Helping Young Children Who Have Experienced Trauma
Join the National Conversation on Child Abuse and Neglect

Speakers

WELCOME
Sharon McKinley
Program Specialist
Children’s Bureau’s Office on Child Abuse and Neglect

GUEST
Jessica Dym Bartlett, MSW, PhD
Senior Research Scientist
Child Trends

MODERATOR
Nilofer Ahsan
Lead, Knowledge & Partnerships
CANTASD

www.cantasd.org
Definition of Early Childhood Trauma

When a young child experiences an event that causes actual harm or poses a serious threat to the child’s emotional and physical well-being.

Different from regular life stressors because it causes a sense of intense fear, terror, and helplessness beyond the normal range of typical childhood experiences.
Early Childhood Trauma

Affects almost half of all U.S. children (35 million)

Disproportionately affects young children

Examples: abuse & neglect, separation/loss of a parent, serious injury, domestic violence

Myths: Young children don’t remember traumatic events; they always “bounce back”

Join the National Conversation on Child Abuse and Neglect

Trauma in early childhood affects:

- brain structure
- cognitive development
- social-emotional development and behavior
- learning
- ability to form healthy attachments to others
- physical health

Child Trends & National Center for Children in Poverty

www.cantasd.org
Meeting the Needs of Young Children Who Have Experienced Trauma

• Presence and continuity of a nurturing caregiver
• Environments that promote:
  • Safety and trust
  • Self-regulation and social-emotional skills
  • Other early skills needed to succeed in school
Nurturing Adults Can Provide Trauma-Informed Care

- Facilitate children’s coping by helping them process events.
- Provide predictable routines and expectations.
- Identify and limit exposure to triggers and help children cope.
- Protect children from re-traumatization.
- Promote children’s self-regulation skills.
- Support early learning.
- Access community services and supports.
Parents and other caregivers need information on:

- The impact of trauma on children
- Effective ways of identifying and addressing trauma
- Promoting parental well-being
- Evidence-based/-informed community services and supports
- Ways to cope with and prevent secondary stress
Impact on Parents and Families

• Parenting a trauma-exposed child is stressful.
  • Stress may lead to insensitive caregiving.

• Parents may experience the same trauma (e.g., domestic violence, accident).
  • Negative reactions in parent or child may intensify the other’s symptoms.

• Challenges related to child trauma may lead to family conflict.
Resources

- **Helping young children who have experienced trauma: Policies and strategies for early care and education**
- **National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Early childhood trauma**
- **Excessive stress disrupts the architecture of the developing brain**
- **SAMHSA’s concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach**
- **Trauma-Informed Practice**
- **Developing a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System**
- **Resource Guide to Trauma-Informed Human Services**
Thank You & 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 trauma and resilience? Tell us about your work. Send an e-mail to hello@CANTASD.org with “Trauma and Resilience” in the subject line.
Thank you for your participation!

How useful was this session?

Additional Comments:
hello@CANTASD.org