

The Power Source Workbook Facilitator's Guide

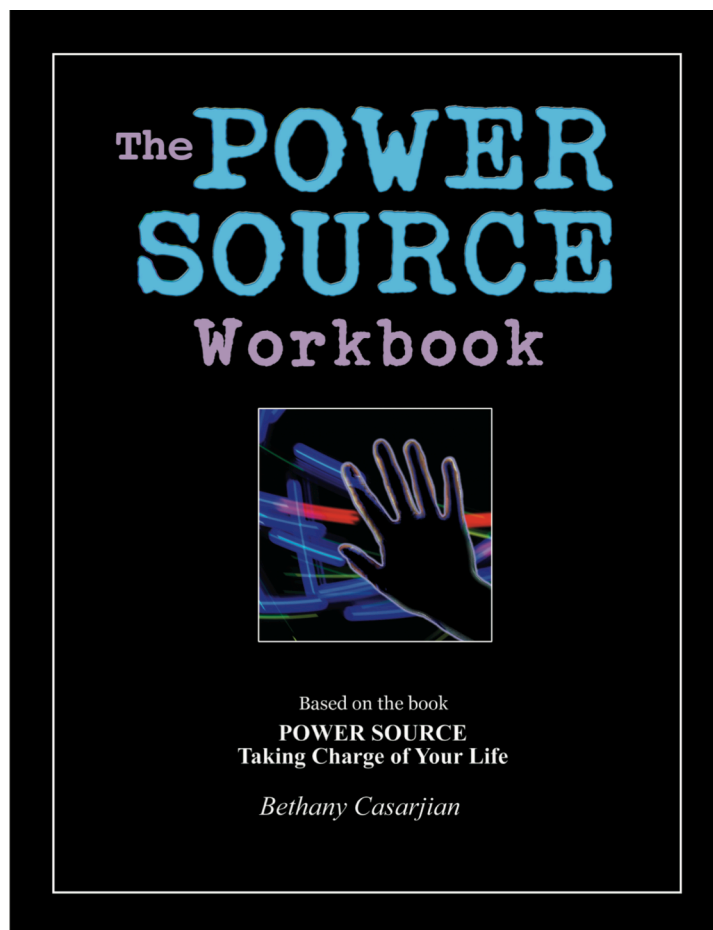


Table of Contents

Who Is the Power Source Workbook for?	3
Using the Power Source Program	6
The Parts of the Power Source Workbook	7
○ Circles	8
○ Mindfulness Activities	8
○ The Supplemental Workbook	9
Getting Started	9
○ What You Need	9
○ What to Say	10
Frequently Asked Questions about the Power Source Workbook	10
Making the Biggest Impact	15
○ Facilitator Presence	15
○ The Importance of Praise	16
○ Looking at Ourselves with Compassion	17
○ Using mindfulness skills ourselves	17
○ Looking at the connection between our own stress, triggers, and trauma history	17
○ Secondary Trauma	18
What is Emotional Regulation?	20

The Power Source Workbook:

A Trauma-Informed, Social and Emotional Learning Program for Adolescents

Increasingly, research is confirming what most of us know intuitively -- **that it is our social and emotional competence such as understanding and managing our emotions, developing and sustaining healthy relationships, and following through on goals that largely predicts the quality of our lives.** Helping youth develop the social and emotional skills covered in this workbook is a major contributor in launching them toward trajectories of success and well-being. These skills not only impact adolescents physical and mental health, educational outcomes, and work-place readiness, but shape the quality of their relationships across the life span as well. Anyone working with trauma-impacted youth has most likely witnessed some face suspension or expulsion because they struggled to manage difficult feelings such as anger or disrespect. Or watched with frustration as they quit hard-to-come-by entry level jobs because they had yet to learn the interpersonal skills necessary to navigate workplace relationships effectively, placing their career advancement and sometimes even their economic security on the line. Most likely you have also witnessed firsthand the sense of competency and accomplishment young people feel when they use these SEL skills to solve conflicts, self-advocate, and experience success--that deeply felt sense of knowing that when equipped with the necessary skills, “they can do hard things.” The good news is that these skills are not capacities you are either endowed with or you’re not; they are entirely learnable. And that’s where the Power Source Workbook comes in.

Who Is the Power Source Workbook for?

When the Lionheart Foundation published the book *Power Source: Taking Charge of Your Life (PS)* to help youth impacted by trauma harness their inner-strength, resilience, and dignity, we were told over and over not to write a book because **“kids won’t read it.”** But since its publication, we’ve found just the opposite to be true. The Lionheart Foundation has received letter after letter from youth who discovered through this book, the fact that **they are not alone with their pain and suffering;** that there are thousands of youth across the country who have been

swept up in similar cycles of family violence, parental drug use and incarceration, and the toxic fallout of poverty. And that many of these youth have **gone on to create decent and productive lives**. Through reading *Power Source*, many discovered, often for the first time, that a safe, hopeful, and stable life was possible for them as well.

Below are a few letters from youth whose lives have been impacted by *Power Source*.

