



CTISP

Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Project

# Creating Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Systems

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Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Project

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Rady Children's Hospital – San Diego

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# Why is this Important?



*The research is clear that the experience of abuse or neglect leaves a particular traumatic fingerprint on the development of children that cannot be ignored if the child welfare system is to meaningfully improve the life trajectories of maltreated children, not merely keep them safe from harm.*

- Bryan Samuels, Commissioner for the Administration on Child, Youth and Families  
Testimony to House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, Congress

# Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Project (CTISP)



SAMHSA funded (2010-2013) as  
Category II NCTSN Site

## Goals

- Provide leadership in identifying effective treatments and developing specialized service delivery models to children in the public child welfare system who have been victims of abuse and/or domestic violence
- Support the evolution of public child welfare agencies into trauma-informed organizations and agents of change in their communities
- Transform the wider child welfare system into a multi-dimensional, trauma-informed, evidence-based system

# Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Project (CTISP)



- National Advisory Committee to:
  - Guide process
  - Assist with identifying key issues, challenges, and resources
  - Provide input and feedback on CTISP Products
- Chaired by Howard Hendrick
- Members from CWLA, NCTSN, Casey, State Government, Advocacy Groups, Universities

# CTISP Products



- Policy Guide for Trauma-Informed Child Welfare
- Desk Guide on Trauma-Informed Services for Child Welfare Supervisors
- Desk Guide on Trauma-Informed Child Welfare for Mental Health
- Trauma-Informed Casework Practice Model Adaptation Guidelines
- Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Policy Toolkit

# CTISP Laboratory Sites



- Oklahoma
- New Hampshire
- San Diego
  
- CTISP provides assessment, consultation, training, technical assistance, and resources to sites
- Sites will test CTISP products and provide feedback
- CTISP products and services to be disseminated to 20 states by year 3 (2012-2013)

# Child Welfare System



- Public Child Welfare Agency
- Department of Social Services (Child and Family Services)
- Public and Private Mental Health Agencies
- Non-Profit Social Service Agencies
- Specialty Programs (i.e., Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence)
- Juvenile and Family Courts
- Juvenile Justice
- Law Enforcement
- Attorneys and Advocates
- Child Advocacy Centers
- Foster Care and Adoption Agencies and Associations
- Schools
- Public Health Department
- Tribal, Community, and Faith-Based Organizations



# Origins of Trauma-Informed Child Welfare



**We were actually doing it before we  
know what to call it**

- Good Child Welfare and Court practices
- Understanding of adult and child PTSD
- Child Advocacy Center movement
- Trauma Mental Health
- Evidence-Based Practice
- Substance Abuse Treatment

# Viewing Child Welfare Practice Thorough a Trauma Lens



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The National Child  
Traumatic Stress Network

