skill based programs.

REBECCA: So Sophie, before we jump in, I'm wondering if you have a pup date for me about Monty.

SOPHIE: Yes. So Rebecca and I both have dogs. They're poodle mixes, and we're pretty obsessed with them. My puppy is named, Monty. He is a straight up pandemic pup I will admit. He is doing really well. He just started visiting dog parks, so we are working on relationship building and friendship skills these days with him with other dogs. He can be very handsy. Like I have never seen a dog sort of use his front paws like they were hands, and gently caress other dog faces, which is not a thing that all dogs think is funny. I think it's hilarious though. So we're working on that. But that's Monty. How's your pup, Rebecca?

REBECCA: He's good. Monty is so precious. So Gus is five years old. So we adopted him when he was two. They said he was a stray. But I think you just live with like an old person that never socialized him with other dogs. Because when we first got him, he just really didn't know how to play with other dogs. He was just very into fetch, which he still is. He could play fetch for hours.

But he's doing better socially. After we got him, we started taking to the dog park regularly. But then during the pandemic, all of the social skills-- and maybe my own-- reverted. And he was getting pretty reactive with other dogs. So we started taking him to dog school where he started to learn that dogs can be safe, and how to maybe like comfortably interact with other dogs. And get some reinforcement around being other dogs. Which has kind of helped both of our relationships with each other. And it all felt very trauma informed also because he might have gone through some stuff when he was a stray. And it just kind of helped my partner and I build a better relationship with him too.

SOPHIE: Oh, that's so sweet. Well, today's episode is all about relationships. So we believe that the heart of being a trauma informed care provider is being someone who understands what trauma and stressors are, and how supportive relationships can help ameliorate the impact of trauma for all of us adults and children. Ameliorate just means to help buffer or lessen the impact of something. And in this case, we're talking about trauma.

REBECCA: Yeah. So today, we'll be chatting with Alondra from Latino Heat, Dr. Katie Emerson Haas from Cultivate Learning at the University of Washington, and Tina Morales who is also from Latino Heat at Youth Eastside Services.

SOPHIE: So let's get started with our Youth Voices interview with Alondra.

ALONDRA: So my name is Alondra. My pronouns are she/her/hers. And I'm a recent graduate of Eastern Washington University. Yes. Very proud of myself for that honestly. And I was a part of a Latino H.E.A.T. From my sophomore year of high school. So when I was like 15 years old. And I still go back and volunteer over the summers. When I would come back from college, I want others to have the same experience as myself from the group.

SOPHIE: That's awesome. It seems like Latino H.E.A.T.'s been a really important part of your life for the last several years.

ALONDRA: I remember when I first joined Latino H.E.A.T., I was done with my counseling session, and I was waiting for a mom outside. And Tina just popped out. I hadn't seen her since I was five. Yeah. We go way back. And I remember my mom forced me. She like took me out of the car, and she walked me there. I was like, I'm not showing up. They're not going to have a meeting. You know, Tina lied. And I made up all these excuses to not go. And I was just so shy.

I walked in there, and everybody was like talking and having fun. And I was so shy. But at the end of it, I felt so comfortable. It's like, wow. I actually want to come back again for next week. And that's how it started. Just coming back every single week since then, and I haven't stopped since that first time. And I'm really thankful for Tina for really making me feel comfortable, and just making that environment. So inclusive.

REBECCA: That is so heartwarming. I cannot tell you how much I was smiling during that whole thing. That was really sweet. And I'm really glad it sounded like it was such a good fit for you join their group. So I'm curious how those positive relationships that you form they're at Latino H.E.A.T. Has made an impact on your life. And have they shaped the way that you engage with your community now?

ALONDRA: I always knew I wanted to be someone that would help other people. And it took me a while to realize what exactly I wanted to do with that. So Tina really inspired me to become a social worker. And I'm very, very grateful to be in this position where I am a social worker, and just helping out my clients as much. I felt like a Tina for them. You know, I'm still learning so much on the job. And sometimes I'm not that Tina for them. But the clients that I am that Tina for, I feel so great.

Even throughout college, Tina was my rock. My first year, it was really difficult for me because I struggled a lot just transitioning from being at home and having a support system to going to a new location where I knew nothing about the whole city, town. And having no family nearby. No friends. No nothing.

