

Module One, Vignette One

John was raised in a home where he was frequently disciplined by having lit cigarettes put out on his body by his father and hit with objects by his mother. John's abuse began at age two. In addition to the harsh discipline John received, John lived in a neighborhood struggling with community violence. John was often bullied by older kids who would restrain him and repeatedly punch him. At the age of 12, he was removed from his parent's care and placed in the home of a foster family. He is often in physical altercations at school and appears to have significant challenges understanding and completing his homework. While in the foster home, John most recently became belligerent with the foster mother after a family friend, who smelled of cigarette smoke, came to visit the home and attempted to shake John's hand. As the foster parent began to raise her voice to John in frustration, he became even angrier and ultimately put his fist through one of their walls. At school, John's latest incident involved his P.E. teacher who was unable to allow John to test out of a physical fitness unit due to a school assembly. At the point of being told he would not be able to complete the test, John yelled expletives at the teacher and stormed out of the classroom, pushing another male peer against the wall as he left.

1. What type of trauma did John experience? Acute, chronic, or complex
2. Is John presenting with a survival in the moment response of fight, flight, or freeze?
3. How might the experiences in the foster home and at school have reminded John of his past trauma experiences?
4. How may John's responses in the foster home and at school have protected John in his biological parent's home and community?