

**Fort Bend County
Behavioral Health Services**



Supporting Youth With Complex Needs

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Youth With Complex Needs

- Youth experiencing significant (toxic) stress, face lifelong challenges
- There are protective factors that counterbalance the effects of these stressors
 - Social connections, nurturing caregivers, basic needs, sense of “belonging and hope”
- These youth require a Trauma-Informed Approach & a Systems of Care Approach



(Social-Current)

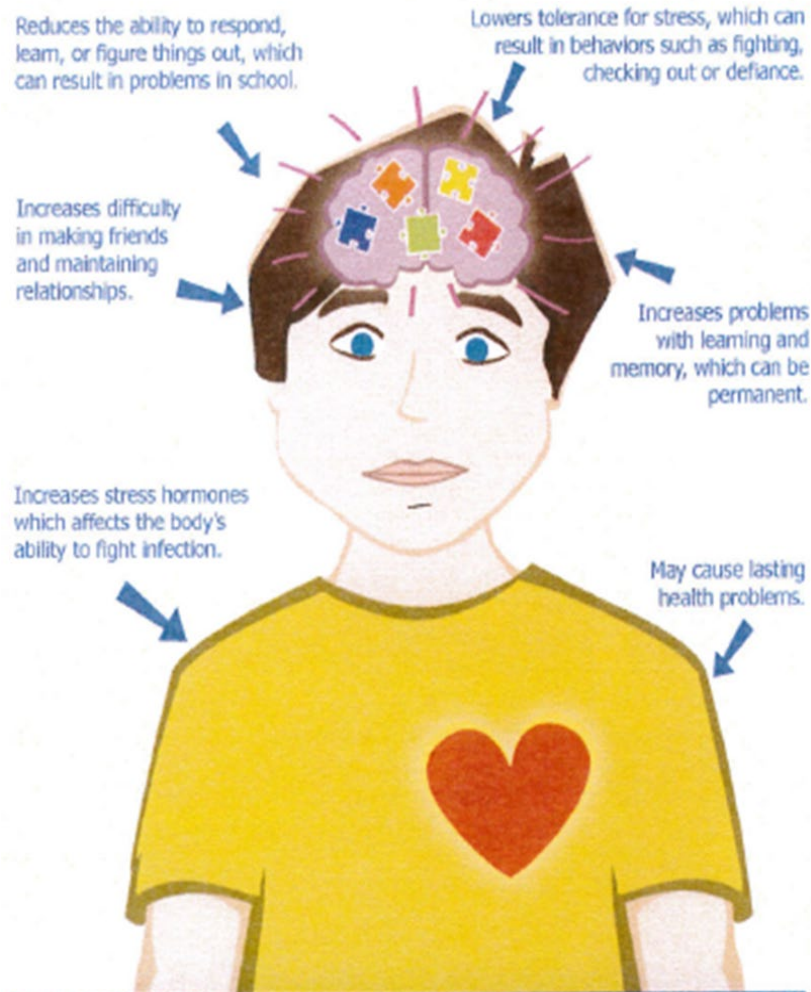
ACE'S

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Serious childhood traumas that may result in toxic stress & harmful to a child's brain

Significant adversity can impact:

- Learning
- Emotional regulations
- Relationships
- Result in long term physical and behavioral health problems
- Lack of economic productivity



A Survival Mode Response to toxic stress increases a child's heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and muscle tension. Their thinking brain is knocked off-line. Self protection is their priority. In other words:
"I can't hear you! I can't respond to you! I am just trying to be safe!"