And I never forget this. I still have this note. She sent me a care package-- her and all the Latino H.E.A.T. students. And that day was like one of the hardest days for me. And it had a note that Tina wrote. And I think it said something like don't cling on to rocks that are already falling. And it just all resonated with me. I remember crying, and just being like, oh my gosh. I was so thankful for everybody. And from that time forward, I just really focused on myself and my education.

SOPHIE: Oh, that's just beautiful. I mean, talk about really the importance of the supportive relationships in our lives. It sounded like Tina and Latina H.E.A.T as a whole group have really been there for you and had your back in really profound ways.

ALONDRA: Yes. Yes, it did.

SOPHIE: Well, thank you so much for being here with us today, and sharing these amazing stories about Latino H.E.A.T, and Tina. And the way that you've been able to just kind of bloom in this amazing environment with the wonderful relationships that you've built and continue to help make as you are now a social worker and coming in to support other young people. That's awesome.

ALONDRA: Thank you. Thank you so much for that.

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SOPHIE: All right. It is time for our word of the week.

REBECCA: We're going to share a vocabulary word every episode to help build shared terminology for talking about trauma informed care practices. Today, we'll share our definition for the term trauma informed care. So trauma informed care is a strength based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma. It emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety and choice for both providers and survivors.

SOPHIE: For example, this means as a provider, and in your relationships in general, you can think about ways to give others choice, honor their autonomy, and offer consistent support. The goal of trauma informed care is progress, not perfection. This is an ongoing journey of self-reflection and compassion for both ourselves and others.

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ALONDRA: If any of you are interested in joining Latino H.E.A.T., feel free to reach out to Tina Morales or Judith Mercado.

TINA: Call us at 425-747-4937. It's old school way. But leave us a message, and we'll get back to you. And we hope that you involve yourself in the community to create change with us. Garcias.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SOPHIE: Our guest today is Dr. Katie Emerson Haas, our colleague and friend. We were all part of a team that created and delivered the trauma informed care modules for early childhood educators. Katie was the lead content writer on that project, and we're excited to have her here today as we discuss what trauma informed care means. And put that in context of school age care and youth development.

REBECCA: Hi, Katie. Welcome to showing up.

**KATIE
EMERSON-
HOSS:** Hi, Rebecca. Hi, Sophie. I'm so glad to show up.

SOPHIE: Could you share your pronouns, and tell us about your experience working with young people in the mental health field?

**KATIE
EMERSON-
HOSS:** My pronouns are she and her. I work at Cultivate Learning on the EarlyEdU Alliance Project. And my experience working with young people in the mental health field. Well, I think it's important to acknowledge, particularly when we're talking about trauma, about our own experiences. So I grew up in a family with a brother who had severe mental illness with a very early onset of 9 or 10. And I was 5. And that life experience has really shaped my interest in the mental health of young children, and the importance of supporting families.

So I've been an early childhood mental health consultant for decades now working in classrooms and homes. Working directly with children, helping adults around them adopt strategies and perspectives. And then aside from my home visiting job in Vermont, which I just loved so much, I think my favorite job has really been the lead teacher in a therapeutic nursery at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. It was a parent child program for children birth to 3. At the time, I was also in a two year post-graduate training for infant parent mental health and early childhood group therapy.

And so it was such a privilege to be able to both study and work with this focus on early childhood mental health. And to be able to apply directly what I was learning to my work with children and families

REBECCA: Thank you for sharing that, Katie. I love that you tied in your kind of personal connection with this work also. And it's really clear that passion has kind of driven your career path a bit. So this is our first episode of the series talking about trauma informed care, and how we can show up for young people in our lives. Could you start off with some definitions of terms? Like what is trauma and what does it mean to be a trauma informed care provider.

**KATIE
EMERSON-
HOSS:** Put simply, we could define trauma as an overwhelming threat or danger, which could be an actual danger or it could just be a perceived danger, particularly from a young child's perception, that we don't know how to deal with. And it overwhelms our ability to stay regulated. And it really undermines our sense of physical or emotional safety. And it's not just a single thing. And it depends on the person in terms of how an experience is sort of received and understood. Dr. Gabor Mate says in the 2001 film, *The Wisdom of Trauma*, trauma is not the bad things that happen to you, but what happens inside you as a result of what happens to you. And I think that's just sort of a useful perspective.

