ACEs and Parenting Education: Trauma Informed Practice

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Agenda

Part 1  DeAnna
- Defining Trauma and Toxic Stress
- The ACEs Study
- Trauma’s affect on the Brain & Body

Part 2  Julika
- The ACEs & Protective Factors questionnaires
- How this data informs our practice
- Administering these questionnaires

Part 3  Jackie
- Preventive Strategies and Best Practice
- Self-Care, Healing Strategies for Children and Adults
- Making Referrals
History

- **Causal relationship** between negative life experiences and negative mental health affects

- **Hysteria** (later 19th century)
- **Shell-shock** (early 20th century)
- **PTSD** (later 20th century)
A Landmark Study

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (1980-90s)

- Vincent Felitti
- Robert Anda

The study focused on three categories of trauma:
- Abuse
- Neglect
- Family Dysfunction
The ACEs Study

Critical Findings:
1. Childhood trauma is linked to poor health outcomes in adults
2. Dose-Response relationship
3. ACEs are common & tend to occur together
ACEs: What is Trauma?

Stress can be good and bad...

**Toxic Stress**

**Tolerable Stress**

**Positive Stress**

What other childhood experiences might cause trauma?
Trauma’s Deep Impact

Brain  

Body  

Life-Long...
Trauma Changes the Brain

- Learning problems
- Behavioral problems
- Lack of inhibition & impulse control
- Hyper or Hypo-arousal of the HPA Axis
Trauma Affects the Body

- Failure to thrive, reduced size/stature
- Deep abdominal fat storage, weight gain
- Elevated heart rate, blood pressure, inflammation
- Reduced brain volume
- Hyper or Hypo arousal of HPA Axis
  - Attachment Disorder,
  - “ADHD” and “ADD” characteristics
  - ODD, Anxiety Disorder
  - Learning problems, reduced memory, verbal recall
  - Inability to regulate emotions
Trauma’s Long-Term Affects

• Increase in chronic disease
  • Obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, Heart Disease, COPD, Cancer, ...
• Mental Illness including depression, anxiety and suicide attempts
• Substance abuse, other negative coping strategies
• Accidents, injuries and broken bones
• STDs, early sexuality, and unintended pregnancies
• Parental beliefs and attitudes affect parenting practices
• Epigenetics – trauma transmitted through generations
ACEs and Long-Term Health Outcomes

2+ ACEs
• 2 times as likely to develop an auto-immune disease

4+ ACEs
• 2 times as likely to develop heart disease or cancer
• 3 ½ times as likely to develop COPD

7+ ACEs
• 3 times as likely to develop lung cancer
• 3 ½ times as likely to develop heart disease
What the numbers say

National Averages Based on ACEs Study

- ZERO: 36%
- ONE: 26%
- TWO: 16%
- THREE: 9.5%
- FOUR OR MORE: 12.5%

Livingston County Parenting Education Participants 2017-18

- Zero: 15%
- One: 4%
- Two: 15%
- Three: 15%
- Four or More: 50%
How can we use ACE Assessments in our programs?
2Gen Approach – making the connection

• One-on-One
• Group
ACE Assessment Tools

Prior to your 18th birthday:

- Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?  
  No___If Yes, enter 1 

- Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?  
  No___If Yes, enter 1 

- Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?  
  No___If Yes, enter 1 

- Did you often or very often feel that... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn’t look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?  
  No___If Yes, enter 1 

- Did you often or very often feel that... You didn’t have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?  
  No___If Yes, enter 1 

- Were your parents ever separated or divorced?  
  No___If Yes, enter 1 

- Was your mother or stepmother: Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?  
  No___If Yes, enter 1 

- Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?  
  No___If Yes, enter 1 

- Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?  
  No___If Yes, enter 1 

- Did a household member go to prison?  
  No___If Yes, enter 1 

Now add up your “Yes” answers: _ This is your ACE Score.
What’s the ACE Score in the Room

Go to menti.com
Enter code: 68 52 85
Enter your score
Click submit

https://www.menti.com/
What you want to adjust...

• Experiencing violence in your environment/neighborhood
• Fear or deportation, or if someone in the family has been deported
• Experiencing racism
• Military deployment
• ....others
Protective Factors Instrument

• As pre- and post assessment
• Individually or within a group/series
• Orange County example
Genius 2Gen

- Building onto desired outcomes, i.e. success
- Connecting and understanding stressful experiences
- Parents understand their own lives better
- Improves outcomes for their children
Putting it into Practice...
Tending to the Environment

• Safety = physical & emotional
• Conducive to learning
• People will retain more when they feel “comfortable” in the learning environment.
Things to consider

• Access to exits
• Personal Space
• Room to “take a break”
• Sensory needs (experiences, toys, etc.)
• Privacy
• Childcare
Things to consider

• Setting the emotional tone of support:
  • Body language & facial expressions
  • Tone of voice
  • Time for listening
  • Participant efficacy & shared power
    (problem solving with vs. advising)
Teaching Practical Self Care Skills

National Extension Parenting Educators’ Framework
Teaching Practical Self Care Skills

• Deep Breathing Exercise
• Reflection Sheets
• Sensory bottles
• Miracle Question guided visualization
• Coloring to music
• Shake it off
• Body Scan
Knowing when and how to make a referral

• Training: DV 101, MH first aid, etc.
• Resource file of local services with contact information
• “I’d like you to...” vs. “Have you considered?”
• Maintaining your role- educator/facilitator of learning
Resources

• **Recommended Reading**
  - The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity by Nadine Burke Harris, M.D.
  - The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma by Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D.

• **Websites**
  - CDC Centers for Disease Control & Prevention [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html)
  - ACEs Too High [https://acestoohigh.com/](https://acestoohigh.com/)
  - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration SAMHSA [www.samhsa.gov/](http://www.samhsa.gov/)
  - ACEs Connection [www.acesconnection.com](http://www.acesconnection.com)
  - National Child Traumatic Stress Network [www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org)

• **Online Media**
  - TED talks by Nadine Burke Harris M.D., Bessel Van Der Kolk M.D.
  - Paper Tigers documentary
  - Resilience documentary
Please join the Parent PWT Subgroup – Zoom meeting first Thursdays at 10am
Contact Julika von Stackelberg jv426@cornell.edu

Questions & Comments?

Thank You!