Dear Lionheart Foundation,

My name is Jay and I am currently serving a treatment sentence. I would like to receive a copy of the book *Power Source*. It helped me change in so many ways because at first I was like F The World and didn't care if I came back to jail. I was doing high-risk behaviors just to feel like I had it in me to steal a laptop or run in a house and steal something. Now that I am in jail I have changed. when I first came in here I said to myself 'It ain't gone change me one bit' But now I have honestly changed I have started to respect the staff When I get out I will try to get a job. if you can may I get a copy of the book sent to me. Thank you - that book changed me so much.

Jay, Ohio

To the people who wrote *Power Source*,

I am writing to tell you how the book *Power Source* has helped me. Before reading *Power Source* I thought that I might be the only one with really big problems. This book has taught me that if you want to give up - you are taking the easy way out. Learn from your mistakes and they will help you grow. Thank you so much.

Stevie, CA

I relate to this book *Power Source* in many different ways. Abandonment, alcohol and drugs, grief. My life has been tough. My dad went to prison 10 years ago. I'm not quite for sure why? I used to cry myself to sleep every single night. The first time I read this book I was so hooked on coke - then I finally realized that I have a kid to look after and drugs weren't as important as him so I have stopped. I have been in and out of placement since I was 10. I just so happen to come across *Power Source*. It made a difference in my life **BIG TIME**.

Although nearly 90,000 copies of *Power Source* have been distributed across the country, we felt that even more youth could be reached. Power Source was originally written for some of our nation's most marginalized and underserved youth—those involved in the juvenile justice system. But soon we noticed that a wide-range of professionals from schools serving trauma-impacted youth to community-based diversion programs were using the program.

In response, we decided to create the **Power Source Workbook** to make the program available to a wider audience. Using a *developmentally sensitive and trauma-focused perspective*, The Power Source Workbook helps youth develop the social and emotional regulation skills they need to enter the workforce, build healthy relationships, and break intergenerational cycles of violence and addiction.

In particular, the *Power Source* book and workbook build youths' capacity to:

- Develop a **cohesive and healthy sense of self and future orientation** in the wake of trauma;
- Recognize the emotional, social, and situational factors that lead to risk-taking and **develop health-promoting behaviors** in their place;
- **Increase interpersonal skills** including managing conflict, repairing relationships, taking responsibility for one's actions, self-advocacy, and seeking help;
- Acquire the **Social and Emotional skills associated with workplace readiness success**;
- **Select positive peers** and develop the skills to maintain those relationships;
- Identify individual and situational factors leading to **substance use** and learn **alternative coping strategies**;
- **Learn to tolerate and manage distressing emotions such as anger, disrespect, shame, and fear.**

The Power Source Workbook can be used by youth in:

- High schools serving trauma-impacted youth engaging in health-risk behaviors;
- Secure and non-secure detention centers;
- Diversion and alternative to incarceration programs;

- Residential treatment centers and facilities;
- After school and community-based programs.

Using the Power Source Program

Power Source was originally designed to be delivered as a 13-session facilitator led program. And while this is still an option (go to www.lionheart.org for information on ordering the Power Source Facilitator's Manual) we realized that many professionals working with youth simply do not have the time or resources to plan groups and organize the necessary materials to make these sessions successful. We also found that people needed a resource that could be easily adapted to the unique needs of the population they were serving.

This led to the creation of the **Power Source Workbook**, a theoretically-driven, high-impact, ready-to-use resource that requires no explicit training, preparation, or planning and is also highly accepted by youth.

The Power Source Workbook is designed to be used:

- in group settings;
- one-to-one (with a staff/facilitator and a youth);
- by youth working on their own.

