

Trauma-Responsive Virtual and Hybrid Safe Baby Courts

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**Judge Thomas H. Broome, County Court Judge,
Rankin County Youth Court**

**Judge Colleen Gilmartin, Circuit Court Judge,
Clackamas County Circuit Court**

**Judge Carlos Villalon, Associate Judge,
Child Protection Court of the Rio Grande Valley West**

Disclaimer

Points of view or opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the presenter(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the NCJFCJ or ZERO TO THREE.

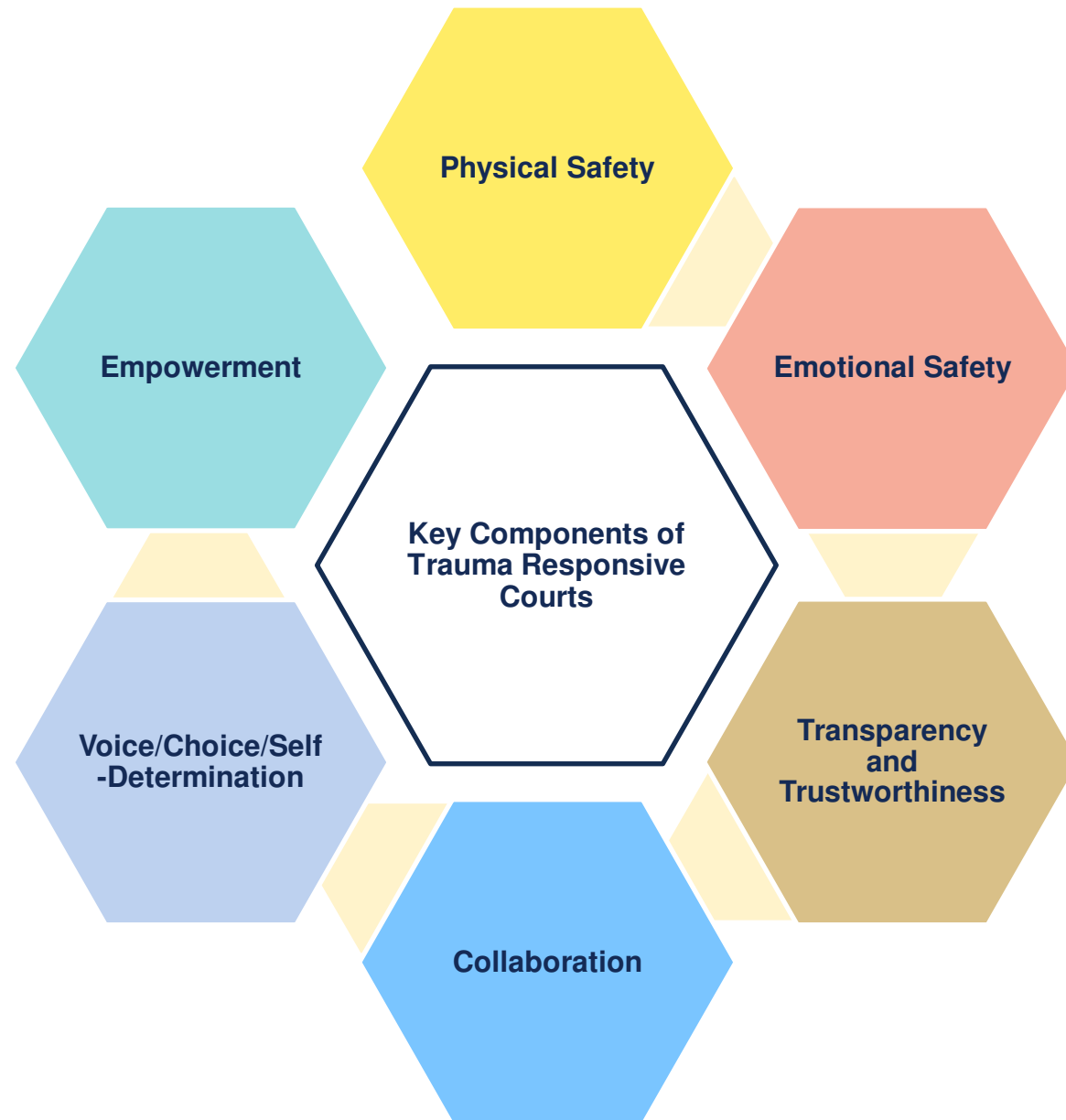
Learning Objectives:

Describe the importance of trauma-responsive practices in virtual and hybrid environments.

