



THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA & TOXIC STRESS ON YOUNG CHILDREN

Early On Conference
November 11, 2015

TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

- Review key concepts about early brain development
- Understand the effect of trauma & toxic stress on young children
- Discuss strategies for fostering resilience & mitigating the impact of trauma

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Trauma can change the course of a child's life and their future

OBJECTIVE #1
EARLY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT: KEY
CONCEPTS



EARLY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT:
KEY CONCEPTS

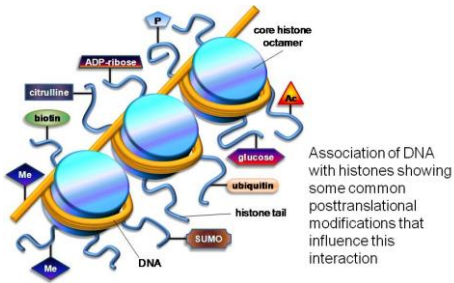
Knowledge from the fields of **neuroscience**, **immunology**, **genetics** and **epidemiology** have increased our understanding of the ways experience impact our biology, behavior & long term physical & mental health



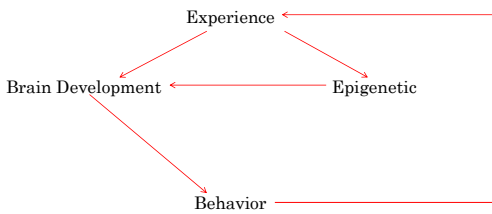
EARLY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT:
KEY CONCEPTS

1. Experience shapes brain architecture & function
2. Brains are built from the bottom up
3. The importance of serve and return
4. Experience alters how are genes are expressed

EXPERIENCE ALTERS GENETIC EXPRESSION



THE DANCE BETWEEN NURTURE AND NATURE



AAP: Helping Foster and Adoptive Families Cope With Trauma ; 2013

EXPERIENCE BUILD BRAIN ARCHITECTURE

- o <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/>

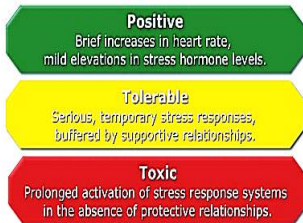
OBJECTIVE #2
STRESS, TRAUMA & TOXIC STRESS



HOW DOES STRESS WORK?

- Stress is a normal & necessary part of life
- Stress disrupts our sense of well being
- Stress causes physiological reactions
- Stress causes behavioral reactions

THREE TYPES OF STRESS



Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

WHAT ARE TRAUMA & TOXIC STRESS?

- o **Trauma** – an intense event that threatens safety or security of an individual
- o **Toxic Stress** – re-occurring negative experiences that threaten safety or security
- o **Traumatic Stress** -event, the experience, and the effect



TRAUMA EXPOSURE OR EXPERIENCE

- o **Survivor** (abuse, neglect, accident, disaster)
- o **Witness** (personal witness-family, friend, neighbor, professional role)
- o **Related to** (family member or close personal friend)
- o **Listening to details** (professional role, media)



SECONDARY WOUNDING

- o **Secondary Wounding** - Experiencing a sense of blame, minimization and expectation about the traumatic experience from trusted individuals.
- o **Self-Secondary Wounding** – Applying disparate meaning to role in the traumatic experience through self-blame.

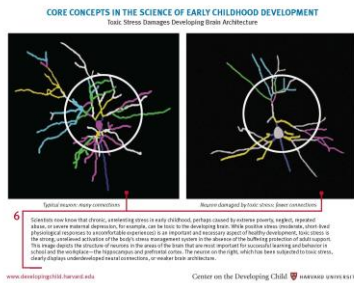


HOW DOES TRAUMA AFFECT YOUNG CHILDREN?

