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Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Dissemination and Implementation Project
Goals of This Presentation

• Provide education about the intersection of trauma and the child welfare system.
• Provide information about the “Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System” and practical ways to integrate these elements into child welfare practice.
• Provide information on tools and resources that exist to help child welfare systems become more trauma-informed.
Child Welfare System

- Public Child Welfare Agency
- Department of Social Services (Child and Family Services)
- Public and Private Mental Health Agencies
- Non-Profit Social Service Agencies
- Specialty Programs (i.e., Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence)
- Juvenile and Family Courts
- Juvenile Justice
- Law Enforcement
- Attorneys and Advocates
- Child Advocacy Centers
- Foster Care and Adoption Agencies and Associations
- Schools
- Public Health Department
- Tribal, Community, and Faith-Based Organizations
Origins of Trauma-Informed Child Welfare

We were actually doing it before we know what to call it

- Good Child Welfare and Court practices
- Understanding of adult and child PTSD
- Child Advocacy Center movement
- Trauma Mental Health
- Evidence-Based Practice
- Substance Abuse Treatment
Viewing Child Welfare Practice Through a Trauma Lens

Establishing a Trauma in Child Welfare System
Weaving Trauma-Informed Systems into Fabric of Child Welfare

Developmentally Informed
Culturally Informed
Evidence Informed
Trauma Informed

Safety & Risk
Permanency
Well-being

Weaving Trauma-Informed Systems into Fabric of Child Welfare
Experience shapes response to future trauma.
Definition of Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System

A trauma-informed child welfare system is one in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the varying impact of traumatic stress on children, caregivers, families, and those who have contact with the system. Programs and organizations within the system infuse this knowledge, awareness, and skills into their organizational cultures, policies, and practices. They act in collaboration, using the best available science, to facilitate and support resiliency and recovery.

The research is clear that the experience of abuse or neglect leaves a particular traumatic fingerprint on the development of children that cannot be ignored if the child welfare system is to meaningfully improve the life trajectories of maltreated children, not merely keep them safe from harm.

- Bryan Samuels, Commissioner for the Administration on Children, Youth and Families Testimony to House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, Congress on 6/16/2011
Simply removing a child from a dangerous environment will not by itself undo the serious consequences or reverse the negative impacts of early fear learning. There is no doubt that children in harm’s way should be removed from a dangerous situation. However, simply moving a child out of immediate danger does not in itself reverse or eliminate the way that he or she has learned to be fearful. The child’s memory retains those learned links, and such thoughts and memories are sufficient to elicit ongoing fear and make a child anxious.

Addressing Trauma Requires an Integrated Approach

- Trauma has biological and psychological effects that impact behavioral, social, and emotional domains.
- Impact of trauma can hinder development and interfere with children’s functioning in relationships, school, and life.
- Complex challenges of children who have experienced trauma may not be addressed by the system and services as they are currently designed.

Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System

- Partner with Agencies and Systems that interact with Children and Families
- Maximize Physical and Psychological Safety for Children and Families
- Identify Trauma-Related Needs of Children and Families
- Enhance the Well-Being and Resilience of Those Working in the System
- Enhance Child Well-Being and Resilience
- Enhance Family Well-Being and Resilience

Broader Child-Serving System

Child Welfare System

Family

Child
Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System (continued)

1. Maximize physical and psychological safety for children and families.

2. Identify trauma-related needs of children and families.

3. Enhance child well-being and resilience.

4. Enhance family well-being and resilience.

5. Enhance the well-being and resilience of those working in the system.

6. Partner with youth and families.

7. Partner with agencies and systems that interact with children and families.
Element #1: Maximize Physical and Psychological Safety for Children and Families

Safety is one of the priorities of the child welfare system – but for a child and family who have experienced trauma, they may still feel unsafe even when they are no longer in a dangerous situation. Given this, in addition to ensuring physical safety, it is important to help children and families feel psychologically safe.
Element #2: Identify Trauma-Related Needs of Children and Families

- One of the first steps in helping trauma-exposed children and families is to understand how they have been impacted by trauma.
- Trauma-related needs can be identified through trauma screening and assessment.
- It is important to consider trauma when making service referrals and service plans.
Screening and Assessment