# Weaving Trauma-Informed Systems into Fabric of Child Welfare



Safety  
&  
Risk

Permanency

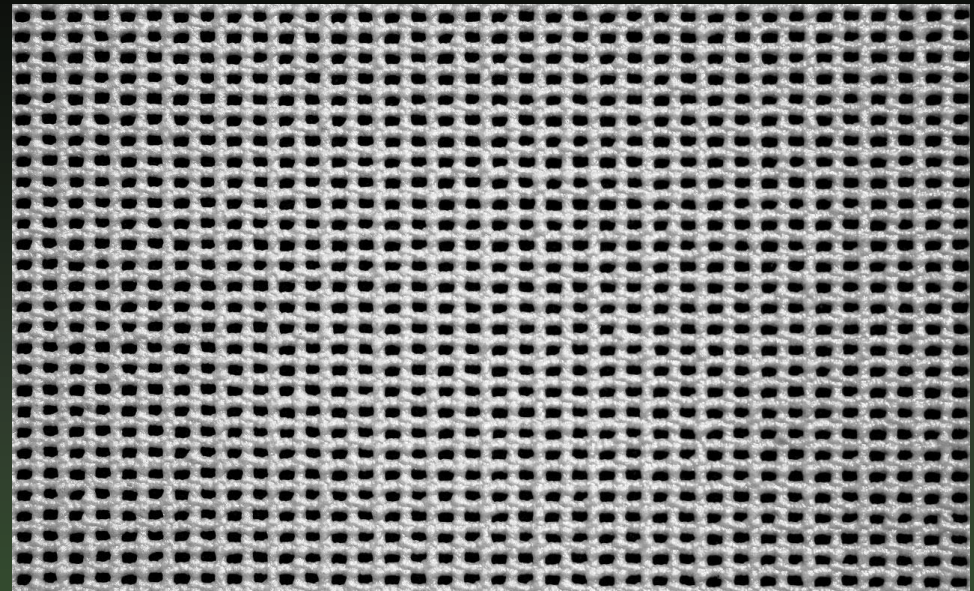
Well-being

Developmentally  
Informed

Culturally  
Informed

Evidence  
Informed

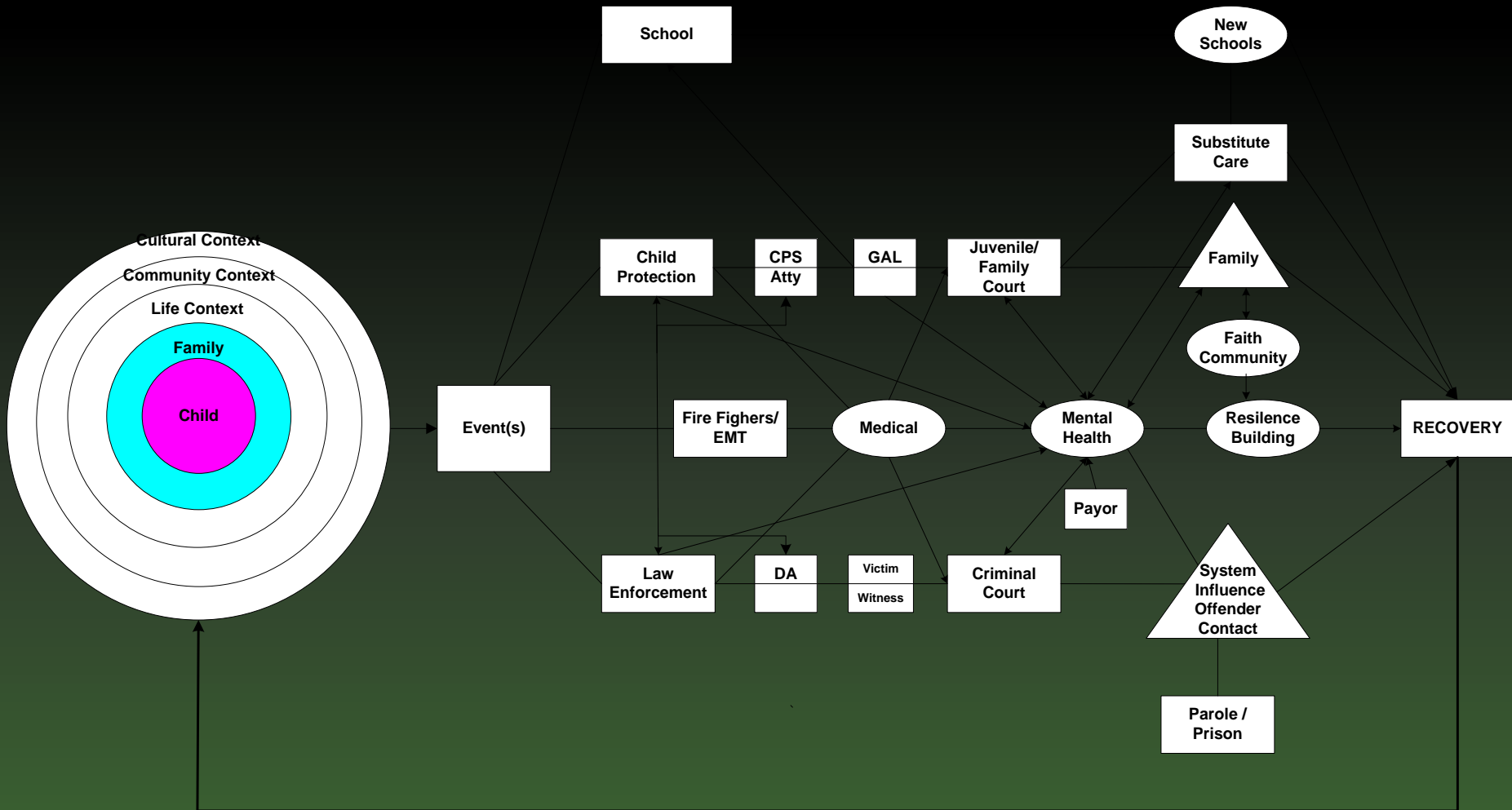
Trauma  
Informed



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# Emotional Chain of Custody



Experience shapes response to future trauma

# Definition of Trauma-Informed System



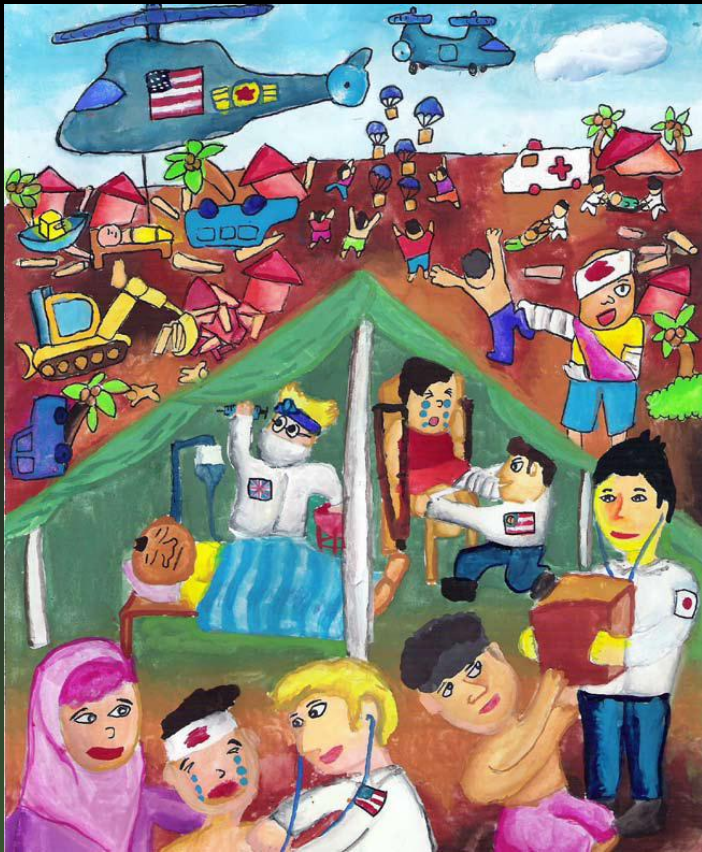
*A trauma-informed child welfare system is one in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the varying impact of traumatic stress on children, caregivers and those who have contact with the system. Programs and organizations within the system infuse this knowledge, awareness and skills into their organizational cultures, policies, and practices. They act in collaboration, using the best available science, to facilitate and support resiliency and recovery.*

- CTISP National Advisory Committee

# Call for Trauma-Informed Child-Serving Systems



**What realistic and practical actions can be taken at all levels of the system to understand and address trauma to make it better for the children, families, and workforce?**



Artwork courtesy of the International Child Art Foundation ([www.icaf.org](http://www.icaf.org))