So different experiences will affect different people in different ways. So really adopting a trauma informed approach is learning about trauma, recognizing and realizing the prevalence of trauma, then responding by putting that knowledge into practice. It's not essential when say we have a trauma informed approach to necessarily understand and dive deep into people's specific traumas. But it's understanding how trauma affects people, and then responding to what you see presented.

You don't need to find out about their trauma. That actually can carry some risks for you and for them to sort what went wrong? What's making you this way? Unless you are working in a team of mental health professionals. But that understanding that this behavior that I may not understand or may be confusing to me as a provider or an after school provider may be a result of trauma.

So maybe I need to increase the amount of safety. Or maybe I need to make sure that this child is having some choices and agency in what they're choosing to be able to do. Or maybe they just need somebody to sort of talk about what I see. It's like, oh I see you're sitting under the table. I wonder if that feels safer under there.

SOPHIE: I know in the trauma informed care modules and in your work generally that you focus on the impact of these positive relationships. And how that can support people experiencing trauma or toxic stress. Could you tell us a little bit more about that? Why do these positive relationships matter so much?

**KATIE
EMERSON-
HOSS:** We really developed this first module that really focuses on the impact of relationships. Anybody who's in any kind of care giving field, it's like, oh, relationships matter. Relationships matter. But we rarely sort of talk about, well, how do relationships work? Right. So we come to understand our world and ourselves in that world through our relationships with other people. And then as we grow older with other things and other experiences. And so Urie Bronfenbrenner, I forget exactly the quote. But it's just like every child just needs one person who is just wild about them, and really pays attention to them, and sees them. And that is profound.

So a child or a young person to have an adult, a responsive adult, who says, oh, I see you. I'm not putting my agenda on you or my expectations about what you're going to do. But I see that you're doing this, and I think it's interesting, and I care, and I'm here. That's profound. And that's profound for all development. But it's particularly profound for working with families and children who have experienced trauma, and have had an experience that's overwhelmed that capacity to stay connected and to stay connected with other people.

Positive relationships are built out of these recurring interactions over and over again. Patterns of interaction. So it doesn't matter if you're upset with a kid, and you feel like that's disrupted this relationship. That's OK. Because that happens all the time in relationships. What matters is the repair.

What matters is to be able to come back in the next day and say, you know when I snapped at you the other day? I was stressed out. I had a flat tire on my way to work. I just didn't have any capacity. Or I hadn't eaten my lunch that day. And I just wasn't able to respond. And I just want to let you know that I'm sorry for that and if that was painful. And let's sort of move on.

So to be able to identify and describe the things that happened, and describe the feelings that are attached to those things that happened, and to be able to sort of make sense of it.

REBECCA: I love that. I think you've highlighted some really key skills to build relationships with young people. Repairing those relationships if they do kind of go awry. And also, I heard you mention earlier kind of just being curious. Using the phrase like wondering about when talking with young people. Are there other ways that we can grow our relationship building skills with young people?

**KATIE
EMERSON-
HOSS:** I think you're catching on to the wonder and the curiosity. I mean, if you are in a position where you're working with young children, I feel like it's sort of your duty to be curious about who they are and how they understand the world. And so there's a concept in mental health called reflective function. And that's that ability to see a behavior. Because that's all we can observe is the behavior. And then wonder about what's behind that. If I look at a child's behavior of dragging all the toys off the shelf, there are a lot of ways I might interpret that or think about that.

What we can do with kids is first of all just notice it. I notice you're knocking all those toys off the shelf. I wonder if you're bored. I wonder if you're nervous about the next transition. I wonder if you think that's the best way to get my attention. So that you're wondering about those mental states, which we might be very good and get very good at accurately knowing what that is. Being able to look at a face and say, oh wow, I think you're sad.

But we always want to approach it with the I think or I wonder because we can't know. We want to wonder about other people's experiences, but we can never really know what somebody else is feeling or thinking. And doing that, particularly with young kids, is giving them that language. With older children, or teenagers, that can be profound because adults sort of stop talking to teenagers that way. They expect them to be able to hear direction and follow it.

And so sometimes I think it's still important to say, I notice that you're showing up 20 minutes late and missing this part of our class or this part of the session. I wonder what's going on there. I wonder what that's about. To help them sort of start to wonder as well because often we don't know. Often we're just having a feeling and reacting. We're not really making those connections.