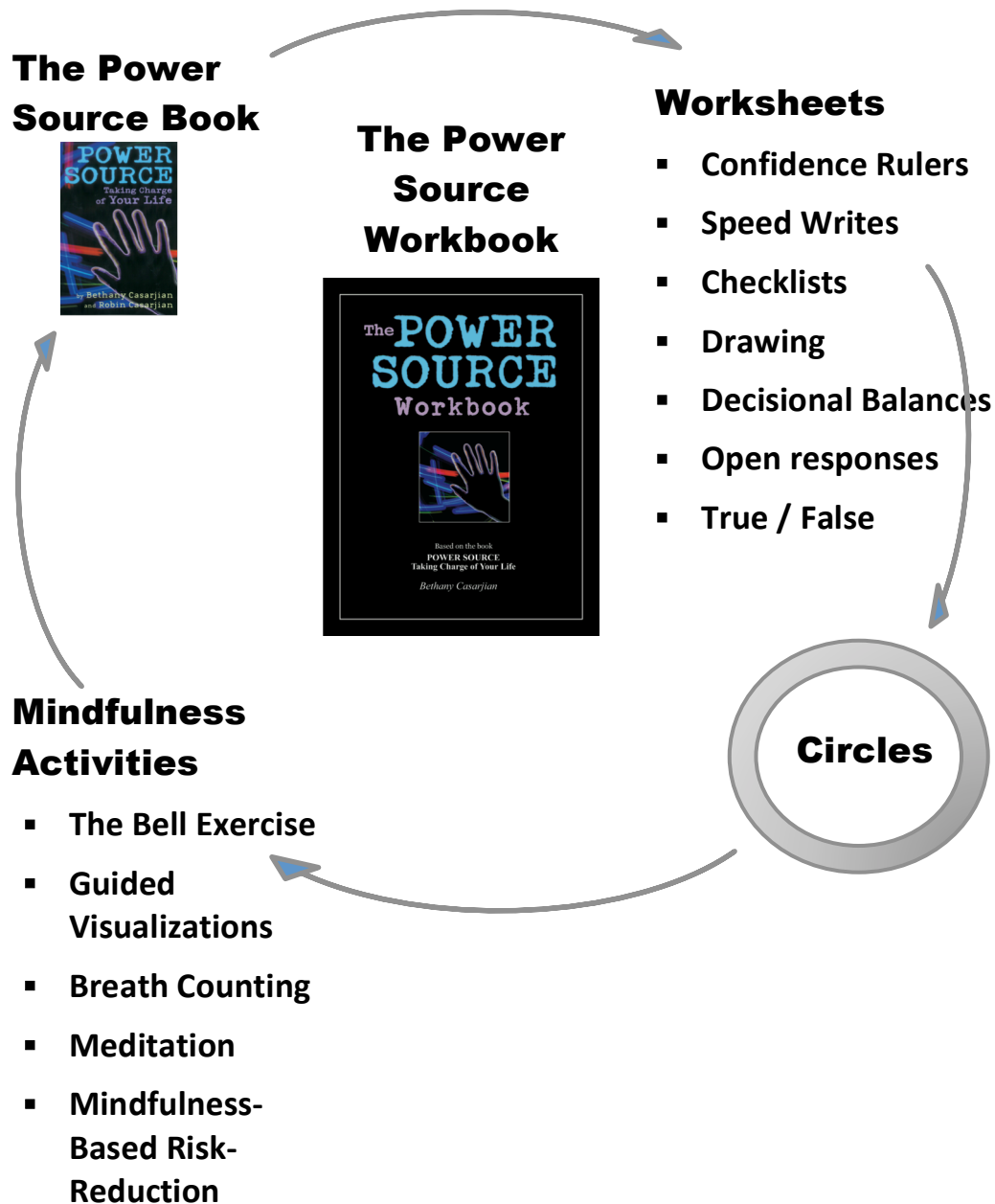
If youth are working on the material independently, it's important to check in on their progress by reviewing their work and assessing their comprehension. In this case we recommend having students write down all of their answers to the Circle Questions posed at the bottom of the worksheets.

The Power Source Workbook is meant to be **as self-explanatory as possible**. In fact, with supervision and some pre-training, peer-led Power Source groups are possible.

A typical group-based session includes:

- reading a selection from the Power Source Workbook;
- completing the content of the worksheet;
- a mindfulness activity;
- and sharing their answers in a Circle.

The Parts of the Power Source Workbook



Circles

At the bottom of most pages of the Power Source Workbook you'll find Circle Questions. These questions can be processed either through Circle (simply having seating set up in a circle and then giving each student in the Circle the opportunity to share their response without interruption). Or responses can be written out first either in the space provided or on additional paper and then shared in Circle. If a youth is doing the workbook on his or her own or one-to-one with an adult facilitator, these Circle questions can be passed in for supportive comments or discussed with the facilitator.

Circles create an opportunity for youth to have the **profoundly powerful experience of being heard respectfully and without interruption** by peers and teachers/facilitators. Further, Circles provide a forum for youth **to build active-listening skills, practice impulse control by learning not to interrupt, and create a platform for youth to formulate and share their thoughts**. We are always struck by the fact that reserved youth, ones who will often not join a group discussion, will typically share their responses through Circle.

For more information on Circles, we recommend the *Heart of Hope* (2010) or *Circle Forward* (2015), two excellent manuals by Kay Pranis and Carolyn Boyes-Watson. They can be ordered at www.livingjusticepress.org.

Mindfulness Activities

All programs developed by the Lionheart Foundation have mindfulness practices embedded at their core. Mindfulness practices have become more integrated into trauma-informed care as research investigating their impact on key markers of physical and psychological health has exploded. The type of mindfulness referred to in Power Source can best be described by author, researcher, and psychologist, Jon Kabat-Zinn who states that mindfulness is the process of “paying attention, on purpose, non-judgmentally, and in the present moment.” It is a way for us to step out of the automatic and habitual patterns that often run our lives. For trauma-impacted youth these reactive behaviors might manifest as yelling at a teacher when spoken to in a way perceived as “disrespectful.” Or using alcohol or drugs to self-soothe when their emotions seem intolerable. Mindfulness practices, over time, help us build the self-awareness and self-regulation skills that stop us from being “hijacked” by our emotions and foster intentional responses to the world.

