

Essential Element 5
Your Role: Enhancing the wellbeing and resilience of those working in the system

1) Enhancing the well-being and resilience of those working in the system

- Be aware of how the trauma work is affecting you and know your warning signs.
- Stay connected to peers, family, friends, and community. Seek out supports and sources of enjoyment and inspiration.
- Consider therapy for any unresolved trauma that the child welfare work may be activating.
- Practice stress management through meditation, prayer, conscious relaxation, deep breathing, and/or exercise.
- Develop a written plan focused on maintaining work–life balance.
- Be aware that trauma work may be impacting staff and professionals you work with.

2) Communication

- Ensure that the tone of your communication in and outside of the courtroom reflects a supportive environment
 - Judges can help ensure that others are doing the same
- Communicate empathy and understanding of other’s point of view

Avoid	Why is this important?
Getting angry, upset, or yelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may mean your own stress response system is being activated. When this happens, we are not using our prefrontal cortex, i.e., using our logic, which can lead to quick, biased judgment. • This behavior may serve as a trauma reminder/trigger to others in and outside of the courtroom, setting off stress response systems of others.
Blaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume that everyone is doing their best work and have the best intentions in mind when making decisions/recommendations

3) Court Processes

- Acknowledge that some court proceedings, particularly those that require retelling of traumatic or stressful events, can be difficult.
- Remember stress and trauma can impact memory and the recall of details.
- Take a break if tensions are too stressful in the courtroom.

4) Court Environment

- Remember the court can be an intimidating place for most and can be a trauma reminder for some
- Remember that everyone wants the same thing – child safety, permanency and well-being
- Acknowledge and celebrate successes, even the smallest ones