- Young children experience trauma differently than older children or adults
- Primarily a sensory experience
- Not as able to anticipate danger and protect self
- Limited ability to express thoughts & feelings
- Different understanding of causation - the power of thoughts, wishes, fears

Source: National Child Traumatic Stress Network

IMPACT OF TOXIC STRESS ON THE BRAIN

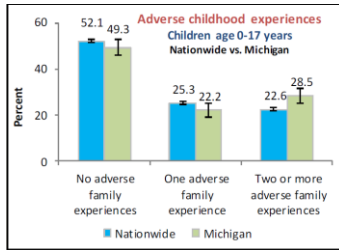


ACE STUDY

- **Adverse Childhood Experiences Study**
 - 1997 study conducted by CDC & Kaiser Permanente
 - Surveyed 17,000 adults (middle aged, white, middle income)
 - Count of adverse childhood experiences (up to 10)
 - 25 % had at least 1 ACE; 12% had 4 or more

R. Anda, MD, MS and V. Felitti, MD

PREVALENCE OF ACES - MICHIGAN



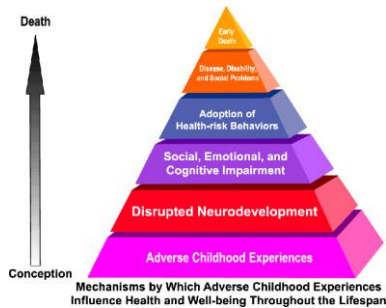
48.7% of Michigan children with CSHCS have 2 or more ACES

WHAT ARE THE LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES?

When ACE score increases so does:

- High risk behaviors – smoking, substance abuse
- Behavioral health problems – depression, suicide attempts, intimate partner violence
- Physical health problems – STDs, COPD, liver disease, ischemic heart disease
- Early death

HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN: ACE PYRAMID



OBJECTIVE #3
WHAT'S THE GOOD NEWS?



RESILIENCE



- o Ability to successfully confront challenges & bounce back from setbacks.
- o We are all born with resilience
- o Resilience can be nurtured & recaptured

RESILIENCE

- o <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-resilience-series/>

SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- Decrease stress hormones
- Increase positive neural connections
- Enhance a sense of safety
- Teach positive coping skills
- Nurture resilience



TRAUMA INFORMED CARE:
KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- **Realize:** understand trauma & its impact
- **Recognize:** signs of trauma & its prevalence
- **Respond:** use/connect to trauma informed interventions
- **Resist:** avoid re-traumatization

SAMHSA, "Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach"

RECOGNIZE

- Ask what happened rather than what's wrong
- Unresolved trauma in parents may lead to toxic stress for children
- An opportunity to support & educate parents/caregivers

RESPOND & RESIST

- Emphasize What Young Children Need
- Teach Coping Skills
- Enhance Protective Factors
- Mindful of Our Interactions with families



RESPOND & RESIST

What Young Children Need

Safety

Security

Nurturing



RESPOND & RESIST

- Encourage development of social emotional skills
 - Form relationships
 - Communicate needs
 - Regulate emotions
 - Explore their world
- Enable child's own abilities



RESPOND & RESIST

○ Support Caregivers & Teach Coping Skills

- Self care
 - Nutrition, sleep, exercise
- Stress management
 - Support, stress relievers
- Problem solving
 - Address stressors (safety, income, health access)



RESPOND & RESIST

○ Enhance Protective Factors

- Family Functioning/ Resiliency
- Social Support
- Concrete Support
- Child Development/Knowledge of Parenting
- Nurturing and Attachment



RESPOND & RESIST

○ Refer for Services

- School completion & job training
- Mental health treatment (adult or child)
- Substance abuse treatment
- Intimate partner violence services



RESPOND & RESIST

o Mindful of our interactions

- Safety
- Trustworthiness & Transparency
- Peer Support
- Collaboration & Mutuality
- Empowerment, voice & choice
- Cultural, historical & gender issues addressed



SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

The self is most important tool

STS is our occupational hazard



Attention to STS is = to using Personal Protective Equipment

Protect self in order to care for others effectively



IN SUMMARY

- o Trauma & toxic stress change a child's experience of the world
- o Which leads to changes in biology & brain architecture
- o As a result, children act differently (defensively)
- o Which impacts how they learn, get along with others, and take care of themselves
- o Supportive relationships protect children from the impact of trauma & toxic stress



THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

○ For More Information:

- Website:
www.michigan.gov/traumatoxicstress
- Trauma Informed System Coordinator
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