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Traumatic Stress Network

# Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice



## 1) Maximize the child's sense of safety

- Physical and psychological safety
- Concept of triggers

## 2) Utilize comprehensive assessment

- Assess child's traumatic experiences
- Assess impact on the child's development and behavior
- Let assessment guide services when appropriate

## 3) Assist children in reducing overwhelming emotion

# Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice



- 4) Address any impact of trauma and subsequent changes in
  - Child's behavior
  - Development
  - Relationships
- 5) Help children make new meaning of their trauma history and current experiences
- 6) Coordinate services with other agencies
- 7) How and when to apply the right evidence-based treatments

# Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice



- 8) Support and promote positive and stable relationships in the life of the child
- 9) Provide support and guidance to child's family and caregivers
- 10) Recognize that many of the child's adult caregivers are trauma victims as well (recent and childhood trauma)
- 11) Manage professional and personal stress
  - Vicarious Trauma

# Operationalizing Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Systems



- Trauma Screening
- Mental Health Assessment and Treatment
- Community Assessment

# Screening, Assessment and Evaluation



- Screening?
- Assessment?
- Psychological Evaluation?

These terms are often used interchangeably, but what are they?

When it is appropriate to use one versus the other?

# Trauma Screening



- Front-line workers - Child Welfare or mental health
- Brief set of questions
- Child's exposure to trauma and his/her symptoms
- Helps determine if a child needs trauma-focused mental health assessment and/or treatment
- Integrates knowledge about child's trauma history
- Examples of screening measures:
  - Child Welfare Trauma Referral Tool
  - Traumatic Events Screening Inventory

# Trauma Assessment



- Mental health provider
- Drives treatment planning
- Good trauma assessment
  - Occurs over 2-3 sessions of therapy
  - A clinical interview
  - Use of objective measures
  - Behavioral observations of the child
  - Collateral contacts with family, caseworkers, etc.
- Domains covered include:
  - Basic demographics
  - Family history
  - Comprehensive trauma history
  - Developmental history
  - Overview of child problems/symptoms

# Psychological Evaluation



- Psychologists
- Multiple methods of data collection
  - Objective and projective measures
  - Collateral interviews
- Specific questions - often done for the court
- Types of evaluations include:
  - Child custody evaluations
  - Competency evaluation
  - Juvenile Justice – Amenability to treatment
  - Risk Assessment
- Unclear standards and practices across the country about when to refer children for psychological evaluations

# Who Needs Trauma-Focused Treatment?



- Experienced extreme trauma
  - Penetrating injury (gun shot, stabbing, etc.)
  - Sexual assault
- “Re-experiencing” the traumatic events
  - Nightmares
  - Flashbacks
  - Repetitive play
  - React strongly to reminders of their trauma
- Actively avoiding reminders of the trauma
  - People
  - Places
  - Sounds
  - Smells

# Evidence-Based and Evidence-Informed Practices



Practices that utilize the core components of good trauma treatment.

- Evidence-Based: Research evidence to support utilization of the entire practice with a specific population
- Evidence-Informed: Research to support the use of components or pieces of the intervention

These core components serve as the building blocks of good practice.

# What are the Core Components of Evidence-Based Trauma Treatment?



- Building a strong therapeutic relationship
- Psychoeducation about normal responses to trauma
- Parent support, conjoint therapy, or parent training
- Emotional expression and regulation skills
- Anxiety management and relaxation skills
- Cognitive processing or reframing

# Core Components of Trauma-Focused Treatment (continued)



- Opportunity for trauma integration
- Strategies that allow exposure to traumatic memories and feelings in tolerable doses so that they can be mastered and integrated into the child's experience
- Personal safety training and other important empowerment activities
- Resilience and closure

# How Do These Core Components Fit Together to Create Evidence-Based Practices?



# Treatment Triage: Examples of Evidence-Based Treatments for Children



- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
- Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)
- See [www.cebc4cw.org](http://www.cebc4cw.org) for more information on other modalities that exist

There are many different evidence-based trauma-focused treatments. A trauma-informed mental health professional should be able to determine which treatment is most appropriate for a given case.