**Psychological Evaluation**
*Designed to answer a specific referral question and conducted by court-approved evaluator*

**Trauma Assessment**
*In-depth assessment of trauma symptoms and psychosocial functioning completed by a mental health provider*

**Trauma Screening**
*Universally administered by front-line worker to determine a child or parent’s trauma history and related symptoms*
Element #3: Enhance Child Well-Being and Resilience

- Many children are naturally resilient.
- It is important for the child welfare system to recognize and build on children’s existing strengths.
- Both individual caseworkers and overall agency policies should support the continuity of children’s relationships.
- Child welfare staff and agencies should also ensure that children who have been traumatized have access to evidence-based trauma treatments and services.
Enhance Child Well-Being: Resilience

- Resilience is the ability to overcome adversity and thrive in the face of risk.
- Neuroplasticity allows for rewiring of neural connections through corrective relationships and experiences.
- Children who have experienced trauma can therefore develop resilience.

Factors that Enhance Resilience

Sources:
Enhance Child Well-Being: Support and Promote Positive and Stable Relationships

- Being separated from an attachment figure can be very stressful for a child.
- Maintaining positive connections enhances psychological safety and resilience.
- In order to form positive attachments, stability and permanency are critical.
- Child welfare workers can play a huge role in promoting positive relationships in children’s lives and helping them maintain connections.
Enhance Child Well-Being and Resilience: Treatment and Services

- One way to enhance resilience is ensuring that children have access to evidence-based, trauma-informed treatments and services.
- Trauma treatments, when indicated, should focus on addressing the impact of the child’s trauma and subsequent changes in child’s behavior, development, and relationships.
- Treatment can also help the child reduce overwhelming emotion related to the trauma, cope with trauma triggers, and make new meaning of his/her trauma history and its impact on his/her current and future life events.
Enhance Child Well-Being and Resilience: Trauma-Focused Treatment

• There are evidence-supported interventions that are appropriate for many children in the child welfare system and that share many core components of trauma-informed treatments.

• Unfortunately, many therapists who treat traumatized children lack any specialized knowledge or training on trauma and its treatment.

• When a child welfare worker has a choice of providers, he or she should select the therapist who is most familiar with the available evidence and has the best training to evaluate and treat the child’s symptoms.
Core Components of Trauma-Focused, Evidence-Based Treatment

- Building a strong therapeutic relationship
- Psychoeducation about normal responses to trauma
- Parent support, conjoint therapy, or parent training
- Emotional expression and regulation skills
- Anxiety management and relaxation skills
- Trauma processing and integration
- Personal safety training and other important empowerment activities
- Resilience and closure
Questions to Ask Therapists and Agencies that Provide Services

1. Do you provide trauma-specific or trauma-informed therapy? If so, how do you determine if the child needs a trauma-specific therapy?

2. How familiar are you with evidence-based treatment models designed and tested for treatment of child trauma-related symptoms?

3. How do you approach therapy with children and their families who have been impacted by trauma (regardless of whether they indicate or request trauma-informed treatment)?

4. Describe a typical course of therapy (e.g., Can you describe the core components of your treatment approach?).
Examples of Evidence-Based Treatments

- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)
- Prolonged Exposure Therapy for Adolescents (PE-A)

There are many different evidence-based trauma-focused treatments. A trauma-informed mental health professional should be able to determine which treatment is most appropriate for a given case.
Element #4: Enhance Family Well-Being and Resilience

- Families are a critical part of both protecting children from harm and enhancing their natural resilience.
- Providing trauma-informed education and services to parents and other caregivers enhances their protective capacities.
- Child welfare agencies should recognize that caregivers themselves may have trauma histories.
Element #5 - Enhance the Well-Being and Resilience of Those Working in the System

• While child welfare staff play an important role in supporting children, working with people that have experienced abuse, neglect, violence, and other trauma can cause staff to develop secondary traumatic stress reactions.

• Child welfare agencies should collect information about trauma and secondary trauma experienced by staff, implement strategies and practices that build resilience and help staff manage stress, and address the impact of secondary traumatic stress on both individuals and on the system as a whole.
Impact of Working with Victims of Trauma

- Trauma experienced while working in the role of helper has been described as:
  - Compassion fatigue
  - Secondary traumatic stress (STS)
  - Vicarious traumatization

- STS is the stress of helping or wanting to help a person who has been traumatized.

