Changing the Trajectories of Justice-Involved Youth through Trauma-Informed, Evidenced Based Approaches

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine
The Neurocognitive and Psychosocial Impacts of Violence and Trauma

Jane Halladay Goldman, PhD
National Center for Child Traumatic Stress
Director, Service Systems Program
Overview

- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- Trauma, Development and Offending
- Trauma and Justice – Involved Youth: Findings from the NCTSN Core Data Set
- Trauma-Informed, Evidence-Based Approaches
• Established by Congress in 2000 as part of the Children’s Health Act to raise the standard of care and increase access to services for traumatized children, families, and communities

• Funded through SAMHSA and coordinated by the UCLA-Duke University National Center for Child Traumatic Stress

• Current grantees include 82 hospitals, universities, and community based programs in 44 states and the District of Columbia that are involved in training, service delivery, product development, data collection and evaluation, and public policy and awareness and systems change efforts
Adolescent Development and Offending

- Interplay of biological, psychological and social factors key to adolescent development

- Imbalance of key neurological systems (pleasure seeking and emotional reactivity vs. self regulation)

- Policies of many child-serving systems (schools, child welfare, juvenile justice) inhibit needs of developing adolescent
Trauma, Adolescent Development, and Offending

• As traumatic events increase, so does risk for offending
• Trauma can derail healthy development
• Delinquent behaviors may be linked to attempts to cope with traumatic stress symptoms
• Trauma reminders can set off physiological reactions that lead to illegal behaviors
• Adolescents need strong guidance and scaffolding from caregivers; Caregivers who have their own trauma history and symptoms may be unable to provide appropriate scaffolding
• Damage to a youth’s social contract can impact the way that youth interacts with authority figures and systems
Beyond Trauma Exposure in Detention: Understanding Trauma Reminders

• When faced with people, situations, places, or things that remind them of traumatic events, children may experience intense and disturbing feelings tied to the original trauma.

  – These “trauma reminders” can lead to behaviors that seem out of place, but were appropriate—and perhaps even helpful—at the time of the original traumatic event.
NCTSN Core Data Set

- Data on >14,088 children referred to NCTSN center for trauma
- Demographic and living situation information
- Trauma history and detail
- Indicators of severity
- Clinical evaluation
- Service Utilization
- Treatment
- Standardized Assessment Measures
  - PTS Symptoms
    - UCLA PTSD Reaction Index
    - Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children-Alternate (also taps associated difficulties: depressive symptoms, anxiety)
  - Behavioral and Emotional Difficulties
    - Child Behavior Checklist
- Measures administered: treatment entry, end of treatment (if short term), or every three months
Multiple Trauma Types and Functional Impairments

Number of Trauma Types

Percent

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

1 2 3 4+

Behavior Problems at Home
Behavior Problems in School
Academic Problems

© NCCTS DEP 2017
Children in the Clinical Range: Baseline vs. Last Follow-Up

n.b., Last follow-up may include children still in treatment (n = 10,982)

* p ≤0.01

PTSD*  Behavior Problems*  Traumatic Stress*

Baseline: 28.6  34.4  10.4
Last Followup: 11.2  10.4  1.9

Percent in clinical range
Trauma Histories Among Youth Recently Involved in the Juvenile Justice System: Findings from the NCTSN Core Data Set

- Carly B. Dierkhising, MA, Ernestine Briggs, PhD., Susan J. Ko, PhD, Robert Lee, MS, Briana Woods, PhD, Alan Steinberg, PhD, & Robert Pynoos, MD. European Journal of Psychotraumatology. Vol. 4, Iss. 1, 2013

- 658 youth with recent justice involvement

- Youth all seen at an NCTSN site for trauma
Trauma Begins Early in Life

Justice-involved group of 658 adolescents (13-18) with recent involvement in JJ from the NCTSN Core Data Set.
Trauma Exposure Persists Across Childhood and Adolescence

Dierkhising et al., 2013
Traumatic Stress and Related Problems are Common

Dierkhising et al., 2013
Prevalence of Trauma Types for Total Sample
(N=658)

Dierkhising et al., 2013
High Rates of Multiple Trauma Exposures Among JJ Youth: NCTSN CDS Preliminary Findings

CDS preliminary findings:
• 54% female;
• 13-18 (M=15.7, sd 1.3);
• 22% AA; 31% Hispanic
  • 90% of youth reported multiple exposures
  • Over one-third of youth experienced multiple exposures each year
• Average # of trauma types = 4.9
• Prevalence increases over time

Dierkhising et al., 2013
## Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System