There is a large body of research demonstrating that mindfulness practices help youth with attention and emotional regulation. In a large National Institutes of

Health study conducted by the Lionheart Foundation and the New York University School of Nursing, we found that youth in the Power Source program who meditated demonstrated better attention and self-regulation skills over time than youth who did not. In these studies, a “dose effect” emerged, meaning that youth who meditated more, derived greater benefits in terms of attention and emotional regulation. Simply put, the more youth meditate, the better. Links to this research can be found on our website www.lionheart.org.

If you’re new to mindfulness, don’t let this deter you from bringing this incredibly potent skill to youth. After years of facilitating Power Source groups, we have found that almost universally, **youth state that the meditation is one of their favorite and most helpful parts of the PS Program**. All you need to successfully teach meditation is a willingness and the PS Workbook. Youth may also find Lionheart’s meditation video helpful, which shows us teaching meditation to a group of youth.

The Supplemental Workbook

Power Source was originally written for very high-risk youth involved in the criminal justice system, and there is some material in the PS book that might not be suitable for a school classroom unless there is access to therapeutic support. Therefore, the following chapters will be placed in a supplemental workbook which will be available online by June 2017:

Chapter 5 –Families: Where We Come From

Chapter 9 – Grief and Loss

Chapter 13 – Forgiving Others: Get the Monkey Off Your Back

Chapter 15 – Spirituality

A Section of Chapter 10 – Gangs

Getting Started

What You Need

Basically, all you need to get started is a **Power Source Book** and **Power Source Workbook** for each youth. The Power Source books are an investment that can be used over and over, while each student should have his or her own workbook to write in and keep after the group has ended. The **PS Videos** (see below) are helpful teaching tools, but not necessary. Some facilitators like to brainstorm with

youth and find that a **large whiteboard** to be useful in this process. **Pencils** and **pens** are needed for almost every exercise.

What to Say

Although there is no single way to introduce Power Source, we have found that the following highlights are helpful in orienting youth to the purpose of the groups. We use the word “group” in the points below, but just use a substitute if you’re working one-to-one with a youth or if he or she is doing the workbook independently.

Key PS Points

- ★ This group is about **YOU** and finding ways **to keep your power** so that you’re not handing it over again and again to other people.
- ★ It’s about figuring out **who you really are** and not letting the past define you.
- ★ We’ll talk about some of the **challenges all people face in life** and ways to deal with them without getting dragged into cycles of violence or drugs and alcohol.
- ★ It’s about taking a close look at relationships and **the people you want in your life**.
- ★ It’s about learning the connection between **your thoughts, your feelings, and your actions** so that you control them and not the other way around.
- ★ Finally, in this group we’ll talk about the things you can do **right now** to create the **kind of future** you want.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Power Source Workbook

I am not a trained social worker or therapist. Can I still do the PS Workbook with youth?

Anyone with the desire, motivation, and sensitivity to work with trauma-impacted youth can use the PS Workbook. This includes **teachers, guidance counselors, direct care staff, psychologists, volunteers, and arts therapists**. If youth have gone through the workbook and have demonstrated peer leadership abilities, the Workbook can be facilitated through a peer-led process. An understanding of the way trauma typically affects youths’ social, emotional, and behavioral

development is always an important pre-requisite to doing this work, but no particular degree or training is required. For more information on working with trauma impacted youth see **EQ2: The Emotion Coaching Handbook** at www.lionheart.org available September 2017.

How many worksheets should I do in a session?

The simple answer is ‘do as many as you comfortably can.’ There is no set formula and the pace is usually influenced by the makeup of the group. The worksheets are designed to be self-explanatory and guide participants through the key social and emotional skills delivered through the *Power Source* book and workbook. Some worksheets will spur discussions that add depth and value to the material. We encourage you to use the worksheets as a launching pad to explore issues that are relevant to the youths’ social and emotional development as well as their larger lives. **The more you reinforce concepts, the more youth will take hold of these ideas.**

Do you recommend having youth write down their answers or share their answers verbally in the Circles?

If a youth is doing the workbook independently, we recommend having them write down their answers so they can be reviewed by and discussed with a teacher or facilitator. If the workbook is being done in a group, it’s up to the discretion of the facilitator, however we highly recommend that youth write out their responses. Writing can help youth formalize their thoughts and allows them to formulate their answers without the influence of others’ responses. If writing becomes so burdensome that it interferes with students’ willingness to engage in the material, then we suggest having youth answer the questions verbally in a Circle format (see below).

I see you use Circles to process the material. Can I do this as a more traditional facilitator-run group instead?

Some Power Source facilitators have expressed to us that they feel more comfortable processing the material in an open-format, group discussion, which is a perfectly valid approach to use with this workbook. Group discussions can be a vibrant and powerful way to explore and shift youths’ attitudes and beliefs. However, over the years we have increasingly seen first-hand the value of Circles.

I work in a school, not a residential center, some of the Power Source material seems to be written for youth involved in the justice system. Can I still use it?