So I think making those things explicit and really being curious. You really want to make sure that you have opportunities to have fun, and share joy, and laugh. Because laughing with other people is just profound to building relationships.

REBECCA: I love that, Katie. I think the brain building of just like the gift is saying like hey, I see this behavior is like a great way to acknowledge someone's existence, and also help them. And even as an adult, I've had that experience of where someone was like, oh, I noticed that you seem frustrated about this. And it was a really good time for me to pause and check in. And be like, well, I am frustrated about this.

**KATIE
EMERSON-
HOSS:** And it can make you feel good. It makes you feel connected. And it makes you feel less alone with that frustration.

SOPHIE: What advice would you give to providers looking to provide a trauma informed space for the young people in their care?

**KATIE
EMERSON-
HOSS:** My first piece of advice is to show up and notice what's going on. If you do little more than just sort of narrating what you see happening with kids and with yourself-- that's important, particularly for teenagers, that you're not just sort of narrating what you see them doing. But that you're sort of saying for yourself. It's like, yes, I walked in here and I was really frustrated. And made me not want to pay attention to this. But hey, let's go do this. So I think that's showing up and noticing is of course key because showing up is not enough without actually sort of noticing what's going on.

The other thing, particularly with trauma, is to get support and learn more. So whether that's taking trauma informed care courses or classes, or whether that's getting together with other providers and talking together about your practice. If that's offered through work, you could do that. If it's not, there are still other providers and people who are doing the work you're doing. And getting together to really talk about your work, and having other people sort of reflect back. So now other people are saying, well, I notice every time you talk about this kid, you get really anxious and angry. And I wonder what's going on there.

Because our ability to regulate and understand ourselves allows us to show up for kids. Also, if you're working with children and families who have experienced trauma, there's the reality of secondary trauma. So I may not have had to flee a war torn country, but when I'm working with families who have I can start taking on those feelings. And one of the important ways of dealing that is having somebody yourself to talk to. So I can't emphasize that enough.

SOPHIE: Thank you so much for being on our show today, Katie. I think you gave us some really awesome like just strategies to build positive relationships with young people. And give us a good foundation for being trauma informed care providers.

KATIE
EMERSON-
HOSS: Thank you both so much for doing this work. It's just fabulous.

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SOPHIE: So our next guest is Tina, from Youth Eastside Services or YES. Welcome, Tina.

TINA: Thank you. I feel blessed to be here. Really honored. My name is Tina. I work at Youth Eastside Services. And I go by the pronouns she, ella, hers. At Youth Eastside Services, I have the privilege and honor of facilitating a group called Latino H.E.A.T. It started after racism and violence. And H.E.A.T. stands for Hispanos En Accion Together.

REBECCA: That's awesome. I'm so excited to have you with us today. Could you tell us what the Latino Heat group is, how it got started, and some of the work that you all do.

TINA: Latino H.E.A.T started after racism and violence. And the violence that occurred led to seven expulsions. The violence involved adults and youth. And just honestly just thinking about it, talking about it right now literally I do have a pit in my stomach remembering that. And after this violence, the principal of the school called us in to talk with a group of students who were feeling a backlash not only from their peers, but from their teachers. We know this today as microaggressions. I think that they were responding to these microaggressions because they are aware of the problems. And this compounded experience of really oppression over time is I think what was awakening them.

We just started to provide the space to hear them out. And what these students literally said was they wanted to change the negative image that existed of themselves, of the culture, of the community inside the school and outside of the school. And so, as a result of that, we engaged in community service projects, in leadership work. And really what resonated with the students was that we were talking about culture, and that we were reconnecting with culture. And it was reminding them of who they already were, but possibly with maybe missing pieces. Maybe with some brokenness.

And so what we say really happens as a result of leadership work, making any service project meaningful in the community, is that culture heals. And so that restoration of self, of culture, really motivates. And it mobilized the students to involve their peers, to involve their parents. And this is exactly what was needed for culture to be introduced into school. The invitation to center on culture, to center on unmet needs, to center on their student voice. And it's really a great example of what can happen when schools partner with community organizations, and when youth voice, culture, and families are involved in the solutions.

