

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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B.C. Child and Youth in Care Week is Not a Time to Celebrate: Trauma Informed Care

Surrey, British Columbia The *American Heritage Stedman's Medical Dictionary* defines 'trauma' as "An emotional wound or shock that creates substantial lasting damage to one's psychological development, often leading to neurosis." It's an unmistakable fact that all children and youth who are placed in the B.C. foster care system have experienced trauma. Most do not receive the treatment they need in order to become psychologically healthy again. SOS Children's Village B.C.'s unique and globally-proven model of care seeks to rectify that.

The charity has identified four key problems in the foster care system and is moving to ensure each foster child and youth living in the Surrey village has the absolute best and most nurturing care possible. The four issues include: **lack of permanency for foster children, brothers and sisters being split up within the system, failure to recognize and treat trauma foster children and youth have been through, and lack of access to therapeutic services to aid in healing.**

The third of four pillars of SOS Children's Village B.C.'s solution is **Trauma Informed Care**. Removing a child or youth from the care of their biological parents and placing them in foster care with an unfamiliar guardian is a traumatic experience – of that there is no doubt.

Foster children are like youngsters abandoned in the aftermath of war. They endure crises, family breakdown, and perhaps see people they love and depend on abusing drugs or alcohol or suffering mental health problems. Maybe they have been abused themselves, physically, mentally, or sexually, and their childhood has been a living nightmare.

Even the most caring foster parents may not know what a child is going through or how to aid them in overcoming their trauma. Services that treat trauma can be difficult to access. **Foster parents truly require special resources and support.**

"SOS Children's Village B.C. provides wraparound services to every child in our village, and all of our supporting professionals know how to deal with trauma, if something comes up," states Douglas Dunn, the charity's Executive Director.

Moreover, the foster parents at the village receive ongoing training on how to effectively deal with the trauma the children in their care have gone through. It is a given that foster children and youth have been through considerable anguish and that they can easily be triggered and consequently act out. **An environment of Trauma Informed Care can prevent them from hurting others or themselves, as they cope with past ordeals that haunt them like ghosts.**

Providing Trauma Informed Care is the hallmark of an effective child welfare system that raises stable youth who overcome their demons and become contributing members of society – that would be something to celebrate.

About SOS Children's Village BC

SOS Children's Villages is the world's largest non-governmental, non-denominational child development organization for orphaned and abandoned children. It has existed for over 65 years with presence in 134 countries and 553 Villages. British Columbia is home to the only SOS Children's Village in Canada. SOS Children's Village BC provides stable homes, a supportive and healing Village environment, and community-based family care programs to help foster children and youth in need grow into caring, self-reliant adults.

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We hope that you will be inspired to pick up our 'dark side of foster care in B.C.' series over the rest of the week.

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