Originally the book *Power Source: Taking Charge of Your Life* was written for high-risk youth who had either offended or were at-risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system. Since its publication, we have received letters from schools across the country using it in a variety of ways including as a social and emotional learning curriculum, a gang prevention program, and as a harm reduction intervention. The Power Source Workbook was written with a broad audience in mind, with the idea that professionals will use what serves their particular programming needs.

We noticed that there are 4 videos that go along with the Power Source Program. How do these connect with the workbook?

There are 4 videos to date in the Power Source Series:

#1 Risk-Taking: Life on the Edge

#2 Meditation: It's Not What You Think

#3 Lost Childhoods

#4 Families: Where We Come From

The videos are produced in such a way that there is an opportunity to pause and reflect after each section. Prompts and discussion questions are provided throughout each video. We suggest using the video that corresponds to the sections of the workbook. **The Lost Childhood** video can be used with the Power Source Workbook section entitled, *When Life's Not Fair*.

The facility I work in has adolescents coming and going all the time. Can youth join ongoing groups?

The Lionheart Foundation has worked closely with residential treatment programs for the past 15 years. We understand that youth enter facilities on a rotating basis and they vary largely in their length of stay. The workbook is designed so that youth can join at any point. However, we strongly encourage youth to do at least some of the preceding chapters independently or with a teacher/facilitator. Core concepts such as **Stop, Breathe, and Choose** and the **Core Self** are essential components of the program.

We only have youth for a few weeks at a time. I won't get through the whole workbook. What do you recommend?

If you know that a youth will only be in placement or in your program for a short time, there are several approaches you can take. One is to focus on the primary referral issue and select the chapters based on that. For instance, if a youth is struggling with self-regulation, we recommend focusing on the most relevant chapters such as **The Cycle of Risk**, **Meditation**, and **Taking Control of Anger**.

Other approaches such as assigning material as independent work or embedding it throughout the school curriculum (for example in an English, Humanities or Health class) can also help cover greater ground.

You can also use the workbook in a more ala carte manner. For example, if a youth is in placement for a very brief amount of time we suggest focusing on the **Stop, Breathe, and Choose** worksheets placed throughout the workbook. This is the program's core emotional regulation skill and can be a powerful tool in helping youth begin to alter their risk-taking behavior.

Why are some of the worksheets in the PS Workbook more than once?

At its core, the Power Source Workbook is an emotional competence curriculum. Helping trauma-impacted youth regulate their emotions is not something that happens in one or two sessions. These are complicated skills that depend on brain maturation, increases in cognitive capacities, and skills acquisition. Developing the ability to recognize one's physiological response to a trigger, inhibit dominant responses such as using aggression when threatened, and select an adaptive response is a complicated process that requires time and practice. Further, the process not only requires youth to learn new skills, but to "unlearn" habits and old ways of reacting to the world that have hurt them (and others) in the past. By practicing these new skills over and over, alternate neural pathways are formed and new behavior chains are established. To help reinforce these skills we have placed the **Stop, Breathe, and Choose** worksheets and exercises throughout the workbook. **Stop, Breathe and Choose** is the primary emotional regulation skill that can be used across settings and in response to many different triggers. The **Emotional Weather Report (EWR)** is repeated three times in the workbook. You have permission to photocopy the EWR and use it as often as you'd like. In fact, we encourage you to do the Emotional Weather Report as often as possible. For instance, if there is a conflict or a youth reacts aggressively to a trigger, use a

Stop, Breathe, and Choose or the Emotional Weather Report to explore the event and identify adaptive responses for the future.

The ‘What Went Down’ Worksheet

While developing this workbook at East Boston High School in Massachusetts, we found ourselves wishing we had a ready-made sheet to explore the high-risk situations students reported engaging in outside of school—and the factors that preceded and surrounded those events. The **What Went Down Worksheet (pages 42 & 43)** provides a structured format to process critical incidents by focusing on *where youth were, who they were with, and how long they stayed*. By making these situational factors leading to high-risk choices explicit, youth begin to understand the cascade of events that often results in loss of freedom, physical injury, and emotional distress.

What is the point of the Bell Exercise and do I have to use the Meditation part of the workbook?

We recommend beginning every session with the **Bell Exercise**. It is an introductory mindfulness technique that helps youth practice focusing and shifting their attention, two key skills in mindfulness training. We recommend following this with the **7-Breath Count**. Instructions for these 2 activities are on **page 7** of the Workbook.

The research demonstrating the benefits of mindfulness meditation are very compelling. Ongoing practice has been shown to increase attention and emotional regulation and to decrease symptoms of depression, anxiety, and aggression. And while you can use the workbook without using these two mindfulness exercises, it will not be as effective. Mindfulness helps youth pay attention to their physiological reactions to triggers—a foundational emotional regulation skill. Directing focus to the breath, and then to thoughts that help youth de-escalate are key steps in Stop, Breathe, and Choose. The more practice youth get in bringing awareness to physiological cues in their bodies, their thoughts, and their emotions, the greater likelihood that they will respond in more adaptive (and less reactive) ways to triggers.