- Unlike other forms of job “burnout,” STS is precipitated not by work load and institutional stress but by exposure to clients’ trauma (can be acute or cumulative).

- STS can disrupt child welfare workers’ lives, feelings, personal relationships, and overall view of the world.
Element #6: Partner with Youth and Families

- Youth and families should be given choices and an active voice in decision-making on an individual, agency, and systemic level.
- Youth and family members who have been in the system have a unique perspective and can provide valuable feedback.
- Partnerships with youth and families should occur at all levels of the organization.
Element #7: Partner with Agencies and Systems that Interact with Children and Families

- Child welfare agencies need to establish strong partnerships with other child and family-serving systems.

Service providers should develop common protocols and frameworks.

- Cross-system collaboration enables all helping professionals to see the child as a whole person, thus preventing potentially competing priorities and messages.

- Collaboration between the child welfare and mental health systems promotes cohesive care and better outcomes.
How Can we Create a More Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System?

• Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Project
  • Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice Toolkit

• Materials and resources
  • Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit – Revised Version
  • Caring for Children who have Experienced Trauma: A Resource Parent Curriculum
Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Project (CTISP)

SAMHSA funded (2010-2013) as Category II NCTSN Site

Goals

• Provide leadership in identifying effective treatments and developing specialized service delivery models to children in the public child welfare system who have been victims of abuse and/or domestic violence

• Support the evolution of public child welfare agencies into trauma-informed organizations and agents of change in their communities

• Transform the wider child welfare system into a multi-dimensional, trauma-informed, evidence-based system
Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Project (CTISP)

- National Advisory Committee to:
  - Guide process
  - Assist with identifying key issues, challenges, and resources
  - Provide input and feedback on CTISP Products
- Chaired by Howard Hendrick
- Members from CWLA, NCTSN, Casey, State Government, Advocacy Groups, Universities
CTISP Products

• Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice Toolkit
  • *Trauma System Readiness Tool and focus group questions*
  • *Guidelines for Applying a Trauma Lens to a Child Welfare Practice Model*
  • *Desk Guide on Trauma-Informed Mental Health for Child Welfare*
  • *Desk Guide on Trauma-Informed Child Welfare for Mental Health*

• Available online at [www.ctisp.org](http://www.ctisp.org) by March 31, 2013
Trauma System Readiness Tool

- 150-item self-assessment instrument
- Completed by child welfare staff at multiple levels (line staff, supervisors, administrators)
- Domains incorporate the *Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System* and core principles of trauma-informed care
- For each item, participants respond on a six-point Likert scale (from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*)
- Converted into a computerized survey for ease of administration
- Can be modified/updated for other serving systems, such as mental health
Interviews and Focus Groups: Main Topic Areas

• Trauma screening and assessment for children and adults in the CW system
• Mental health services for families impacted by trauma
• Barriers to mental health services for this population
• Strengths and barriers of the current CW system
• Trauma-related training for CW staff, resource parents, and mental health providers
• The impact of trauma on child safety, permanency, and well-being

• Vicarious trauma
• Defining TICW
• Policies and practices in the current system that are trauma-informed as well as those that may add new trauma or inhibit recovery
• Barriers to TICW in the current system
• Recommended resources and supports
• Cross-system collaboration

- Designed as a tool for the child welfare administrator who is interested in having their systems become more trauma-informed.

- Sections covered include:
  - Why is this important to child welfare?
  - Brief summary of the issue
  - Background of the Issue
  - Practice Implications for Administrators
  - Resources
  - References
Guidelines for Applying a Trauma Lens to a Child Welfare Practice Model

- Designed as a tool for the child welfare agency to use to assist them in making their child welfare casework practice model more trauma-informed.
- For each stage in casework practice, the following sections are included:
  - Overview of the particular stage
  - Importance of Addressing Trauma in this stage
  - Trauma-Informed Policies and Administrative Strategies
  - Trauma-Informed Supervisory Strategies
  - Trauma-Informed Practices
  - Community Examples
• Designed to assist child welfare workers and supervisors in understanding mental health services available for children in the child welfare system.

