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Developing Trauma-Informed Practice in a Community Mental Health Clinic: In the Child Welfare Context

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MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MANKATO

Developing Trauma-Informed Practice in a Community Mental Health Clinic: In the Child Welfare Context

Kelly Froehle

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Purpose

- This project provides direction for working with clients who present at First Street Center for mental health services with a trauma history.
- As child welfare staff work to develop trauma-informed practice, having similar procedures and services at First Street Center may complement services families are receiving from the county as a whole.

Trauma Treatment Definitions

Trauma Specific Interventions

- Specific practices developed to address trauma.

Trauma Specific Services

- Programs that address trauma with a continuum of interventions from screening to treatment to recovery supports.

Trauma Informed Care

- Reflects the adoption of underlying principles rather than a specific set of procedures. An environment that promotes safety and trust for recipients as well as staff members.

Literature Review

- Trauma results from an event or series of events experienced as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening (SAMHSA, 2012).
- Trauma has lasting effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being (SAMHSA, 2012).
- Many clients in the MH system have experienced multiple traumas (Jennings, 2004).
- Children in the CW system often have experienced numerous traumatic events and exhibit traumatic stress symptoms (Conradi, Wherry, & Kisiel, 2011).
- Children who experience chronic trauma are more likely to have symptoms such as problems sleeping, paying attention, concentrating (Smyth & Gerber, 2013).

Trauma Screening Tools

Child

- Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children
- Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children
- Traumatic Events Screening Inventory-Parent Report

Adult

- Traumatic Symptom Checklist
- Trauma Symptom Inventory
- Distressing Events Questionnaire

Trauma-Focused Screening Topics

Child abuse

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
 - Hitting
 - Shaking
 - Biting
 - Burning
 - Choking
 - Stabbing
- Sexual Abuse
 - Touching
 - Penetration
 - Pornography exposure
- Emotional Abuse

Extended separation from caregivers

- Out of home placement
- Incarceration of parent
- Kidnapping victim

Rape

Domestic violence

- As a victim
- As a child witness

Significant physical injuries

Invasive medical procedures

Exposure to accidents

Natural disasters

Human disaster/terrorism

Witness to a violent death

Military service history

Evidence-Based Therapeutic Approaches for Trauma

Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

- Similar to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) with a specific focus on the trauma experience. Provides children and parents with knowledge and skills to process trauma, manage distressing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and enhance safety, parenting skills, and communication.

Exposure Therapy

- Form of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) where client learns to redefine how they think about and respond to the traumatic events in their past. Clients are re-exposed to the experience and learn to reprocess and make sense of what happened and decrease negative reactions.

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

- Uses a unique standardized set of procedures and clinical protocols which incorporate dual focus of attention and alternating bilateral visual, auditory, and/or tactile stimulation.

Recommendations for First Street Center

- All staff should attend training on providing services to clients who have experienced trauma.
- Continue to provide a variety of therapeutic approaches including trauma specific interventions.
- Integrate trauma specific screening questions into the diagnostic assessment tool used for all intakes.
- Create and maintain a list of local practitioners who provide intensive, trauma-specific services.

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Full references available upon request