INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING ENGAGEMENT IN FAMILIES WITH INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

CHARLESTON CHILD TRAUMA CONFERENCE 2019

INTRODUCTIONS

- Catherine Weaver, BA, Larimer County Dept. of Human Services
- Ryann Vernetson, MA, LPC, Specialized Alternatives for Families & Youth (SAFY)
- Stephanie Seng, MS, LMFT, Child Trauma & Resilience Assessment Center (CTRAC)
- CK Rizzo, PhD, Child Trauma & Resilience Assessment Center (CTRAC)

OBJECTIVES FOR TODAY

Objective 1: Identify obstacles facing caregivers and families impacted by intergenerational trauma

Objective 2: Describe the importance of building awareness of adult trauma history when working with vulnerable families

Objective 3: Identify strategies for better engaging caregivers with personal histories of childhood trauma

LARIMER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

- 6th largest county in Colorado
- Differential Response county since 2011
- Serve child welfare clients and juvenile justice
- Number of staff in Child Welfare – 151 employees
- Larimer County child welfare statistics
  - SFY 2019 - 6647 referrals
  - SFY 2019 - 2032 (30.6%) screened in assessments
  - SFY 2019 - 2178 Children through Case Involvement
  - “Can you tackle this thing called trauma”

CHILD TRAUMA & RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT CENTER (CTRAC)

- Founded in March 2015 at Colorado State University (CSU)
- Supported by Western Michigan’s Child Trauma Assessment Center (CTAC) and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)
- Strong collaborations with local agencies, including Larimer County DHS, SAFY, school districts, and other individual/groups serving with trauma-impacted families
  - 7 County Consortium & a 5-year SAMHSA grant
- Primary service is comprehensive trauma assessments
- Multi-component assessments for youth with complex trauma histories
- Our team has conducted over 600 trauma assessments in 4.5 years
- Integrated within the CSU Marriage & Family Therapy Master’s program

SAFY

- Multi-state, non-profit agency founded in 1984
  - Continuum of care including Treatment/Therapeutic Foster Care, Family Preservation & Reunification, Behavioral Health, Adoption, and Older Youth Services
  - Services offered in Alabama, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Nevada, Ohio, and South Carolina
- SAFY of Colorado founded in 2014 with preliminary focus on multigenerational treatment services
  - Targeted families with complex needs stemming from generational trauma
  - Integrated services available, but not required, based on family need and choice
  - Multigenerational Treatment Services and Trauma Treatment Coordination (Family Preservation/Reunification)
  - Treatment Foster Care
  - Animal Assisted Therapy Program, as a standalone service or to supplement Family Preservation or Treatment Foster Care services
KEY CONCEPT: INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Intergenerational trauma theory suggests that the impact of trauma transmits negative consequences across generations.

KEY CONCEPT: ENGAGEMENT

- Client Engagement:
  - How we engage with our clients
  - How our clients engage with us
- System Engagement:
  - How we engage with other agencies
  - How other agencies engage with us

WHY DOES ENGAGEMENT MATTER?

Trauma in the past can make it challenging to engage with trauma in the present.

THE "SYSTEM"

TRAUMA

Confusing
Overwhelming
Unsafe
Controlling
Overbearing
Disorganizing
Scary
Unpredictable
Disorienting
Dehumanizing

HOW DOES “SHOW UP” IN OUR WORK?

Stand up!
- Briefly introduce yourself to your table (groups of 3-4). Give a brief overview of your agency/organization and your role.
- How did you “get to trauma”?
- Describe your experience working with families with intergenerational trauma.
- What challenges do you see these families facing? How do these challenges “show up” in your work?

Participation
Interpersonal
Personal
TENANTS OF ENGAGEMENT

1. Transparency, Predictability and Routine
2. Focus on Resilience
3. All Behavior is Communication (“Nothing comes from nothing”)
4. Families are the Experts

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN OUR WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shows up as…</th>
<th>Doesn’t look like…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transparency, Predictability, and Routine</td>
<td>Showing families what is coming, arriving on time, honest even when difficult, structuring meetings similarly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience Focused</td>
<td>Dismissing the individual strengths and capabilities, believing in everyone’s capacity to heal</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Nothing Comes from Nothing”</td>
<td>Believing a person is being difficult to make our job harder, focusing only on the behavior and not the purpose or origin (especially true for adults)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families are the Experts</td>
<td>Feeling powerful knowledge of what is best for a family, not asking families about what is working and what isn’t</td>
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MEET AMBER…
- Read through the case study history
- In your small group, discuss the following:
  - What are the obstacles facing Amber’s family in engaging in services?
  - If you were working with this family, what strategies would you be using to engage with them?
  - How does the presence of intergenerational trauma inform your work with this family?

ENTRY INTO THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM
- Read Part I
- As you read it, take note of the following:
  - What do you notice about how Catherine engages with this family?
  - What strategies and/or tools does she utilize?
  - How do you think the family’s past experiences are impacting their work with Catherine?

SPOTLIGHT: TRAUMA SCREEN CHECKLIST
- Trauma screen is used to guide child welfare caseworkers in evaluating children who have been exposed to trauma and may be at risk for other concerns, including PTSD and complex trauma.
- The comprehensive checklist helps pinpoint emotions, behaviors, attachment concerns, and school problems the child may be experiencing, and can be utilized in the treatment planning process.
- There are two versions of the screen, one for children ages 0-5 and one for children ages 6-18.
- Trauma Screen begins to move us away from the events and towards understanding the impact.

TRAUMA SCREEN STRATEGIES
- Trauma Screening Protocols
- Engagement tool
- Builds an awareness of impact
- Prospective taking
- Treatment planning
- Families and youth have the option to decline or withdraw from the trauma screening/assessment process


NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Many of us are comfortable using engagement strategies with children. How could you use these strategies to engage the whole family system?

Share with a partner at your table.
TRAUMA SCREEN ➔ TRAUMA ASSESSMENT ➔ TRAUMA TREATMENT

LCDHS ➔ CTRAC ➔ SAFY

STARTING WITH SAFY...

- Read Part 3
- As you read, take note of the following:
  - What strategies and/or tools did Ryann utilize to engage and connect with the family?
  - How do you think the family’s work with Catherine, CK, & Steph could impact their engagement at SAFY?

SPOTLIGHT: COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTATION

- Collaborative documentation is a tool to:
  - Facilitate client engagement
  - Help focus treatment
  - Increase trust between clinician and client/family
  - Discuss what a client is getting from time together versus what we think they are getting

APPLICATION

- Many of us are comfortable using engagement strategies with children. How could you use these strategies to engage the whole family system?
- Share with a partner at your table.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT FOR AMBER?

- Amber and her family continue Multigenerational Treatment Services, aimed at whole-family healing, stability and resiliency building
- In her continued work with SAFY Laura gains an increased understanding of how her trauma is interacting with Amber’s. As a result, SAFY partners with LCDHS to initiate an Adult Trauma Screen and refers Laura to individual therapy
- The Department and SAFY work collaboratively to continue partnership with the family and utilize their expertise in planning for their future
- CTRAC is used for consultation at various points to ensure that any deviations from the trauma assessment recommendations are still aligned with Amber’s unique needs
- The family decreases their usage of 24/7 on-call usage, as they learn to navigate crisis independently and use sessions to identify root causes and new solutions
- The family’s case closes with DHS and they remain open with SAFY for the next two months, at a low level, to support the transition out of the child-welfare system.