# Questions to Ask to Determine if a Therapist is Trauma-Informed



- Do they provide trauma-specific or trauma informed therapy? If so, how do they determine if the child needs a trauma-specific therapy?
- How familiar are they with evidence-based treatment models designed and tested for treatment of child trauma-related symptoms?
- How do they approach therapy with traumatized children and their families (regardless of whether they indicate formal trauma-informed treatment)?
- Can they describe a typical course of therapy?
- Can they describe the essential elements of their treatment approach?

# Trauma-Informed Assessment and Feedback Process



- Community Assessment
  - Background Information
  - Trauma System Readiness Tool
  - Interview with Child Welfare Administrators
  - Focus Group with Child Welfare Supervisors
  - Focus Group with Child Welfare Workers
  - Focus Group with Mental Health Providers
  - Focus Groups with Consumers (Birth Parents, Resource Parents, Youth and Alumni of Foster Care)
- Generate Unique Community Profile
- Review and Feedback Process
- Create Collaborative Trauma-Informed Systems Intervention Plan
- Operationalize and Implement Trauma-Informed Systems Intervention Plan

# Goals of Assessment



- Include a variety of perspectives and multiple modes of data collection
- Identify existing strengths and resources
- Identify challenges or areas of growth within current system
- Identify concrete barriers to trauma-informed care
- Provide recommendations and strategies to inform plan to help system become more trauma-informed

# Trauma System Readiness Tool



- 150-item self-assessment instrument
- Completed by child welfare staff at multiple levels (line staff, supervisors, administrators)
- Domains incorporate the Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice and core principles of trauma-informed care
- For each item, participants respond on a six-point Likert scale (from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*)
- Converted into a computerized survey for ease of administration

# Domains of the TSRT Related to the Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice

<b>TSRT Domain(s)</b>	<b>Essential Element of TICW</b>	<b>Sample Item</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The child welfare agency's understanding of the impact of traumatic stress on children being served through training and education practices</li><li>• Appropriate screening and referral</li><li>• Trauma-informed mental health assessment practices</li> <li>• Knowledge and availability of trauma-focused treatments within their jurisdiction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Address any impact of trauma and subsequent changes in child's behavior, development, and relationships</li> <li>• Utilize comprehensive assessment of the child's trauma experiences and their impact on the child's development and behavior to guide services</li> <li>• Knowing how and when to apply the right evidence-based treatments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I have received recent training and education in how trauma affects a child's development</li> <li>• The screening process or tool used by my agency includes a thorough trauma history for the child</li> <li>• To the best of your knowledge, child welfare workers are knowledgeable about evidence-based trauma-focused treatment models that are relevant for children and families in the child welfare system</li></ul>

TSRT Domain(s)	Essential Element of TICW	Sample Item
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child welfare agency's understanding of adult trauma and its impact on caregivers/parents</li> <li>• The child welfare system's ability to assess for and address parent trauma</li> <li>• The child welfare system's understanding of its role in mitigating the impact of trauma on children and families</li> <li>• The system's understanding of psychological safety and efforts to enhance psychological safety for children and families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize that many of the adult caregivers in the child welfare system are trauma victims as well, with trauma in childhood and/or more recently as adults</li> <li>• Assist children in reducing overwhelming emotion</li> <li>• Help children make new meaning of their trauma history and current experiences</li> <li>• Maximize the child's sense of safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child welfare staff members at all levels are knowledgeable about the impact of past or current trauma on a parent's ability to care for his/her children</li> <li>• Child welfare staff members at all levels understand their role in helping reduce the impact of trauma on children involved in the child welfare system</li> <li>• Child welfare workers address psychological safety in a formal way when removing a child from a home</li> </ul>