1. **Trauma-Informed Policies and Procedures**
2. **Identification/Screening of Youth Who Have Been Traumatized**
3. **Clinical Assessment/Intervention for Trauma-Impaired Youth**
4. **Trauma-Informed Programming and Staff Education**
5. **Prevention and Management of Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)**
6. **Trauma-Informed Partnering with Youth and Families**
7. **Trauma-Informed Cross System Collaboration**
8. **Trauma-Informed Approaches to Address Disparities and Diversity**
Trauma-informed policies and procedures make juvenile justice organizations safer and more effective by ensuring the physical and psychological safety of all youth, family members, and staff and promoting their recovery from the adverse effects of trauma.
Understand that carefully timed traumatic stress screening is the standard of care for youth in the juvenile justice system.
IDENTIFICATION/SCREENING OF YOUTH WHO HAVE BEEN TRAUMATIZED

• Traumatic stress screening should take place as early as possible to identify traumatized youth who have emotional, behavioral, learning, or relationship difficulties.

• Explain the purpose of the screening and share the results with youth and family.

• Ensure that the screen is designed and administered in a manner that is valid/reliable and sensitive to diversity, including the youth’s and family’s language, culture, gender, identity, and ability (e.g., religion, sexual orientation, disability).
Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System

Resources

Screening and Assessment Webinar Series
NCTSN Measures Review Database
Clinic assessment intervention for trauma-impaired youth

Trauma-specific clinical assessment and treatment and trauma-informed prevention and behavioral health services are the standard of care for all youth identified as impaired by posttraumatic stress reactions in the screening process.
Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System

CLINICAL ASSESSMENT/INTERVENTION
FOR TRAUMA-IMPAIRED YOUTH

- Assessment should determine the potential relationship of posttraumatic stress and related behavioral health symptoms to criminogenic risks/needs and responsivity factors related to recidivism.

- Services should include a continuum of clinical or preventive interventions (e.g., for substance abuse, depression/anxiety, anger/aggression, negative peer group affiliation, school/learning problems, and impulsivity) designed to address the effects of posttraumatic stress symptoms and related behavioral health problems on youths’ criminogenic risk/needs.

- Assessment and services should identify strengths possessed by the youth and family that can positively influence the legal and treatment process.
Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System

Resources

NCTSN Database of Empirically Supported Treatments and Promising Practices

Juvenile Justice Briefs
http://nctsn.org/resources/topics/juvenile-justice-system:

● Assessing Exposure to Psychological Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms in the JJ Population

● Evidence Informed Interventions for Posttraumatic Stress Problems with Youth Involved in the JJ System
Trauma-informed education, resources, and programs are the standard of care across all stages of the juvenile justice system.
Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System

4

TRAUMA-INFORMED PROGRAMMING AND STAFF EDUCATION

• Offer resources and training about:
  – The effects of trauma exposure on youth and families
  – The nature of traumatic stress reactions and strategies to avoid further harm
  – Recognizing the signs of staff’s secondary traumatic stress

• Support staff development of skills that non-clinical—as well as clinical—service providers can utilize in interacting with justice-involved youth to increase the engagement of youth and their families.
Beyond Trauma *Exposure* in Detention: Understanding Trauma Reminders

- When faced with people, situations, places, or things that remind them of traumatic events, children may experience intense and disturbing feelings tied to the original trauma.

  - These "*trauma reminders*" can lead to behaviors that seem out of place, but were appropriate—and perhaps even helpful—at the time of the original traumatic event.
Resources

Think Trauma: A Training for Staff in Juvenile Justice Residential Settings

Target Audience
✓ Direct care professionals working with youth in residential/correctional facilities

Description
✓ Helps staff learn how trauma impacts thoughts, feelings, attitudes and actions of youth in care, and provides practical tools for them to use in their response.

Format
✓ Facilitator’s Guide
✓ Case Vignettes
✓ Slide Kit
✓ Supplemental Materials
Use of Seclusion Over Time

![Graph showing the use of seclusion over time with two lines representing TARGET + Think Trauma and CONTROL.](Graph.png)

**Mean Use of Seclusion**

**Time Period**

5/07-8/07 9/07-12/07 1/08-4/08 5/08-8/08 9/08-12/08

Marrow, Knudsen, Olafson, & Bucher, 2012
Juvenile justice administrators and staff at all levels recognize and respond to the adverse effects of secondary traumatic stress in the workplace in order to support workforce safety, effectiveness, and resilience.
Juvenile Justice Professionals Surveyed...

92%
- Witnessed an act of violence or aggression by a youth directed at a staff member.

90%
- Witnessed an act of violence or aggression by a youth directed at another youth.

81%
- Restrained a youth in their program.