Making the Biggest Impact

Facilitator Presence

There is nothing in the PS program (or any program for that matter) that has the potential to impact youth more powerfully than the quality and tenor of the relationship you shape with them. **Relationship is everything.** Each positive interaction holds the seed to transform, on a neurological level, the way that a youth perceives himself or herself, as well as the potential to repair the damage that has been caused through previous, traumatic relationships.

We call this facilitator stance **“relentless positive regard,”** and it takes sustained, intentional effort on your part. It requires us to remember that what was damaged through relationship can also be healed through relationship. It means seeing the good and decent essential nature of an adolescent despite the protective shield they may wear of distrust and anger. Relentless positive regard means that we deal effectively with a youth’s behavior if it is harmful or destructive while never losing sight of a youth’s inherent decency. Trauma becomes a lens through which a youth sees and interacts with the world. **Also true is that the behaviors associated with trauma powerfully color the way we perceive a child whether we are conscious of this or not.** We may find ourselves “walking on eggshells” or uncharacteristically triggered by their behavior. These experiences are natural and important to acknowledge. We are not suggesting that you overlook disruptive behavior, but “relentless positive regard” is a choice to see the potential and dignity in every youth on a continual basis and without conditions. It means saying, “I see in you something deeper and worthwhile despite your actions.” In Power Source lingo, we call this seeing the Core Self. The only way many traumatized youth will see their innate human value is through their relationship with you.

Below is a checklist of effective, trauma-sensitive PS facilitator behaviors.

Effective Facilitator Checklist

This week as a Power Source Facilitator I...

- ☐ **Saw the Core Self of a youth (the light instead of the lampshade).**
- ☐ **Praised a youth.**
- ☐ **Listened actively to a youth.**
- ☐ **Stayed aware of my tone of voice, my facial expressions, and my body language.**

- ☐ Was consistent and calm when interacting with youth.
- ☐ Responded to a youth's emotion rather than his behavior.
- ☐ Noticed I was getting triggered early in the wave.
- ☐ Used Stop, Breathe, and Choose to manage a situation effectively.
- ☐ Helped a youth identify and label their feelings.
- ☐ Recognized that a youth was reacting from Survival Brain.
- ☐ Apologized if my actions caused harm.
- ☐ Used Cool Thoughts like, "This is the trauma talking" or "It's not personal" to de-escalate a situation.
- ☐ Surfing the Urge (did not say something or do something I would have regretted.)
- ☐ Did something to relieve my stress or took care of myself.

The Importance of Praise

Many trauma-impacted youth have not received a great deal of praise in their lives, in part because of the environments they come from, and in part because of how trauma shapes behavior. Abusive and neglectful families tend to use more coercive parenting strategies to control behavior. Not only does this parenting style result in fewer positive parent-child interactions, but it is shown to contribute to increased negative child behaviors that emerge at home, in school, and the community.

In order to reinforce the use of effective social and emotional skills, praising an adolescent's use of them is critical. One way to practice using praise is to start off with a Circle asking youth to **recount a time during the week when they used (or could have used) PS's key emotional regulation skill 'Stop, Breathe, and Choose.'** When praising, be sure to **praise specific behaviors** such as inhibiting an aggressive urge or using a positive communication strategy. Mastering complex SEL skills takes time and practice. Praising youths' **intentions, attempts, and approximations** at these skills helps shape and refine their use. Also, be aware of your tone of voice and facial expressions when you praise. Be enthusiastic, genuine, and frequent with your praise. Don't be surprised if a youth feels uncomfortable about receiving praise or even rejects it. This may be a new experience for him (her) and he (she) may experience the exchange as insincere or unwanted. The important thing is to remain consistent and undeterred.

Looking at Ourselves with Compassion

Helping trauma impacted youth gain the SEL skills they need to lead productive and healthy lives is a rewarding, though often times challenging endeavor. It requires a wide range of social and emotional capacities on our part including the ability to **take another's perspective, to accurately read emotions, to show empathy, to be cognitively and behaviorally flexible, to inhibit dominant responses to triggers, to be assertive, to effectively de-escalate crisis, to connect through humor, to handle stress, and perhaps most importantly, to forgive.** To quote Gandhi, "we must be the change we wish to see." If we want youth to pause before they respond to a trigger, we must do the same. If we are telling youth to use cognitive strategies to handle disrespect (Cool Thoughts), we need to model this skill consistently. Nowhere is walking the walk more important than when working with youth who have been abused, neglected and hurt by the adults entrusted to care for them. As a result, it is important to constantly take stock of our own emotional reserves and readiness to do this work, otherwise we risk potentially re-traumatizing the youth we are intending to help heal. Below are a few strategies to support our own SEL awareness.

Using mindfulness skills ourselves – In PS, meditation isn't just for youth. In fact, to best teach it, we recommend developing your own practice. This can include taking 15 minutes (or more) a day to practice the same type of breath-focused, mindfulness meditation taught to youth. When we take time to slow down and practice focused awareness, we find that we are more attuned to our own emotional weather. We are less likely to be overwhelmed by triggers and our interactions with youth often become more intentional. If you would like the support of a guided mindfulness meditation, you can go to www.lionheart.org/meditation/.

