

Great Ideas for Family Leaders – January 2017 – Special Edition

Understanding Trauma and Promoting Resiliency in Children, Youth and Young Adults

Dear Family Leaders,

If you missed our January Learning Community for Family Leaders you are in luck. The presentation on ***Understanding Trauma and Promoting Resilience in Vulnerable Children*** by Carmela DeCandia, PhD. was a hit and something you will want every member of your staff to hear. Dr. DeCandia offers a new way to look at resilience and the critical role that parent peer support providers can play in helping families instill resiliency in their children. You can access the presentation slides and the recording by clicking here: <https://theinstitute.adobeconnect.com/p1augwjbpx/>.

Due to the overwhelming response to the Learning Community, we have pulled together resources on trauma and resilience for you to add to your toolkit when working with families who may have experienced trauma.

Our February Learning Community promises to be equally as informative with Kathy Lazear and Peter Gamache presenting on: ***Toward an Understanding of Youth Who are Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity/Expression Diverse (SOGIE) or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, Two-Spirit (LGBTQI2-S)***. We hope you can join us. Click here to register: https://events-na11.adobeconnect.com/content/connect/c1/1120832267/en/events/event/shared/1159765005/event_registration.html?sco-id=1580782945& charset =utf-8.

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TRAUMA

The concept of trauma-informed care emerged in the field of mental health over forty years ago. Trauma is ever present, through our personal experiences, experiences in our communities and even through media coverage of tragic news events. Trauma knows no boundaries and can touch all ages, gender, socioeconomic, race, ethnicity, geography or sexual orientation. Some groups are more susceptible to trauma. It is an almost universal experience of people with mental and substance use disorders.

What Is a Traumatic Event?

A traumatic event is a scary, dangerous, or violent event. An event can be traumatic when we face or witness an immediate threat to ourselves or to a loved one, often followed by serious injury or harm. We feel terror, helplessness, or horror at what we are experiencing and at our inability to stop it or protect ourselves or others from it. A traumatic event can happen to anyone.

What Is Child Traumatic Stress?

When a child has had one or more traumatic events, and has reactions that continue and affect his or her daily life long after the events have ended, we call it **Child Traumatic Stress**. Children may react by becoming very upset for long periods, depressed, or anxious. They may show changes in the way they

behave, or in their eating and sleeping habits; have aches and pains; have difficulties at school, problems relating to others, or not want to be with others or take part in activities. Older children may use drugs or alcohol, behave in risky ways, or engage in unhealthy sexual activity.

Types of Trauma

There are many types of trauma including: community violence, complex trauma, domestic violence, early childhood trauma, medical trauma, natural disasters, neglect, physical abuse, refugee trauma, school violence, sexual abuse, terrorism, traumatic grief and more. Some trauma is avoidable while others, like natural disasters, are not.

Researchers are now recognizing that urban poverty is also a type of trauma. The family as a whole is impacted by chronic conditions of high stress and exposure to multiple traumas and families often experience chaotic, disorganized lifestyles, inconsistent and/or conflicted relationships, and crisis-oriented coping.

Source: *The National Child Traumatic Stress Network:*

<http://www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/parents-caregivers>

RESILIENCE

The ability of a child or youth to ‘bounce back’ or as some researchers and clinicians even suggest “bounce forward” after a traumatic event, is directly related to protective factors and resiliency. A landmark study in 1998 by Vince Felitti found that individuals with four or more adverse experiences had a 2-fold to 12-fold increased rate of mental health, substance abuse, and physical health conditions. Adverse early experiences shift a person’s thinking, judgment, and social relationships leading to increased risk behaviors that produce adverse social, economic, and health outcomes.

What is Resilience?

Resilience is the process by which a child moves through a traumatic event, utilizing various protective factors for support, returning to “baseline” in terms of an emotional and physiologic response to the stressor.

Increasing resilience in children

Resilience is the process of utilizing one’s protective factors to navigate successfully through a stressful situation. For example, a child may go through the loss of a grandparent, which is very painful. With the support of caregivers and other social connections, such as friends, the child can grieve appropriately and will return emotionally and physiologically to a place of stability, after a period of time. The critical piece is the presence of protective factors. Life always involves stressful circumstances, but parents and other support systems must ensure that the child has the protective factors in place to prevent long-term negative outcomes. These protective factors include parental resilience, social connections, concrete/tangible help in times of need, parent knowledge of child development, and social and emotional competence of the child. (Strengthening Families)

Source: *Strengthening Families. (n.d.). Protective Factors Framework. Retrieved March 18, 2013, from Center for the Study of Social Policy’s Strengthening*

Families: <http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/basic-one-pagers/Strengthening-Families-Protective-Factors.pdf>

Source: *American Academy of Pediatrics – The Resilience Project*

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/resilience/Pages/Promoting-Resilience.aspx>

Resources on Trauma and Resilience for Parents, Caregivers & Family-Run Organizations

Family-run organizations and parent peer support providers routinely work with families and children who have experienced trauma of all types. All of us need to fully understand trauma, its effects, and how to build resiliency in children and families. The following resources provide a framework and tools to ensure family-run organizations are equipped to fulfill this role.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network – Resources for Parents & Caregivers

<http://www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/parents-caregivers> - This website is a must for anyone who wants to learn about childhood trauma. Numerous resources for families and professionals address trauma that could occur in any context such as school, natural disasters and more.