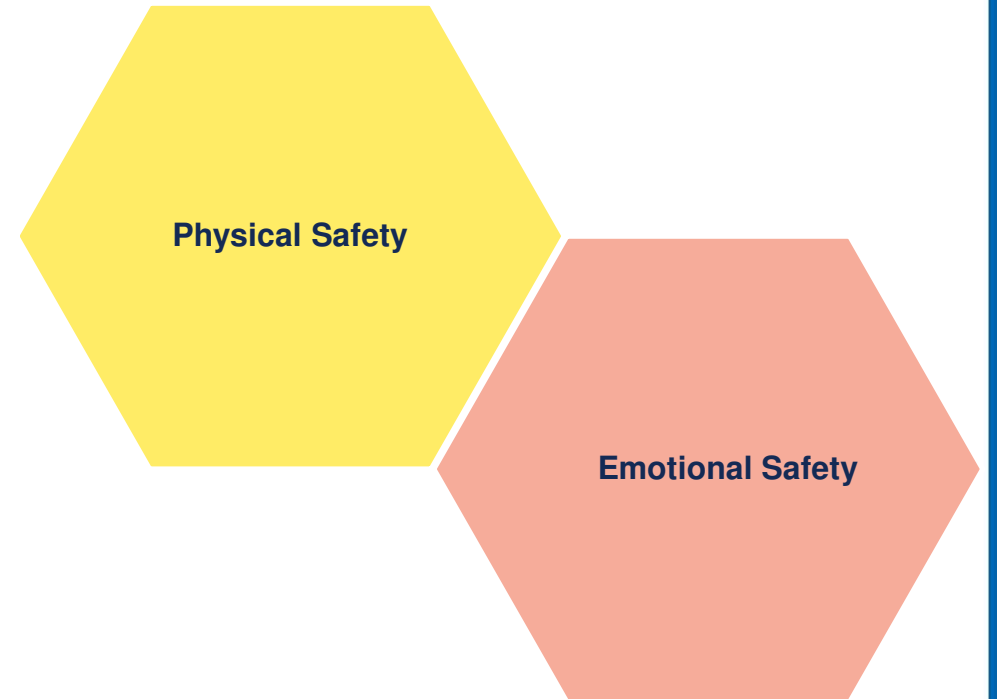
Explain trauma-responsive practices that ensure parents and children feel heard in virtual environments.

Apply trauma-responsive practices that allow parents and children to feel comfortable and safe in virtual and hybrid environments.

Poll Questions!



Promoting Physical and Emotional Safety



Consider the safety and privacy features or precautions that platforms offer to safeguard users



- Set up security measures such as a password and/or wait room to ensure only those invited to the meeting are in attendance.
- Use platform room functions, such as breakout rooms, which allow for confidential attorney-client communications during the hearing process.



Use engagement strategies to encourage safety

- Invite support persons, such as professional counselors, to participate and acknowledge and affirm their attendance.
- Ask where participants are joining from and whether they feel safe and able to meaningfully engage.
- Remind people that the meeting may not be entirely confidential, especially if there are others in the home who are able to listen in on the meeting.
 - Requesting that people use headphones may somewhat mitigate this issue.



Acknowledge the unique qualities of the families and children in your virtual court.

- Invite participants to set up their work area in a way that supports their full participation and emotional regulation.
- Invite people to customize their profile name and add pronouns.
- Provide closed captioning or a transcript for accessibility
- Ensure that the camera is set so that participant's can see the judges face.

Hybrid Hearings



- Ensure parents understand their options for attending the hearing.
- Court technology should allow all parties to see and hear one another, regardless of how they are appearing.
- Ensure agencies and community organizations are aiding in technology and educational needs for accessibility as appropriate.