Looking at the connection between our own stress, triggers, and trauma history – Between 1995 and 1997 a groundbreaking investigation called **The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE)** linked early exposure to traumatic experiences such as family incarceration, divorce, parental substance abuse and mental illness with long-term physical and mental health problems including partner violence, depression, alcohol abuse, smoking and ultimately, pre-mature death. Perhaps the most compelling finding was the prevalence of early adversity in this non-clinical population, with two-thirds of those interviewed reporting at least one exposure and 40% reporting at least two. The findings of the ACE study suggest that not only have **most of us experienced**

some degree of adversity in our lives, but that there is a cumulative effect associated with these experiences with higher levels resulting in greater health risks, impaired relationships, and increased physical health problems.

One of the most potent ways these early adverse experiences shape our lives is by influencing the way we react to others when feeling threatened, unsafe, or disrespected. Just as youth tend to flee, freeze, or fight or in situations they perceive as potentially threatening, so do we. Think for a moment about the last challenging or conflictual situation you had with a youth. Looking back, how did you respond to the situation? Was your inclination to argue with the youth or assert control? Did you become more reserved and try to withdraw from the situation? Or did you separate the youth from his or her behavior and respond flexibly and empathically? What emotions did the experience lead to on your part? Anger? Feelings of being disrespected? Compassion? In order to work effectively with trauma-impacted youth and to not have these interactions be tainted (unconsciously or not) by our own early adverse experiences, we need to be willing to ask ourselves questions such as, how did my own upbringing influence the way I respond to typical trauma responses in others? What specific interpersonal interactions trigger me? How well do I “step back” when I feel myself responding to a youth in a way that isn’t modeling what safe and healthy relationships look like? Only through a willingness to examine in detail and with honesty all of what we bring to our interactions with trauma-impacted youth can we genuinely provide trauma-informed care.

Secondary Trauma – Another phenomenon that affects our well-being, quality of life, and ability to “show up” effectively at our jobs is the amount of stress we experience on an ongoing basis. It is increasingly understood that working with traumatized populations can dramatically increase our levels of stress. Listening to the stories of traumatized youth while experiencing first-hand the often intense emotional and physical manifestations of their trauma, can lead to what researchers call, “secondary trauma.” Below are a some of the ways that secondary trauma can affect us:

Signs of Secondary Trauma

Emotional – feelings of helplessness, anger, sadness/depression, anxiety, easily irritated by minor stressors, mood swings, emotional numbing, thoughts about youth or work popping up even when you’re not at work, feeling “burned out”

Physical – headaches, back pain, unusual tiredness, trouble sleeping, problems with digestive tract, no energy, feelings of always being “on alert”

Interpersonal – feeling overly worried about your own children/family, short tempered with friends and family, feeling isolated from those who don't understand the nature of your work, more conflict with kids and/or partner

General – reliance on alcohol or drugs to manage feelings, overeating, nightmares, losing pleasure in activities, feeling cynical and detached, disgusted with humanity (how could people treat their children like this), re-experiencing some of the traumatic events in your own life, getting numb to or minimizing painful situations

Working with trauma-impacted youth can often seem more of a calling than a job. It requires renewable passion for the work we do, deep reserves of empathy, and resilience. To do it well, it also requires a willingness to get support when the impact of secondary trauma undermines our well-being or our ability to be effective advocates for the youth in our care. The first step in being able to manage secondary stress is becoming aware of its impact on our daily lives. Noticing the symptoms listed in the chart above is critical in detecting secondary stress and trauma early in the cycle. Obviously, there is a certain level of stress that is inherent in this work. Most likely, our susceptibility to feeling the impact of the pain and suffering that many of the youth we work with have experienced also drives our empathy and commitment. The key is not to numb ourselves to the existence of stress, but instead to become increasingly attuned to its presence and impact to minimize potentially chronic and debilitating health consequences. Reaching out to others both within and outside of your agency, school, or organization for support is also important. And finally, using healthy lifestyle strategies to reduce health-risk behaviors, re-energize ourselves, and manage stress on a daily basis before we feel its accumulated impact are critical elements of caring for ourselves, and in turn, the youth.

A Final Note

We congratulate you for doing this incredibly valuable work and acknowledge that it often comes with challenges, particularly if you are working with youth who have been impacted by profound trauma. The Lionheart Foundation is dedicated to producing high quality resources to assist those committed to doing this work.

For more information on Power Source or other programs developed and distributed by The Lionheart Foundation, visit: www.lionheart.org.

The following section provides a theoretical rationale behind why we use emotional regulation as the conceptual cornerstone of the Power Source Workbook. You do not necessarily need to read the material in order to effectively facilitate a PS group, but understanding the basic concepts of emotional regulation can help bring depth and breadth to your work.

What Is Emotional Regulation?