REBECCA: I love that so much. I used to work in social services in the area, so I've seen Latino H.E.A.T pop up as a resource for kiddos, or a recommendation for clients to go and be involved with that. And I didn't know it was like a youth led group that started at a local high school. And I love that it's just continued to grow into this amazing, amazing thing. I'm curious. How have you continued to engage and form positive relationships with young Latinx folks in your community? And why do these positive relationships matter?

TINA: These relationships matter because relationships matter when you're in trouble. Relationships are life saving. We're attending to unmet needs. We're attending to challenging one to grow. We're attending to recognizing the realities and the conditions that are really thwarting one's ability to express who they are. When we bring all of these things together, what we're really, really doing is dipping into the arc of history, and looking at why are we here today?

So it kind of connects us to a past. So how we form these positive relationships is we're validating that. We're validating that this arc of history is present in us today. And we look to our heroes, our heroines-- Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta. And take note from how organized communities can build power and create institutional change.

I think that this is how we can support each other in making not only agents of power accountable, but it's something that also strengthens relationships. Because the way we can ask for accountability is to remind others of what their values, interests, and motivations are. So we have to do this work where we're awakening-- reminding each other what matters.

REBECCA: That is beautiful. I love that. I love that you're kind of tying in not just one on one positive relationships with you and the youth, but you're also tying in different relationships with their family, or with school, or with others. You're just forming this really awesome really strong community that's working on change. So thank you so much for being with us today, Tina. It was such a pleasure to get to highlight your program.

TINA: Thank you for this opportunity to showcase, highlight, Latino H.E.A.T. And really the work of the students, and families, and all of us in creating small shifts that at the end of the day lead to transformation.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SOPHIE: Strategy spotlight is a time for us to share one thing you could implement in your program or classroom. We'll hear again from Dr. Katie Emerson-Hoss about strategies that support meaning making. Katie will outline several strategies and activities that work for kids across the age development spectrum.

KATIE EMERSON-HOSS: I would say there are just two other things that is really want to focus on meaning making. So that's really providing opportunities to tell stories, to draw stories, to write stories because what trauma does is sort of interrupt our ability to understand what's happened to us. Even though traumatic experiences may not be that they make sense because abuse of a child just doesn't make sense to me, but how do I sort of help a child or a family make meaning of that and move on from it. Doesn't mean it goes away. But that they have a way to understand, and process, and connect all those emotions. And there are a couple of really useful strategies.

There's visual thinking strategies, which is a great thing to look up. And then there's storytelling and story acting, which are not trauma informed practices per se. But they both focus on meaning making and bringing out children's perspectives and their stories. And then the other thing I thought is sensory play. We think about that for young children. But I will tell you, teenagers love sand tables, and water tables, and sensory play. I mean, grownups do.

REBECCA: [INAUDIBLE] I'll play with a water table.

SOPHIE: Yeah, me too.

**KATIE
EMERSON-
HOSS:** Yeah, well, my daughter is 17. And she had the traumatic experience of having a peer die this summer. And she had the privilege of being able to go to sort of group therapy with other children who knew this child. And there was a sand table. And she was so excited about it. So it gives them a way to use their bodies. And to do things and move things. And again, that idea of agency. So that really focusing on engagement, not sort of compliance. But to be able to give even older children sensory experiences I think is a great way to engage to build those relationships. It's just it feels good, and that matters.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SOPHIE: As we wrap up this episode, we'll leave you with a few reflection questions. Part of building a trauma informed care practice is building our own self awareness so we can better show up for the young people in our lives.

REBECCA: Our first question is, what relationships have had a positive impact on your life? What are you already doing to offer safe, supportive relationships to young people? And finally, is there a strategy that you heard in this episode that you would like to incorporate into your own work?

SOPHIE: For those of you listening who are working directly with young people either professionally or in your personal life, please know that you are making a tremendous positive impact by being a supportive adult in their lives. Relationships have the power to heal. You are doing life saving meaningful work. In the show notes, we've included some books for additional reading, links to Latino H.E.A.T at Youth Eastside Services, Cultivate Learning's resource library, and additional mental health resources. You can also check out additional episodes of this podcast to learn more about trauma informed care.

REBECCA: This podcast was produced by Cultivate Learning at the University of Washington with funding from the Ballmer Group. We'd like to thank our media producers, [? Satifa Tom ?] and Ryan Hinrichsen, and our graphic designer Tammy Topa. You can find more of Cultivate Learning's work by going to cultivatelearning.uw.edu.