42%
- Experienced posttraumatic stress reactions following a traumatic event in their facility.
PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS (STS)

• Provide educational resources to staff to ensure their ability to:
  – Identify when they or their co-workers or supervisors are experiencing STS
  – Recognize STS as a normative reaction
  – Use effective coping strategies to respond to STS

• Support supervisory staff in developing skills that increase supervisor ability to recognize STS and to respond with appropriate support and resources.

• Develop and sustain programs to provide timely, systematic, and effective stress management.
Secondary Traumatic Stress
A Fact Sheet for Child-Serving Professionals

...We are not aware of those who allow us into their lives but of our own capacity to be helpful...

Each year more than 10 million children in the United States endure the trauma of abuse, violence, natural disasters, and other adverse events. These experiences can give rise to significant emotional and behavioral problems that can profoundly disrupt children’s lives and bring them into contact with child-serving systems. For therapists, child welfare workers, case managers, and other helping professionals involved in the care of traumatized children and their families, the essential act of listening to trauma stories may take an emotional toll that compromises professional functioning and depletes quality of life. Individual and supervisory awareness of the impact of this indirect trauma exposure—inferred as secondary traumatic stress—is a basic part of protecting the health of the worker and ensuring that children consistently receive the best possible care from those who are committed to helping them.

Our main goal in preparing this fact sheet is to provide a concise overview of secondary traumatic stress and its potential impact on child-serving professionals. We also outline options for assessment, prevention, and interventions relevant to secondary stress, and describe the elements necessary for transforming child-serving organizations and agencies into systems that also support worker resiliency.

How Individuals Experience Secondary Traumatic Stress

Secondary traumatic stress is the emotional stress that results when an individual hears about the trophied trauma experiences of another. Its symptoms mimic those of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Accordingly, individuals affected by secondary stress may find themselves re-experiencing personal trauma or notice an increase in arousal and avoidance reactions related to the indirect trauma exposure. They may also experience changes in memory and perception that alter their sense of self-efficacy, a depletion of personal resources, and signs of emotional exhaustion, depression, and insomnia.

This project was funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), to improve state, local, and national policies, and systems of care for those with or at risk for a mental or behavioral health condition. The opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or DHHS.
Trauma-informed juvenile justice systems ensure that youth and families engage as partners in all juvenile justice programming and therapeutic services.
Partnering With Families

Figure 3. Behavior Incidents per Month and Visitation Frequency

Visitation Frequency

Never 14
Infrequently 6
Regularly 4

Behavioral Incidents per Month

Vera Institute
Pathways to Partnerships with Youth and Families in the National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Resources

SHARING POWER
A Tool for Reflection

Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System
Cross system collaboration enables the provision of continuous integrated services to justice-involved youth who are experiencing posttraumatic stress problems.
Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System

7

TRAUMA-INFORMED CROSS SYSTEM COLLABORATION

• Identify youth who are involved in multiple systems to offer them efficient and timely trauma-informed screening, assessment, and collaborative case and service planning.

• Support traumatized youth and families’ successful transitioning across systems, settings, and developmental phases.

• Develop communication systems that allow for the sharing of information among systems while appropriately maintaining confidentiality of youth.
Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System

Resources

NCTSN BENCH CARD
FOR THE TRAUMA-INFORMED JUDGE

NCTSN BENCH CARD
FOR COURT-ORDERED TRAUMA-INFORMED MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSION

COPS, KIDS & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
Protecting Our Future

THE NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK     www.NCTSN.org
Trauma-informed juvenile justice systems ensure that their practices and policies do address the diverse and unique needs of all groups of youth and do not result in disparities related to race, ethnicity, gender, gender-identity, sexual orientation, age, intellectual and developmental level, or socioeconomic background.
TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES TO ADDRESS DISPARITIES AND DIVERSITY

• Ensure that peers and adults with whom youth interact or reside do not stigmatize, exclude, or re-traumatize them.

• Provide opportunities to receive prosocial support from youth and adults of similar gender, sexual identity, age, and developmental status.

• Ensure that language barriers or cognitive limitations do not effect traumatic stress screening and assessment or treatment practices.

• Ensure that youths are able to comprehend and engage meaningfully and voluntarily in services and in decisions related to their legal disposition and planning to the best of their ability.
Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System

Resources

Spotlight on Culture Series

Topics include:
► The Organizational Journey Toward Cultural and Linguistic Competency (I-IV)
► Working with Immigrant Latin-American Families Exposed to Trauma
► Trust and Acceptance Can Encourage LGBTQ Youth to Disclose
► Preventing Youth Suicide in Montana’s Indian Country
► Conversations about Historical Trauma (I-III)
Jane Halladay Goldman, PhD
UCLA-Duke National Center for Child Traumatic Stress
Director, Services Systems Program
jhalladay@mednet.ucla.edu

www.nctsn.org
www.learn.nctsn.org