Emotional regulation refers to the processes, both automatic and controlled, that we use to manage our emotions. For many adolescents whose emotional development and self-regulatory capacities have been negatively impacted by trauma, explicit and differentiated instruction in these **SEL skills are critical to their ability to stay in school, hold jobs and, for some, avoid the criminal justice system.** Early adversity arising from maltreatment, exposure to violence, and profound neglect undermines the acquisition of these SEL skills through neurobiological mechanisms and social learning channels. As a result, trauma-impacted youth often experience imbalances in their physiological responses to stress, exaggerated reactions to negative emotional cues, and possess fewer internal resources for self-soothing. Further, behaviors that were adaptive for their survival in dangerous or unpredictable environments such as maintaining a constant physiological level of arousal (a hair-trigger) or possessing a negative attributional bias (perceiving threats even to neutral social cues) can lead to involvement in high-risk behavior in other settings. Adolescence, with its increased focus on the self in relation to others, dramatic brain changes including increases in executive control functioning, and awareness of the impact of their actions on others offers an incredible window of opportunity to build these skills.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has defined 5 interrelated core competencies that are foundational to social and emotional learning (SEL). These are *self-awareness*, *self-management*, *social awareness*, *relationship skills*, and *responsible decision making*. The Power Source Workbook addresses each of these competencies in depth. Throughout the workbook, there are numerous exercises that help youth identify feelings, build a cohesive sense of self, and support the autonomy and individuation that are part of healthy adolescent development. All of these skills increase an adolescent's *self-awareness*. Likewise, the PS Workbook supports youth in developing

perspective taking skills, increasing empathy, responsibility taking, improving conflict resolution capacities, becoming active listeners, learning goal setting behavior, and building a positive future orientation, all of which contribute in turn to *social awareness, responsible decision making, and relationship skill* competencies. But the competency that is most central to the PS program is *self-management*. This includes regulating one's emotions across different settings, controlling impulses, building frustration tolerance, managing stress, learning to re-direct and sustain attention, and using self-soothing skills to return to baseline after a challenging emotional event.

There is considerable overlap between the construct CASEL defines as *self-management*, and the concept of emotional regulation that serves as the theoretical foundation of the Power Source Program. In Gross and Thompson's process model of emotional regulation (see ***The Handbook of Emotional Regulation***, 2007 for a full description), they describe 5 families of emotional regulation processes: *situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation*. The first four strategies are labeled as antecedent-focused in that they occur before a "full-blown" emotional response has occurred. The last, *response modulation*, occurs after the event has elicited some degree of an emotional response. **Power Source builds skills at each point in this process model.**

Here's an example of how Power Source targets *situation selection* and *situation modification*, which in turn, influence emotional regulation. Let's say a youth has a history of getting into fights when he goes to his cousin's neighborhood because he has an issue with another kid who lives on that block. When he has encountered this person in the past, his "full-blown" emotional response tendency (caused by his cognitive appraisals of the situation) was to feel disrespected and react aggressively. Instead of selecting to place himself in that situation and attempting to keep his cool by altering those cognitive appraisals, he could pre-empt this chain by using *situation selection* skills and asking his cousin to meet him somewhere else, avoiding those feelings of anger and disrespect which in the past have led him to fight. In this example, the PS skill that targets situation selection and situation modification is called **Rate Your Space/Change Your Place**. But PS intervenes at every other part of the emotional regulation chain as well. For instance, the PS skills found throughout the workbook that helps youth modify the negative cognitive appraisals that lead to distressing emotions and high-risk behavior are called **Cool Thoughts**. And the response modulation strategies that would help this youth walk away from a

potential conflict even after he has been triggered are called **Good Moves**.

Theoretical Targets of the PS Program	
Target ER Skills	Description of Power Source Skills
Situation Selection	Identification of situations/activities that place youth at risk and exacerbate distress. Includes healthy peer selection, using physiological cues to detect early arousal, and an understanding of places/situations associated with emotional triggers.
Situation Modification	Intentional avoidance or alteration of situations that increase arousal, risk taking, and undermine healthy development. Underlying factors include building assertiveness skills, increasing awareness of physiological cues, advancing problem solving skills, and improving frustration tolerance/impulse control.
Attention Deployment	Directing or redirecting attention in a given situation to modulate emotion. Mindfulness meditation increases attentional control.
Cognitive Change	Appraising and reappraising the meaning of a situation to alter its emotional impact. Power Source employs a strategy called <i>Cool Thoughts</i> to reinforce and engage cognitive change skills.
Response Modulation	Influencing the physiological, experiential or behavioral responses to one's environment to modify emotional experiences. The skill <i>Good Moves</i> reinforces response modulation across contexts and in response to a wide range of emotions.
Self-Efficacy	A belief that one has the capabilities to execute actions. Goal setting skills, effective interpersonal communication strategies, problem solving approaches, and locus of control exercises work to build youths' belief in their ability to influence their self-efficacy.
Social Skill-Building	Facilitating positive interpersonal interaction and communication with supportive others. Adaptive social interactions built through problem solving skills, assertiveness training, and active listening skills increase social skills.