What are:

Adverse Childhood Experiences

The child has observed or experienced

- ...verbal abuse
- ...physical abuse
- ...sexual abuse
- ...emotional or physical neglect
- ...discrimination

Someone in the household

- ...Has been threatened with a weapon
- ...Has been to prison
- ...Has alcohol or drug abuse

Someone in the household

- ...is depressed, mentally ill or attempted suicide
- ...has been separated or divorced

The child

- ...has been bullied
- ...feels unloved or unimportant
- ...lacks family support
- ...has witnessed violence outside the home

Neuroscientific changes that occur as a result of trauma can increase stress, anger, and impulsivity while inhibiting youth from engaging in effective coping and problem solving

Risk Factors – Vulnerabilities

- Domestic Violence
- Trauma
- Insecure/ disruptive relationships
- Learning disabilities
- Abuse/ neglect
- Mental illness
- Intellectual developmental disabilities
- Social isolation
- Financial stressors

Resiliency

The ability to
return to *health* and *hope* after
traumatic things occur



(Social-Current)

Building Resiliency

1. ***“Buffering”* presence of a supportive/ nurturing adult**
2. **Resilient parents**
3. **Responsive relationships and positive experiences**
4. **Building attachment and nurturing relationships**
5. **Building social connections**
6. **Meeting basic needs**
7. **Reducing sources of stress in lives of children and families**
8. **Building social, emotional skills & life skills**

Children in Texas

- Approx. 730,000 youth (1 in 10), have experienced three or more ACEs. ([Meadows Mental Health Trauma Informed Care Report, 2017](#))
- 502,519 youth (6.9%), lived with a parent who served time in jail/prison. ([Meadows Mental Health Trauma Informed Care Report, 2017](#))
- As of 2021 there are 64,151 children involved in CPS cases ([DFPS, Data Book](#))
- Over 50,000 children are arrested and referred to the juvenile probation system annually. ([TJJD, Legislative Reporting and Statistics](#))
- 5,900 youth in the juvenile justice system have experienced four or more ACEs. ([TJJD, Legislative Reporting and Statistics](#))

Supporting Youth with Complex Needs

Trauma –Informed Approach

- Safety
- Trust and transparency
- Empowerment, voice and choice
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Cultural, historical, and gender issues

“Understanding what *happened* versus what is *wrong*”

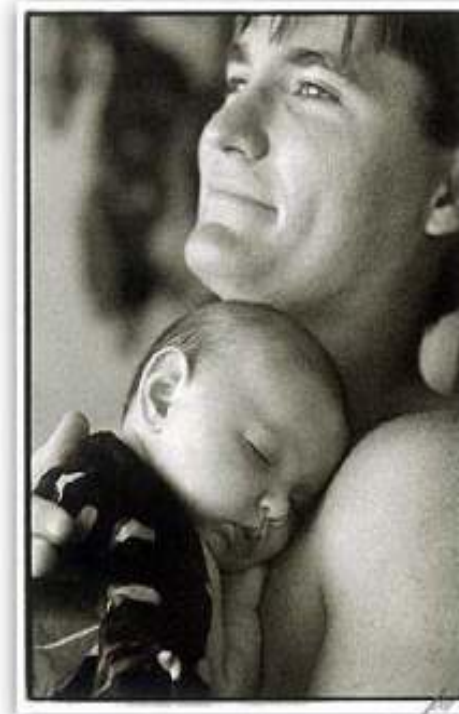
Connecting...Connecting...Connecting

Systems of Care Principles

- Interagency collaboration
- Individualized strengths-based care
- Cultural sensitivity (versus cultural competence)
- Child, youth, and family involvement
- Community-based services
- Accountability

Starting Early – Why?

- *The child-parent relationship is core to a child's development.*
- *We can make a difference by what we do and what we fail to do!*
- *Early Interventions matter.*
- *We can change the course of development by intervening early and effectively.*



Infant Toddler Court

Our interventions focus on helping parents stay connected to their children, learn about their child's needs, respond appropriately to those needs, recognize the impact of their behavior / emotional availability, make better decisions to have healthier lives for themselves and their children.



Starting Early - What can we do?

Infant Toddler Court

Expansion of Trust Based Relations Intervention (TBRI) to children of parents involved in criminal justice systems (e.g., mental health courts, drug courts).

Expansion of services for children whose parents are incarcerated and/or involved in our criminal justice system.

Expansion of trauma focused services and other evidenced based interventions.

Develop a robust system to empower people with lived experiences (youth, adults, families).

Develop systems that address social determinants of health, reduce barriers to care as well as adversities, and provide for positive connections for children.

Don't give up on the children... they are our future and they need to be safe, have hope and skills for healthy lives.

Thank you

