Supporting Child Welfare Staff: The Critical First 3 Months
Speakers

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Trauma-informed Guidelines for Organizations

Secondary Traumatic Stress in Child Welfare Practice: Trauma-Informed Guidelines for Organizations

By
The Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Dissemination and Implementation Project

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Includes:

• Hiring
• The first 3 months
• Cumulative effects
• Critical incidents
• Evaluation
Hiring Phase

An opportunity to engage potential new workers and define the realities of the job and organizational supports

• “Duty to warn”

• Application process
  o Supplemental questions specific to secondary traumatic stress (STS)

• Prior to interview
  o Requested to view “realistic job preview”

• Interview
  o Questions/discussion specific to STS
Hiring Phase (continued)

Additional points:

• Emphasize that “the work is not done alone” and identify the points of support.

• Reiterate the realities of job, and ask how they will handle these.

• Convey a culture of affirmation and caring.

• Provide in-depth information regarding supervision/critical debriefing protocols and supports available like EAP, wellness plans, and peer support groups.
The Critical First 3 Months

• Preparing for the first day

• Orienting new staff to a trauma-exposed work environment

• Supporting an employee through their first 3 months
Preparing for the First Day

- Assess the current climate and culture in the organization.
- Identify workforce champions.
- Prepare a welcome and wellness packet.
Orienting to the Work Environment

• Introduce STS and other concepts used when a workforce is exposed to trauma:
  o STS: Signs and symptoms
  o Compassion satisfaction
  o Emotional resilience
  o Primary trauma

• Highlight the importance of enhancing physical and psychological safety.
Support During the First 3 Months

- Incorporate new employees into the team.
- Provide education and awareness.
- Monitor workload assignments.
- Provide trauma-informed supervision.
  - Reinforce normalcy and the expectation that—
    - The work will elicit strong emotional response, AND
    - The new worker needs to share these struggles with supervisor/peers.
Beyond the First 3 Months

Key elements in supporting staff on an ongoing basis include:

• Individual assessment
• Building resiliency
• Support systems (includes professional development and supervision)
• Coverage and caseloads
• Empowerment and advocacy
• Involving employees in decision making process
• Recognition, team building, and peer support
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Additional Resources

• Realistic Job Previews
  https://www.childwelfare.gov/learningcenter/video-series/rjp/

• Multi-Dimensional Human Services Workplace Stress micro-presentation
  http://cantasd.org/explore-topics/secondary-traumatic-stress/

• Virtual Expo session: Restore, Refresh and Re-energize: Organizational Responses to Secondary Traumatic Stress, available through capLEARN

• Child Welfare Information Gateway
  https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/trauma/secondary/

• National Child Welfare Workforce Institute
  https://www.ncwwi.org/
Thank You and Next Steps

- Download the handouts to learn more. Click on the files in the “Handouts” box on your screen.

- Do you have innovative ideas, questions, or concerns about workforce support? Tell us about your work. Send an e-mail to hello@CANTASD.org with “Workforce Support” in the subject line.
Participant Feedback

Thank you for your participation!

How useful was this session?

Additional Comments: hello@CANTASD.org