Promoting A Trauma Informed System of Care: Psychoeducational Activities for School-Aged Children.

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WHAT IS TRAUMA?

“Severe neglect, loss, and/or witnessing of violence, terrorism, and disasters”

-SAMHSA
WHO DOES TRAUMA IMPACT?

- SAMHSA reports that 90% of the population has been impacted by a trauma and that most have been exposed to multiple traumas.
- Costello, Erkanli, Fairbank, and Angold (2002) estimate 25% of children and adolescents in the community experience at least one potentially traumatic event during their lifetime.
COMMON RESPONSES TO TRAUMA

- Fear
- Hopelessness
- Self Blame
- Self Harming Behaviors
- Addiction
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Depression
- Stress that inhibits effective coping
Impact of Trauma on Children

Mental Heath Concerns
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Self-harming behaviors
- Poor Self-care
- Increased risk for developing psychiatric disorders

Increased Problems at School
- Grades may decline
- Behavior Problems
- Inattention
- Problems in Peer Relationships
- Increase in high risk behaviors
IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON CHILDREN

- Neurological Responses
  - 2007 longitudinal study of children in western North Carolina showed children exposed to trauma had almost double the rates of psychiatric disorders than those not exposed to trauma during the study period.

- How a child’s brain responds to trauma can alter its developmental trajectory.

- Alterations can lead to emotional, behavioral, and cognitive difficulties.
PTSD

- Exposure to an extreme trauma.
- Feelings of fear, helplessness, or horror.
- Persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic event.
- Avoiding stimuli associated with the trauma.

- Approximately 8% of the adult population in America suffers from PTSD.
- Can occur at any age, including early childhood.
- Symptoms can appear as early as 3 months following the traumatic event.
WHAT IS A TRAUMA INFORMED SYSTEM OF CARE?

- NCTSN defines as a system in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on children, caregivers, and service providers.
- Using culturally sensitive, evidence-informed and evidence-based practices.
- Ensures resources on trauma available to all branches of the system.
- Identify and support resiliency factors in children and families impacted by or vulnerable to trauma.
What is a trauma informed system of care?

- Emphasis on continuity of care across services.

- Maintains a supportive work environment that recognizes and treats secondary traumatic stress.
  - Enhances the resiliency of child care staff.
Why is Having a Trauma-Informed System of Care Important?

- Trauma can impact all areas of the survivor’s life.
- Children affected by trauma are more likely to seek services or be referred for services in a health care or educational setting.
Mercy Community Hope Project

- Established in 2010 following the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.
  - Reports showed that nearly 60% of the 925 coastal LA residents were impacted by the spill.
  - 40% reported direct exposure.
  - One in five households reported a decrease in income.
  - Over 25% reported that they may have to relocate due to spill.
How did the oil spill impact children?

- One-third of parents reported that their children had experienced either physical symptoms or mental health distress as a consequence of the oil spill.
MCHP’s AIM

- To reduce the symptoms of trauma associated with the oil spill while reinforcing resiliency and positive coping mechanisms among the coastal residents.
THE INTERVENTION...SKILLS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL RECOVERY

AIM

- To protect the mental health of survivors.
- Enhance survivor’s ability to address needs and concerns.
- Teach skills to promote recovery.
- Prevent maladaptive behaviors
- Identify adaptive behaviors.

OBJECTIVES

- Measurable increases in psycho-social functioning.
- Participants will learn a set of empirically-based skills to help cope more effectively.
  - Problem-solving
  - Positive Activity Scheduling
  - Managing Reactions
  - Helpful Thinking
  - Building Healthy Social Connections.
MCHP Findings (Oaklawn Jr. High)
#1 Symptom...Anger

- Pre: 50% of the students at Oaklawn Jr. High reported feeling angry due to a traumatic event.
- Post: 40% of the students reported still having feelings of anger due to a traumatic event.
# How Well Did They Cope?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre Intervention</th>
<th>Post Intervention</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- No coping skills utilized</td>
<td>- Change upsetting thoughts</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Avoidant and Distracting behaviors</td>
<td>- Talk to Supportive People</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Stay quiet about bad things that happen</td>
<td>- Think about the good things in life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Focus on good things in life</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Talk to peers</td>
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<td>- Come up with answers to problems.</td>
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THREE MONTH FOLLOW-UP

- Utilized Relaxation Skills
- Avoidant Behaviors
- Self Blaming Behaviors
- Higher Indication of Changing Negative Thoughts
- Talked to Someone about Problems
AGAIN...#1 SYMPTOM...ANGER
# How well did ECS Cope?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre Intervention</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant Behaviors</td>
<td>Try to see the good side of things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self blaming</td>
<td>Some self-blaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to others about problems</td>
<td>Some Avoidant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay quiet about problems</td>
<td>Try to fix problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to forget</td>
<td>Stay Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to fix Problems</td>
<td>Come up with different solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to see good side of things</td>
<td>Positive self-talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notice good things in life.</td>
</tr>
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MCHP SUCCESS

- MCHP directly served approximately 620 children in 2011-2012.
- MCHP collected research consents and data on approximately 400 of those children.
- MCHP is currently serving approximately 196-200 children across three parishes.
- MCHP recently conducted follow-ups in MMS and LMS and had 36 children attend the follow-up session.
- In the summer before concluding our current grant, we are hoping to have 10 groups with 6-10 children in each group.
REFERENCES


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