Understanding and Responding to the Chronic Survival Coping of Dual Status Youth

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Workshop Objectives

- Case Review and Discussion
- Relevance of Poly-victimization
- Chronic Survival Coping
- Treatment Response
- Evaluating Your System Response
A Case Illustration
Key Questions to Consider

- What challenges are present in working with this case?
- What needs are present in this case?
- What services would you want to offer?
- In your jurisdiction, how would you address the trauma-specific needs identified in the case?
Poly-victimization

Among trauma-exposed youth, a subgroup acknowledge exposure to multiple types of victimization (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007)
Why is Poly-victimization Important?

Poly-victims are at greater risk for psychosocial impairments in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (Briere, Kaltman, & Green, 2008; Ford, Connor, & Hawke, 2009; Ford et al., 2010)

- Increased risk for PTSD and depression (Andrews et al., 2015; Ford et al., 2011)
- Increased risk for chronic medical diseases (Anda & Brown, 2010)
- Four times more likely to be re-victimized (Finkelhor, Omrod, & Turner, 2007)
- Increased risk for anger, aggression, & impulsivity (Ford, Connor, & Hawke, 2009; Ford et al., 2012)
Why Focus on Poly-victimization?

- Screening for poly-victimization may help to identify youths who could benefit from more intensive services (Briere, Kaltman, & Green, 2008; Ford, Connor, & Hawke, 2009; Ford et al., 2010
  - Prevention of re-victimization
  - Drug/alcohol
  - Trauma-related symptoms
  - Suicidality

- Understanding the risk imposed by exposure to multiple types of victimization may help
  - better serve and manage youth in the juvenile justice system
  - tailoring treatment referrals and management strategies,
  - increase successful rehabilitation and preventing further victimization
Trauma Exposure Patterns can Predict Subsequent Exposure (Grasso et al., submitted)

- In the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) Core Data Set
- Examined patterns of exposure during three developmental epochs: 0-5, 6-12, 13-18
  - Of youth identified as poly-victims between 0-5 (~12%), about 33% were classified poly-victims during ages 6-12
  - Of youth identified as poly-victims at 6-12 (~40%), about 50% were classified as poly-victims during ages 13 – 18
- Information about trauma exposure can inform efforts to prevent subsequent victimization through safety planning and service provision!!
In a child welfare sample, a cutoff of 4 or more potential traumatic event exposures accurately identified 70% of youth who met probable PTSD criteria (Grasso, Felton, & Reid-Quiñones, 2015).

In another child welfare sample, poly-victims were more than 3 times at greater risk for developing PTSD and/or depression one year later (Grasso, Saunders, Williams, Hanson, Smith, & Fitzgerald, 2013).
Early Childhood Adversity and Adolescent Offending Trajectories
(Baglivio et al., 2015)
Youth with > 5 ACE factors

- Had a 345% greater likelihood of belonging to the Early Onset Group
- Odds of being in Late Onset Group were reduced by 30%

**TAKE HOME:** Number of adverse childhood experiences is associated with earlier offending onset and continued involvement in the delinquent behavior through adolescence
The Body’s Alarm System: Fight, Flight, or Freeze

- Narrow focus on threat
- Breathing speeds up and becomes shallow
- Shaking
- Sweaty palms and feet
- Blood flows away from gut to muscles
- Heart rate increases
- Peripheral blood vessels constrict
- Black and white thinking
The Brain Under Normal Stress

The Thinking Center (prefrontal cortex)

Filing Center (hippocampus)

Alarm System (amygdala)
normal stress
The Brain & Body Working Together

the brain
- brain
- spinal cord
- nerves

the nervous system

Alarm System (amygdala) → Filing Center (hippocampus) → Thinking Center (prefrontal cortex)

→

→
extreme stress / trauma
The Alarm Takes Control

Alarm System (amygdala)
Filing Center (hippocampus)
Thinking Center (prefrontal cortex)
Chronic Survival Coping

Hypervigilance (Distrustful/On Edge)
Reactive Aggression (Overt or Covert)
Hopelessness Masked as Indifference
Can’t stop and think past immediate problem or opportunity
Can’t let go of grudges/resentments
Can’t set/stick with goals
Can’t trust, especially people who are caregivers
Can’t tell who is trustworthy, relationally promiscuous
Too stressed/bored/tired to think clearly
Too angry to remember to use anger management skills!
True mental focusing is difficult for anyone, especially teens (whose brains are in flux)

However, teens can become highly mentally focused if they are motivated and interested

But this can be challenging in juvenile justice contexts
Psychoeducation about how traumatic victimization leads to survival adaptations in the brain’s stress/alarm system

A 3-step, 4-step, or 7-step template for recognizing stress reactivity: to stop and think before reacting

Skills that build on the person’s strengths and goals to focus thinking and turn down the brain’s alarm
T4 - TARGET in 4 Steps

1. ALARM REACTION
2. RECOGNIZE TRIGGER
3. FOCUS SLOW DOWN ORIENT SELF-CHECK
4. DEFINE GOAL WHAT IS THE ONE THING I CAN DO THAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO ME RIGHT NOW?
Randomized Controlled Trials


Field-based Effectiveness Studies


The Trajectory of a Traumatized Youth: A Three System Perspective

Opportunities to Interrupt a Negative Trajectory

- Child Welfare System
- Education System
- Juvenile Justice System

These graphics are meant to inform, educate and prompt discussions about the specific youth behaviors the child welfare, education and juvenile justice systems may see as a result of trauma. They are also intended to highlight the individual and cross-system policies and practices that can empower systems to improve outcomes for these youth.
Trauma in Dual Status Youth: Putting Things In Perspective

By Thomas Grisso, PhD and Gina Vincent, PhD
National Youth Screening and Assessment Partners

Identifying Dual Status Youth with Trauma-Related Problems

by Amy Wevoda, Ph.D., Keith Cruise, Ph.D., M.L.S., & Thomas Grisso, Ph.D.
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Center for Trauma Recovery and Juvenile Justice
http://www.nctsn.org/content/university-connecticut-school-medicine-center-trauma-recovery-and-juvenile-justice

National Youth Screening & Assessment Partners
http://www.nysap.us/