## TSRT Domain(s)

- The system's ability to promote positive and stable connections in the lives of children
- The system's provision of education and support to caregivers
- The system's understanding of the impact of secondary trauma on the child welfare workforce and efforts to reduce this impact
- Systems integration/service coordination with other child-serving entities

## Essential Element of TICW

- Support and promote positive and stable relationships in the life of the child
- Provide support and guidance to the child's family and caregivers
- Manage professional and personal stress
- Coordinate services with other agencies

## Sample Item

- Child welfare staff members at all levels promote frequent contact between a child and his/her siblings (except in cases where contact is harmful to the child)
- Resource parents are taught to reframe the child's behavior problems as possible trauma reactions when appropriate
- I have received recent training on managing difficult feelings or reactions that may arise when working with a child and family who have experienced trauma
- Service programs work together to provide integrated care for each child and family

# Interviews and Focus Groups: Main Topic Areas



- Trauma screening and assessment for children and adults in the CW system
- Mental health services for families impacted by trauma
- Barriers to mental health services for this population
- Strengths and barriers of the current CW system
- Trauma-related training for CW staff, resource parents, and mental health providers
- The impact of trauma on child safety, permanency, and well-being
- Vicarious trauma
- Defining TICW
- Policies and practices in the current system that are trauma-informed as well as those that may add new trauma or inhibit recovery
- Barriers to TICW in the current system
- Recommended resources and supports
- Cross-system collaboration

# Focus Group Quotes



## Youth/Alumni

- “I had really good parents but they just couldn’t handle me.”
- “We’re not a piece of luggage. You can’t just drop us off anywhere.”
- “With the trauma, we’re gonna act out what we’re feeling.”

## Birth Parents

- “The worst part is not knowing where your kids are.”
- “We love our children, they came from us. Every parent wants the best for their child. But we all need help.”
- “If you care about the child, you have to care about the parent.”

## Resource Parents

- “How did I get myself into this?”
- “I cry everyday, fall apart, worrying about these kids.”
- “If you’re in as a foster parent for the right reasons, it can’t not affect you.”
- “If foster parents had training – it would be amazing what you could do.”

# Focus Group Quotes

## (continued)



### CW Workers

- “Kids move constantly due to no fault of their own and can’t attach to anyone.”
- “When you’re drowning, it’s hard to see training as important”
- “You end up taking the trauma home and yelling at your own kids.”
- “Leadership needs to understand trauma exposure, what workers are dealing with.”

### CW Supervisors

- “Counseling is generic - not tailored to the family’s needs – each family gets referred to the same services.”
- “The system needs to take into account the trauma they cause by separating kids from their families and how this affects kids.”
- “Parents are re-living what they experienced as a child.”
- “You develop thick skin and you don’t feel as much.”
- “It would help to have a door to close!”
- “If we dealt with the trauma, kids wouldn’t come back as parents.”

# Focus Group Quotes

## (continued)



## Mental Health Providers

- “If mental health providers understand parent trauma they will be more willing to work with parents.”
- “More trauma education is needed in Masters programs.”
- “Only kids with extreme behavior problems get referred for therapy.”
- “Foster/adoptive placements aren’t trauma-informed. When kids get triggered, this leads to multiple placements, higher levels of care, and disruption in treatment.”
- “Courts and lawyers don’t understand trauma.”
- “CW Workers are overwhelmed and are just trying to survive.”
- “There’s a gap in services for adults - no formal process to deal with parent trauma.”
- “A traumatized parent can’t support the child.”
- “Interdisciplinary collaboration is critical. Successful cases have had a lot of contact between MH and CW.”