Resilience Guide for Parents & Teachers

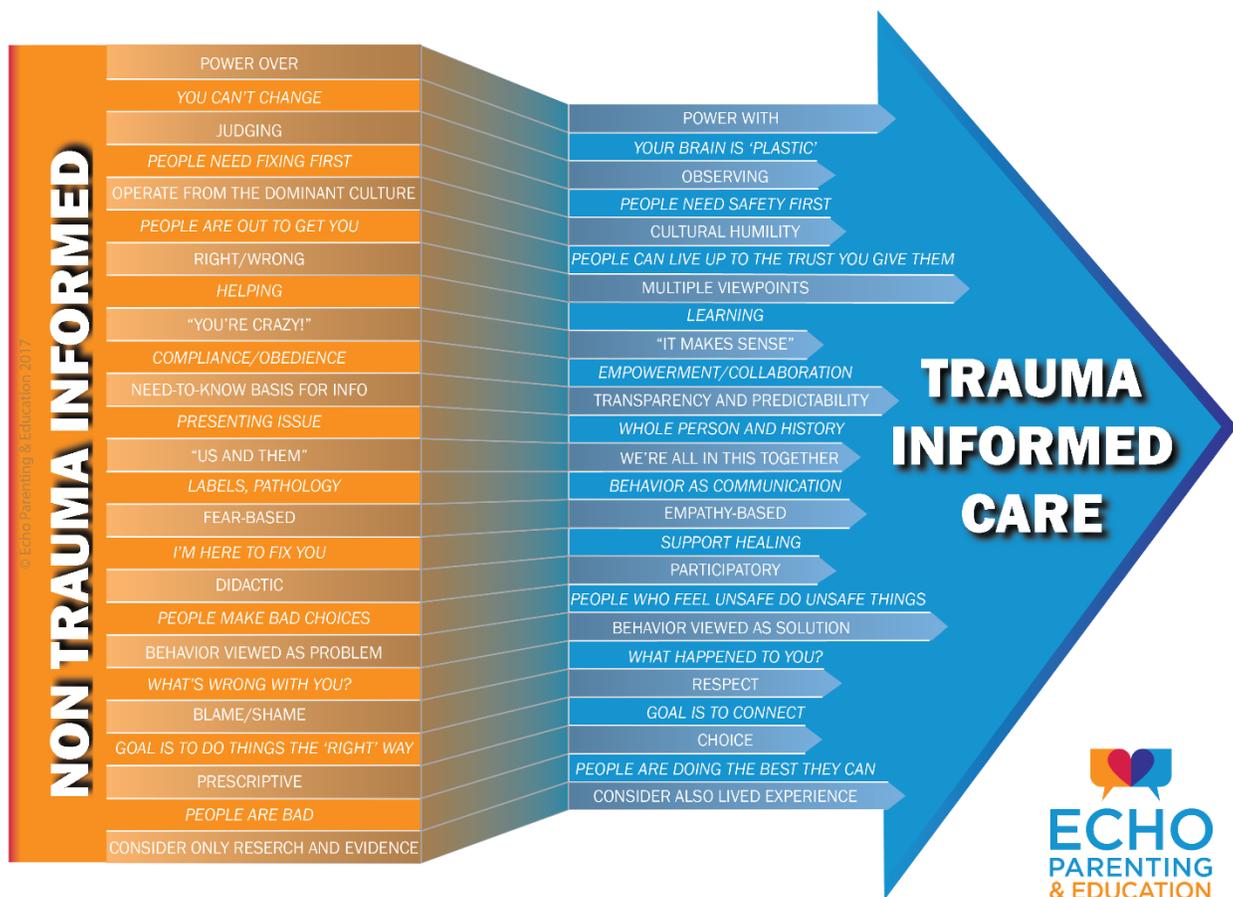
<http://apa.org/helpcenter/resilience.aspx> - The American Psychological Association offers an easily understandable Guide for Families that includes 10 Tips on Building Resilience for Children and Teens. The Guide can be downloaded as a resource for families.

InBrief: Resilience Video Series

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-resilience-series/> - This series of three short videos on resilience developed by the Harvard Center on the Developing Child are wonderful and can be used at staff meetings as well as support groups with families. You will want to use them often for all audiences.

How to Be Trauma Informed – For Real!

<http://www.echoparenting.org/how-to-be-trauma-informed-for-real.html> - Echo Parenting & Education offers a wide array of parenting and professional programs, teaching an approach to caring for children that is grounded in empathy and the philosophy of nonviolence. ECHO's newly released infographic provides a visual comparison of care that is trauma-informed care and care that is not trauma informed. A great addition and reminder for family organization's to have posted in their offices.



The Protective Factors Framework

<http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/about> - The Center for the Study of Social Policy website includes a wealth of information about the Protective Factors Framework including short research briefs on: Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Concrete Supports, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development and Social and Emotional Competence of Children. The website also has a Toolkit on Growing and Sustaining Parent Engagement. This website is worth sitting down with a cup of coffee and spending some time looking through the many resources.

Focal Point: Youth, Young Adults, & Mental Health, Trauma-Informed Care, 2015, v. 29

<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/fpS15.pdf> - This newsletter from Regional Research Institute for Human Services, Portland State University is packed full of articles about brain science, research and more. This is heavy reading but very informative for someone who wants to dive into trauma.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.

<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA14-4884/SMA14-4884.pdf> - This SAMHSA publication provides a public health approach to implementing trauma-informed care. SAMHSA convened a panel of experts to review literature and develop a definition of trauma. They also solicited public input and

received over 20,000 comments. The publication describes the Three “E’s” of Trauma (Event, Experience and Effect) and the Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach.

The Family-Run Executive Director Leadership Association (FREDLA) is a national nonprofit whose mission is to empower and strengthen executive leaders of family-run organizations focused on the well-being of children and youth with mental health, emotional or behavioral challenges and their families. As a partner in the National Technical Assistance Network, FREDLA provides peer-delivered support, training, and technical assistance around family involvement, family leadership, and family-run organizations. For more information, contact info@fredla.org.