Being Transparent and Promoting Trust



Transparency
and
Trustworthiness

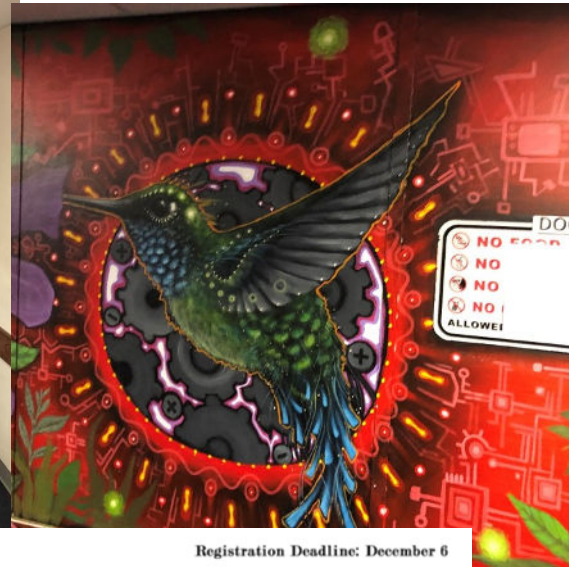
Prior to the meeting



- The hearing notice should include instructions on how to access the hearing, how to mute and unmute, the expectations for camera use, and the norms for conduct during the virtual court.
- Provide suggestions and options for families who may not have access to a device or internet connection.
- Put instructions for accessing hearings on the website.
- Consider strategic use of phone/email reminders the day before or day of, or opportunity to call them at the time of the hearing if they do not connect.
- Ensure access to language interpretation or accommodations for visual or hearing impairment.



Coalition for Empowering Children & Families



Registration Deadline: December 6



SAVE

CEU's Offered



OVAVP
Office for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

For information and Registration
contact: OVAVP@utrgv.edu
956-665-8287

Free and open to all interested stakeholders

FREE TBRI® Overview
Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®),
a holistic, evidence-based, attachment-based,
and trauma-informed intervention designed to
meet the complex needs of vulnerable children.
December 15th
UTRGV Edinburg Campus
DATE

The Court




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 **Child Protection Court of the Rio Grande Valley West**
October 6, 2021 · 🌐


Upcoming docket calendars for Hidalgo and Starr Counties can be found at <http://cpdockets.txcourts.gov/Counties.aspx?c=4>

At this time, all hearings are being held in a hybrid format (both over Zoom and in-person). Parents and children who wish to be present in-person must be accompanied by their attorneys.

Child Welfare hearings may be observed by the general public in the courtroom.

Contested Child Welfare hearings may be closed to the public upon the agreement of all parties to the suit. If there is an agreement, the court may limit attendance at the hearing to only those persons who have a direct interest in the suit or in the work of the court. (§105.003 (b), TEXAS FAMILY CODE)

Juvenile Justice proceedings are open to the public unless the court determines there is good cause to exclude the public. (§54.08(a) TEXAS FAMILY CODE.) If a child is under age 14 at the time of the hearing, the hearing must be closed to the public unless the court finds that the interests of the child or the public would be better served by opening the hearing to the public. (§54.08(c) TEXAS FAMILY CODE.)

