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

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Reflects the adoption of underlying principles rather than a specific set of
Programs that address trauma with a continuum of interventions from
Specific practices developed to address trauma.

Trauma Specific Interventions

Trauma Informed Care

Children who experience chronic trauma are more likely to have symptoms
Children in the CW system often have experienced numerous traumatic
This project provides direction for working with clients who present at First
Street Center for mental health services with a trauma history.

Purpose

- This project provides direction for working with clients who present at First
- 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 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
- 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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