• Includes sections on:
  • Development
  • Screening
  • Assessment
  • Evidence-Based Mental Health Practices
  • Psychotropic Medication
  • Increasing Parental Protective Factors
  • Working with Substitute Care Providers
  • Working with Mental Health Professionals
  • Coordinating Services with Other Agencies
  • Glossary of Terms
  • TIP Sheet
Desk Guide on Trauma-Informed Child Welfare for Mental Health

- Designed to assist mental health professionals in increasing their knowledge of the policies, practices, and culture of the child welfare system.

- Includes sections on:
  - Structure of the Child Welfare System
  - Understanding the Culture of the Child Welfare System
  - Child Welfare Practice
  - Screening and Referral
  - Investigation
  - Coordinating Services with Other Agencies
  - Psychotropic Medication
  - Working with Birth Parents
  - Working with Substitute Providers
  - Glossary of Terms
  - Frequently Asked Questions
Child Welfare Training Toolkit Overview

Developed by the Child Welfare Committee of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, CALSWEC and CFPIC

Goals of the Toolkit:

- To educate child welfare professionals about the impact of trauma on the development and behavior of children
- To educate child welfare professionals about when and how to intervene directly in a trauma-sensitive manner and through strategic referrals
- To assure that all children in the child welfare system will have access to timely, quality, and effective trauma-focused interventions and a case planning process that supports resilience in long-term healing and recovery
Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit Overview

- Teaches child welfare workers how to use knowledge about child trauma to achieve the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) goals:
  - Safety
  - Permanency
  - Well-Being

- Includes the following resources within the Toolkit:
  - Trainer’s Guide
  - Participant Guide
  - Slide Kit
  - Comprehensive Guide
  - Resources and References
  - Companion CD-ROM
Module 2: What is Child Trauma and Child Traumatic Stress?
Module 3: How Does Trauma Affect Children?
Module 4: What is the Impact of Trauma on the Brain and Body?
Module 5: What is the Influence of Developmental Stage?
Module 6: What is the Influence of Culture?
Module 7: Essential Element 1 – Maximize Physical and Psychological Safety for Children and Families
Module 8: Essential Element 2 – Identify Trauma-Related Needs of Children and Families
Module 9: Essential Element 3 – Enhance Child Well-Being and Resilience
Module 10: Essential Element 4 – Enhance Family Well-Being and Resilience
Module 11: Essential Element 5 – Enhance the Well-Being and Resilience of those Working in the System
Module 12: Essential Element 6 – Partner with Youth and Families
Module 13: Essential Element 7 – Partner with Agencies and Systems that Interact with Children and Families
Module 14: Summary
Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: A Workshop for Resource Parents

- NCTSN Training curriculum for foster, kinship, and adoptive parents
- Co-facilitated by a mental health professional and a foster parent
- Incorporates case studies and interactive learning exercises
- Goals:
  - To help resource parents understand the link between trauma and child’s behavior, feelings, and attitudes
  - To provide practical tools for resource parents to help children with coping skills and support their recovery from trauma
  - To help resource parents recognize and reduce the impact of child’s trauma on themselves and how to find support
Caring for Children Training Modules

1. Introductions
   • Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Parenting

2. Trauma 101
   • Types of trauma, reactions to trauma

3. Understanding Trauma’s Effects

4. Building a Safe Place

5. Dealing with Feelings and Behaviors

6. Connections and Healing

7. Becoming an Advocate

8. Taking Care of Yourself
Caring for Children Training Materials

- Facilitator’s Guide, Participant Handbook, slide kit, and handouts available:
  - Free to download from NCTSN web-site: www.nctsn.org/rpc
  - Bound copies of Participant Handbook can be purchased through FedEx Office DocStore
FUTURE DIRECTIONS:

Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Dissemination and Implementation Project (CTISP-DI)
CTISP-DI: Goals and Objectives

- SAMHSA-funded Category II Treatment and Services Adaptation Center within the NCTSN focused on:
  - Disseminating tools and products developed during CTISP to six strategically located “Supercommunities” across the country
  - Providing support on implementation and creating true culture change
  - Expanding to 20 states
Resources

- Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Project – www.ctisp.org
- California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare - www.cebc4cw.org
- Chadwick Center for Children and Families – www.ChadwickCenter.org
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