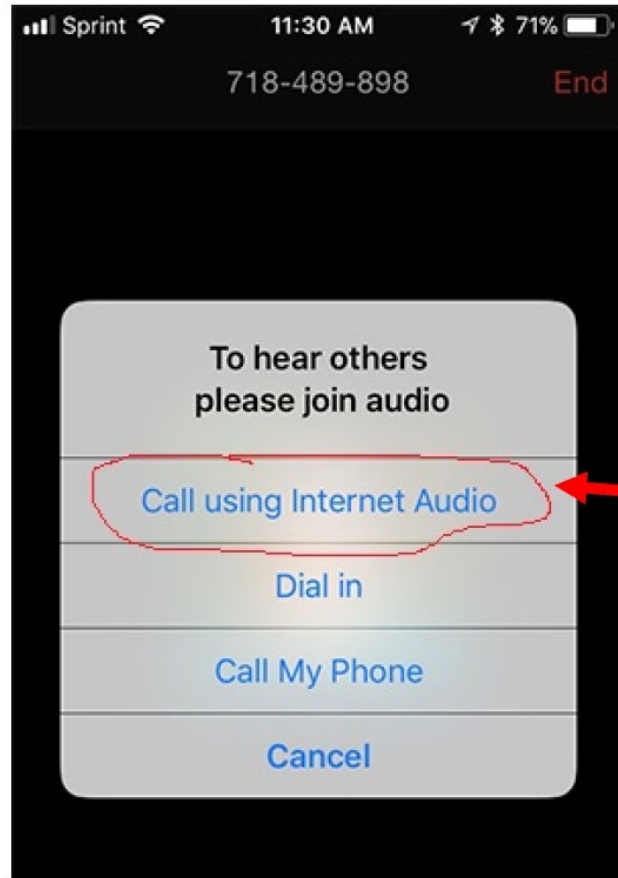
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Hearing Notifications



Hearing Notificaton Registration
Fields in this color are required

First Name:

Middle Name:

Last Name:

Suffix:

User Name:

Email Address:

A Cell Phone number is required to receive notifications via text!

Contact Phone #:
(555) 555-5555 - or - 555-555-5555

I Am:

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- Select --
- Adoptive Parent
- Attorney
- CASA Volunteer
- Case Worker
- Father
- Fictive Kin
- Foster Parent
- Guardian
- Guardian Ad Litem
- Intervenor
- Joint Managing Conservator
- Mother
- Non-relative Custodian
- Other
- Possessory Conservator
- Relative
- Relative Custodian
- Sole Managing Conservator

At the start of the meeting

- Request that all parties introduce themselves and their role.
 - Confirm that all participants can hear and be heard.
- Explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Provide instructions on how to speak up if a participant could not hear a part of the discussion.

At the end of the meeting



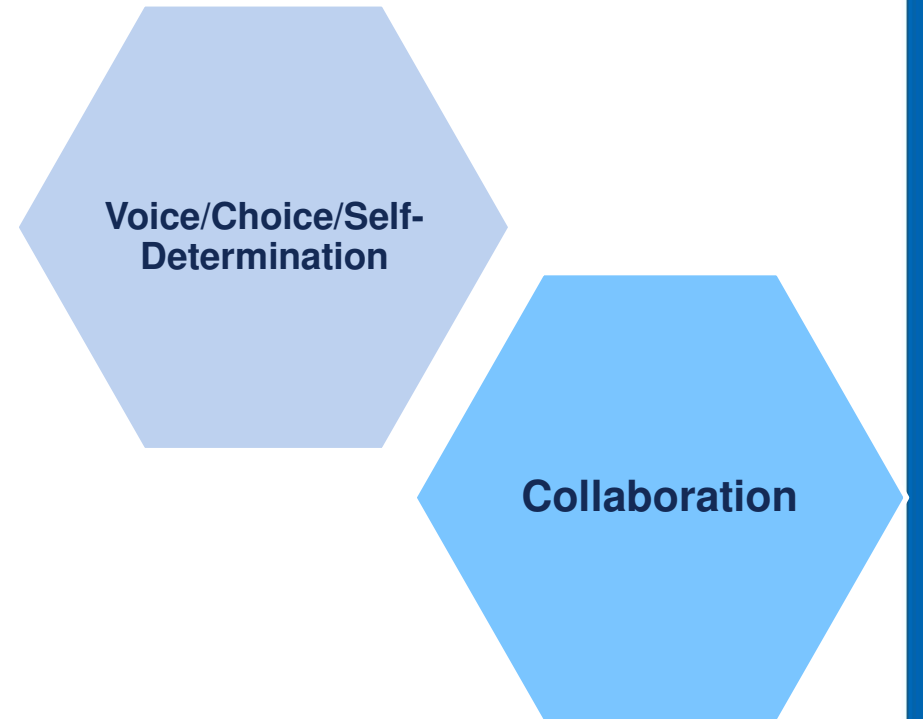
- Identify the next steps in the case.
- Ask parents to explain what has occurred during the hearing and what they need to do next.
- Ask if the next court date works for parents.
- Ask participants for feedback on the process for accessing and participating in the virtual hearing.