# Unique Community Profile



- Data from TSRT and focus groups were analyzed and UCP was created for each site
- UCP included existing strengths as well as barriers to TICW and recommendations for TA and next steps
- UCP incorporated feedback from CW leadership
- UCP used to develop Collaborative Trauma-Informed Systems Intervention Plan with each site

# Common Strengths Identified in Assessment



- 1) Leadership's emphasis on trauma as a priority
- 2) Staff and community engagement and motivation
- 3) Strong community partnerships
- 4) Trauma-specific mental health treatment
- 5) Family involvement

# Common Barriers



- Funding
- Mental health services
  - Access to trauma-focused therapy
  - Therapist training
  - Parents' trauma issues not being addressed
- Systems collaboration (MH, courts)
- Secondary traumatic stress

# Common Recommendations



- Increase **trauma training** for child welfare staff, parents, mental health providers, and other community partners
- Integrate a **screening tool** designed to assess a child's trauma history into child welfare practice
- Increase **cross-system collaboration**
- **Build community capacity** of trauma treatment providers for children and adults
- Provide **increased staff support** to decrease staff turnover, secondary trauma, and increase stability and support for families

# Post-Assessment Lab Site Activities

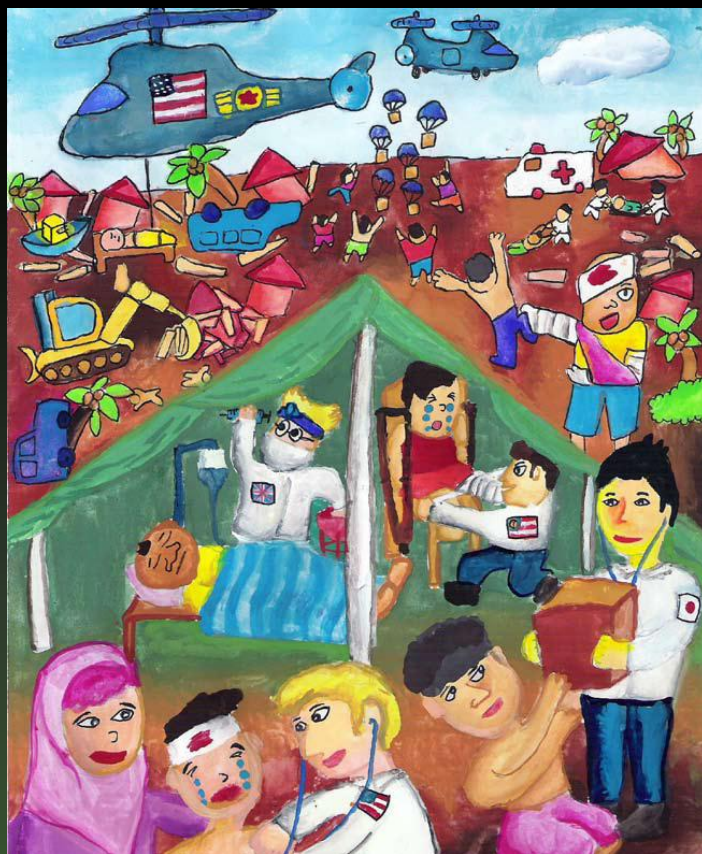


- Oklahoma
  - Children's Court Summit
  - All DHS staff to be trained on CW Trauma Toolkit by end of 2012
- San Diego
  - Working to ensure all CW therapists are trauma-informed
  - Toolkit training for all CWS staff
- New Hampshire
  - TIC Steering Committee
  - Added trauma to behavioral health screening



What resources exist to assist agencies in creating a more trauma-informed child welfare system?

# Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit



Artwork courtesy of the International Child Art Foundation ([www.icaf.org](http://www.icaf.org))

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The National Child  
Traumatic Stress Network

# Child Welfare Training Toolkit Overview



- Developed by the Child Welfare Committee of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, CALSWEC and CFPIC
- Goals of the Toolkit:
  - To educate child welfare professionals about the impact of trauma on the development and behavior of children
  - To educate child welfare professionals about when and how to intervene directly in a trauma-sensitive manner and through strategic referrals
  - To assure that all children in the child welfare system will have access to timely, quality, and effective trauma-focused interventions and a case planning process that supports resilience in long-term healing and recovery

