Trauma Has Long-Term Effects

Childhood trauma has long-term effects. TCCY reinforces this message in its trainings, publications and other communications, drawing on research from the Adverse Childhood Events Study and other studies. Protecting children from chronic stressors prevents emotional and physical health costs and improves economic outcomes for all of us. Researchers have discovered that the long-term pain of witnessing violence can be as destructive as that of being a victim yourself.

Secondary Trauma

Social workers and helping professionals voluntarily expose themselves to secondary traumatic stress (STS) by caring for their clients. Sometimes called “compassion fatigue” or “vicarious stress,” this condition can be caused by frequent and chronic exposure to emotional and detailed accounts of traumatic events, continuing work with families in which serious abuse and violence has occurred, deaths of clients and/or helping those grieving deaths. Child protective workers face potential danger when dealing from people with a history of violence.

Workers dealing with STS may not get the support they need, as symptoms include lower productivity, greater absenteeism, alcohol abuse, irritability and persistent anger or sadness. Possibly the most destructive STS symptom is a loss of hope, both personally and for clients.

Self Care

Empathy is important in helping people but may be a risk factor for secondary stress. Recognizing the potential for STS is an important step toward preventing it. Much of the discussion in the past has focused on self care by professionals to prevent STS. Workers at risk of STS should:

- Be aware of the symptoms;
- Take care of health: eat well, get enough sleep and exercise;
- Maintain a healthy work-personal life balance, including limiting overtime and taking leave;
- Get social support;
- Ask for help.

Perhaps most importantly, workers should be aware of how their personal trauma history weaves into the trauma they observe in clients and co-workers and be able to vent safely and confidentially.

What Can Agencies Do?

Unresolved trauma saps agencies as well as staff. Agencies should consider STS in preparing human resource policies. A National Child Traumatic Stress network report said, “At the very least, being open to talking about trauma can send the message that the agency cares about employee well-being.”

Agencies should:

- Recognize the potential impacts of stress on workers;
- Make sure mental health services are covered by health plans;
- Help workers maintain boundaries and maintain work/home balance;
- Train workers in stress management techniques.

Professional isolation is as devastating for workers as social isolation is for their clients. Agencies should be aware of the isolation caused by geographic distance, social barriers and smaller case populations.

Resources:

TDMHSAS Announces Regional Crisis Response Partners

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services has assigned responsibility for providing crisis services for children and youth to providers in nine regions across the state. This change went into effect July 1.

*Frontier Health
Tri-Cities (877) 928-9062

*Helen Ross McNabb Center
Greater Knoxville: (865) 539-2409

*Mental Health Cooperative
Davidson County: (615) 726-0125

*Counties in white on map.

Youth Villages
East Region: (866) 791-9224
Southeast Region: (866) 791-9225
North Middle Region: (866) 791-9221
South Middle Region: (866) 791-9222
Rural West Region: (866) 791-9227
Memphis: (866) 791-9226

July is....

Perhaps it is not the best self care to do, but July is officially Ice Cream Month (http://bit.ly/tccyad16).
Furry friends and family help, too.

Updates

About Us. Two new Commission members, Ashley Dunkin of Lawrenceburg and Amy Jones of Jackson have been appointed by the Governor to three year terms. Dunkin, an attorney who practiced in Lawrence County, has served as a juvenile court magistrate since 2012. She and her family (at right) recently adopted two children. Jones, the executive director of Madison County Juvenile Court Services, previously served as the executive director of the local CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) program. TCCY Vice Chair Rob Mortenson (Nashville) and members Kelly Drummond (Knoxville) and Jill Grayson Stott (Jonesborough) were reappointed to serve until 2017.

Mark Your Calendar

July 22, 12:30-2:30 p.m., Tennessee Department of Health workshop to collect input from the public about the State Health Plan, UT Health Science Center, Student Alumni Center, 800 Madison Ave., Memphis. Contact Julia Bayles, assistant director of Health Planning, at 615-253-8483 or Julia.Bayles@tn.gov.

July 24, 10 a.m.-12 noon, Tennessee Department of Health workshop to collect input from the public about the State Health Plan, Tennessee State University, Avon Williams Campus, Rm. 354, 330 10th Ave., North, Nashville. Contact Julia Bayles, assistant director of Health Planning, at 615-253-8483 or Julia.Bayles@tn.gov.

July 25, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Tennessee Department of Health workshop to collect input from the public about the State Health Plan, UT Howard Baker Center for Public Policy, 1640 Cumberland Ave, Knoxville. Contact Julia Bayles, assistant director of Health Planning, at 615-253-8483 or Julia.Bayles@tn.gov.

July 28, 10 a.m.-12 noon, Tennessee Department of Health workshop to collect input from the public about the State Health Plan, ETSU D.P. Calp University Center, 807 University Parkway, Johnson City. Contact Julia Bayles, assistant director of Health Planning, at 615-253-8483 or Julia.Bayles@tn.gov.

July 31, 12:30-2:30 p.m., Tennessee Department of Health workshop to collect input from the public about the State Health Plan, Dyersburg State Community College, Campus Activities Building, 1510 Lake Rd., Dyersburg. Contact Julia Bayles, assistant director of Health Planning, at 615-253-8483 or Julia.Bayles@tn.gov.

July 31, 12:30-3:30 p.m., Youth Transitions Advisory Council meeting, Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee, 937 Herman Street, Nashville. Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) staff will present

Aug. 3-6, Tennessee Juvenile Court Services Association Conference, Park Vista Hotel, Gatlinburg. Contact mmiller@bristoltn.org or (865) 436-9211.

Aug. 6, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Tennessee Department of Health workshop to collect input from the public about the State Health Plan, TTU, Nursing and Health Services Building, 1 William L. Jones Drive, Cookeville. Contact Julia Bayles, assistant director of Health Planning, at 615-253-8483 or Julia.Bayles@tn.gov.

Aug. 8, 7:30 a.m.-5:15 p.m., Setting Captives Free Human Trafficking Awareness Training, Tensco Community Center, 115 Tensco Drive, Dickson. Registration fee: $70, includes 8 contact hours or 8 hours POST certification. Register at http://bit.ly/tccycal1.

Aug. 12, 12:30-2:30 p.m., Tennessee Department of Health workshop to collect input from the public about the State Health Plan, Jackson State Community College, Science Building, 2046 N. Parkway, Jackson. Contact Julia Bayles, assistant director of Health Planning, at 615-253-8483 or Julia.Bayles@tn.gov.

Aug. 15, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., TCSW Middle Tennessee Summer Spritzer, Nashville First Church of the Nazarene, 510 Woodland Street. More info/registration: http://conta.cc/1q3v69N.


In the News


Research Information


Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

Confirmed Victims of Maltreatment Who Received Post-Investigation Services


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