CITY OF MERCER ISLAND
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

When there is sexual assault or trauma involving a young person, it is deeply felt in the community. Feelings of shock, anger, betrayal, fear, sadness, and loss of trust are expected, and all deserve a safe place to be heard.

Knowing how to respond to trauma appropriately to support healing is important, but not always obvious. Below are principles YFS recommends when creating healing spaces for individuals who have experienced trauma:

Safety: Create calm and predictable environments to explore any range of emotions and experiences.

Trustworthiness and Transparency: Use factual, age-appropriate communication about what is known about events and be honest about what you do not know.

Empowerment and Choice: Allow individuals to decide when, what, and how to share, process, or disclose, and validate their voices (no "wrong" feelings).

Cultural Humility: Understand and respond to racial, cultural, linguistic, and disability-based differences in how sharing, processing, or disclosing is experienced and handled.

Collaboration: Strengthen relationships between the community and formal support services, including YFS, police, schools, faith communities, civic groups, and others.

Peer Support: Reach out to your peers to share knowledge of how to access professional help if needed.

For additional support, YFS has professional mental health counselors in all Mercer Island public schools ready to provide confidential support to any student or family processing difficult news. YFS outpatient counseling and consultation services are also available year-round to Islanders of all ages at the YFS offices in Luther Burbank Park.

Below are a list of resources for anyone seeking support for sexual assault or trauma:

- King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC) www.kcsarc.org - Resources are provided for survivors, parents and families, allies, and schools.
- 1(888) 99 VOICE - Confidential help/disclosure phone line.
- YFS School-based Mental Health Counselors – Contact information at www.mercerisland.gov/yfs/page/school-based-services
- YFS Mental Health Counselors at Luther Burbank Office – Call the Confidential Voicemail at (206) 275-7657 for confidential consultations, referrals, or to make an appointment with a mental health professional.