# Child Welfare Trauma Training Modules



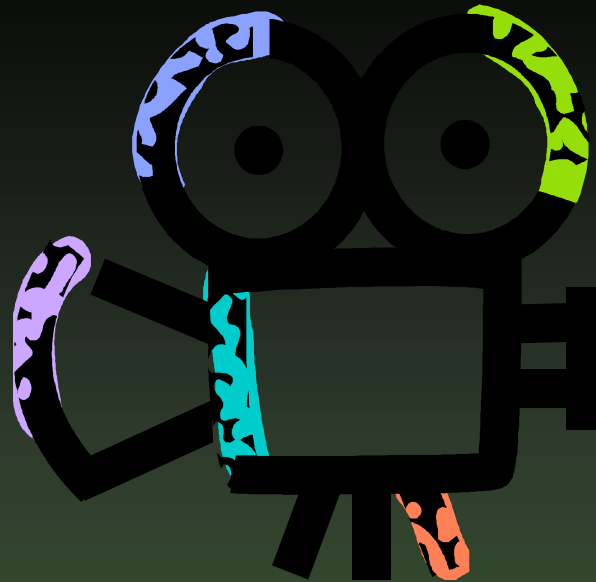
1. Creating a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice: Introduction to the Essential Elements
2. What is Child Traumatic Stress?
3. The Impact of Trauma on Children's Behavior, Development, and Relationships
4. Assessment of a Child's Trauma Experiences
5. Providing Support to the Child, Family, and Caregivers
6. Managing Professional and Personal Stress
7. Summary

# Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit Overview



- Teaches child welfare workers how to use knowledge about child trauma to achieve the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) goals:
  - Safety
  - Permanency
  - Well-Being
- Free to download from NCTSN web-site:  
<http://www.nctsnet.org/products/child-welfare-trauma-training-toolkit-2008>
- CTISP staff are currently updating the Toolkit which should be available by September 30, 2012

# Lori's Story



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Traumatic Stress Network

# Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: A Workshop for Resource Parents



- NCTSN Training curriculum for foster, kinship, and adoptive parents
- Co-facilitated by a mental health professional and a foster parent
- Incorporates case studies and interactive learning exercises
- Goals:
  - To help resource parents understand link between trauma and child's behavior, feelings, and attitudes
  - To provide practical tools for resource parents to help children with coping skills and support their recovery from trauma
  - To help resource parents recognize and reduce impact of child's trauma on themselves and how to find support

# Caring for Children Training Modules



## 1. Introductions

- Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Parenting

## 2. Trauma 101

- Types of trauma, reactions to trauma

## 3. Understanding Trauma's Effects

## 4. Building a Safe Place

## 5. Dealing with Feelings and Behaviors

## 6. Connections and Healing

## 7. Becoming an Advocate

## 8. Taking Care of Yourself

# Caring for Children Training Materials



- Facilitator's Guide, Participant Handbook, slide kit, and handouts available:
  - Free to download from NCTSN web-site:  
[www.nctsn.org/rpc](http://www.nctsn.org/rpc)
  - Bound copies of Participant Handbook can be purchased through FedEx Office DocStore

# Resources



- Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Project – [www.ctisp.org](http://www.ctisp.org)
- California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare - [www.cebc4cw.org](http://www.cebc4cw.org)
- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](http://www.nctsn.org) - [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org) and <http://learn.nctsn.org> Chadwick Center for Children and Families –
- Chadwick Center - [www.ChadwickCenter.org](http://www.ChadwickCenter.org)
- Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit - [http://www.nctsn.org/nccts/nav.do?pid=ctr\\_cwtool](http://www.nctsn.org/nccts/nav.do?pid=ctr_cwtool)
- Caring for Children who Have Experienced Trauma: A Guide for Resource Parents - [www.nctsn.org/rpc](http://www.nctsn.org/rpc)
- TAP Online Training – [www.taptraining.net](http://www.taptraining.net)

# Contact Information



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