Hybrid Meetings



- The Judge should call the case and identify parties present so it is clear who is attending virtually and in-person.
- Establish technological infrastructure in the courtroom to enable all participants to see each other.
- Allow for opportunities for short breakouts as necessary for further explanation of case by attorney.

Collaborating and Incorporating Family Voice, Choice, and Self- Determination

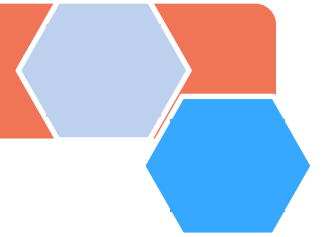


Prior to the meeting



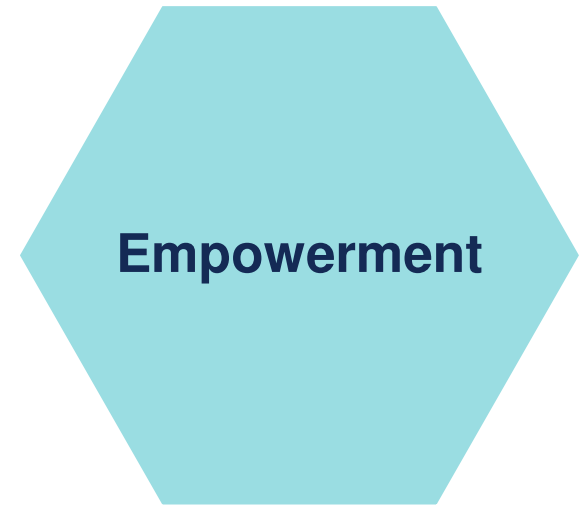
- Conduct virtual pre-hearing case conferencing with all parties.
- Use alternative dispute resolution processes where appropriate.
- Convene virtual Youth and Family Advisory Boards to provide ongoing feedback and guidance on court processes.

During the meeting



- Ask if families have spoken to their attorney prior to the hearing.
 - Let the family know how they can confidentially speak to their attorney during the virtual hearing. Use breakout rooms.
- Offer parents an opportunity to provide input and make choices.
- Let parents know the methods through which they can ask questions, in the chatbox or by raising their hand, and create space for their questions
- Ask parents if they helped create their case plan.
 - Ask parents and family for feedback on the services and resources that are made available to them. Are those services provided virtually?

Create Space for Children and Families to Be Empowered

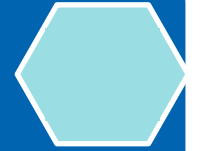


On the Bench



- Focus on family strengths.
- Recognize what they are doing well- even the small things.
- Give them time to share what is going well in their own words. Let them know how they can share this information – chatbox etc.
- Provide information about the process and how it will differ virtually or in a hybrid space and their rights.
- Encourage them to use their strengths to achieve their goals.

Off the Bench



- Invite youth and families to serve on stakeholder committees.
 - Create space for youth and families to have a role in hosting the virtual meeting.
- Create peer to peer mentorship opportunities.
 - Pay children and families for their time.
 - Provide training opportunities for children and families.
- Conduct family/youth experience surveys.

Resources

- Capacity Building center for Courts. Conducting Effective Remote Hearings in Child Welfare Cases.
https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/child_law/conducting-remote-hearings.pdf
- National Center for State Courts. Study of Virtual Child Welfare Hearings Facilitating Trauma-Responsive Virtual Hearings for Dependency Cases. April 2022
https://www.ncsc.org/data/assets/pdf_file/0023/75812/Trauma-Responsive-Virtual-Hearing.pdf
- Trauma Informed Oregon. Hosting a Virtual Meeting Using Trauma Informed Principles. <https://traumainformedoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/TIP-Hosting-a-Virtual-Meeting-Using-Trauma-Informed-Principles.pdf>
- Strategies for Engaging People With Lived Experience
[https://www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/NCJFCJ Strategies for Engaging PWLE Final.pdf](https://www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/NCJFCJ_Strategies_for_Engaging_PWLE_Final.pdf)