



# Trauma Informed Care for Children and Adolescents – An update on the Singapore context

Dr Jasmine Pang

Principal Clinical Psychologist and Assistant Director  
Clinical and Forensic Psychology Branch  
Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore

[Jasmine\\_Pang@msf.gov.sg](mailto:Jasmine_Pang@msf.gov.sg)



# Outline

- Why the need for trauma informed care?
  - What is trauma informed care?
  - Trauma informed care in
    - Mental Health
    - Medical
    - School and Community
    - Child Welfare
    - Juvenile Justice
    - Law Enforcement / First Responders
- 





# What is Trauma?

The experience of a real or perceived threat to life or bodily integrity

OR

the life or bodily integrity of a loved one

AND

causes an overwhelming sense of terror, horror, helplessness, and fear

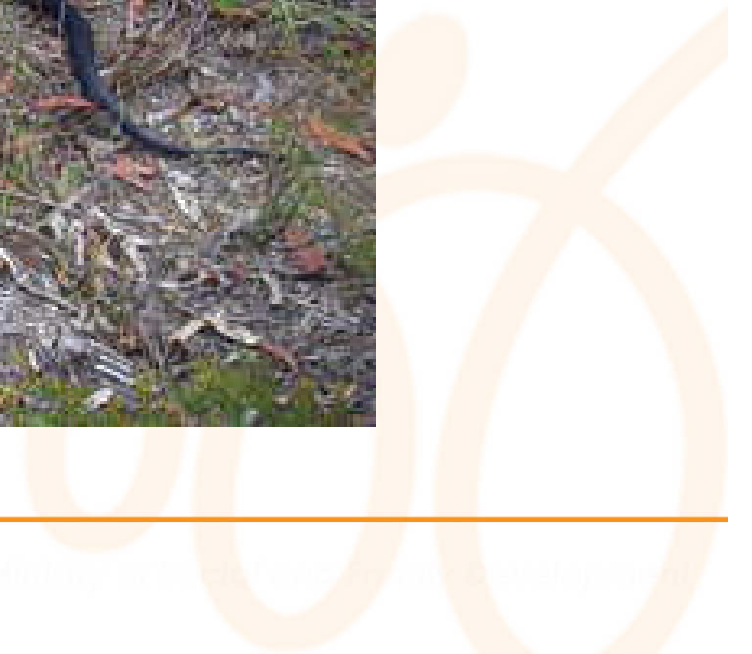


# Trauma

- Approximately 25% of children and adolescents in the community experience at least one potentially traumatic event during their lifetime
  - Many people with trauma histories have overlapping problems with mental health, substance abuse, and are victims or perpetrators of crime
  - Trauma survivors are found across ALL systems of care
  - Trauma is often under-reported and under-diagnosed *(NTAC, 2004)*
-



# We Learn by Experience





# We Learn by Experience





# Impact of trauma over the lifespan

- Neurological, biological, psychological and social in nature. They include:
  - Changes in brain neurobiology
  - Social, emotional & cognitive impairment
  - Adoption of health risk behaviors as coping mechanisms (eating disorders, smoking, substance abuse, self harm, sexual promiscuity, violence)
  - Severe and persistent behavioral health, health and social problems, early death

*(Felitti et al, 1998; Herman, 1992)*

---





# Trauma Informed Care

- All parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress
- They act in collaboration with those who are involved using the best available science to facilitate an support the recovery and resiliency of the individual and family





# Trauma Informed Care

- Programs, agencies and service providers:
  1. Routinely screen for trauma exposure, its impact and treatment
  2. Engage in efforts to strengthen the resiliency and protective factors of individuals impacted by and vulnerable to trauma
  3. Address the trauma and its impact
  4. Emphasize continuity of care and collaboration across services
  5. Maintains an environment of care for staff that address, minimizes and treats secondary trauma stress as well as increasing staff resilience



# Main Arenas that Trauma Informed Care is important

- Mental Health
- Medical
- Education and Community
- Child Welfare
- Juvenile Justice
- Law Enforcement / First Responders



# Creating a Trauma Informed Mental Health System

- Mental health clinicians, supervisors, and administrators should:
    - Build organizational readiness to implement evidence-based practice models.
    - Improve clinically competent practice.
    - Successfully implement trauma-focused interventions and treatments.
-



# Creating a Trauma Informed Mental Health System



KK Women's and  
Children's Hospital  
SingHealth

Psychosocial Trauma Support  
Service



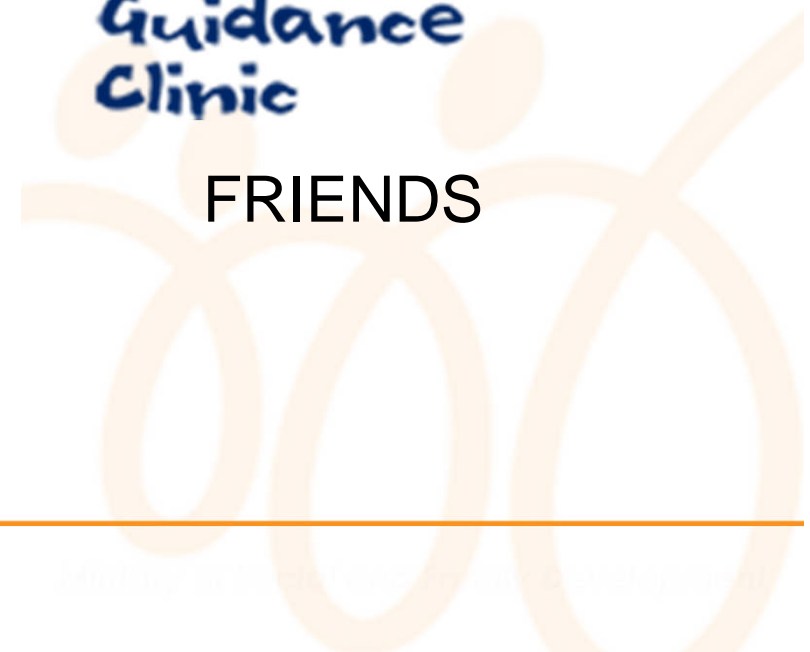
Changi  
General Hospital

Psychotraumatology Service /  
Adolescent Service



Child  
Guidance  
Clinic

FRIENDS





# Creating a Trauma Informed Health Care System

- Health care providers caring for children in emergency and hospital settings should:
    - Incorporate an understanding of traumatic stress in their encounters with children and families.
    - Minimize the potential for trauma during medical care.
    - Provide screening, prevention, and anticipatory guidance.
    - Identify children and families in distress or at risk.
-



# Creating a Trauma Informed Health Care System



## Traumatic Stress in Ill or Injured Children

AFTER THE ABC'S CONSIDER THE DEF'S

<b>D</b>	<b>Distress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess and manage pain.</li><li>• Ask about fears and worries.</li><li>• Consider grief and loss.</li></ul>
<b>E</b>	<b>Emotional Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who and what does the patient need now?</li><li>• Barriers to mobilizing existing supports?</li></ul>
<b>F</b>	<b>Family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess parents' or siblings' and others' distress.</li><li>• Gauge family stressors and resources</li><li>• Address other needs (beyond medical)?</li></ul>



# Creating a Trauma Informed School and Community System

- Community staff, educators, and administrators should:
    - Recognize the potential effects of trauma on education (e.g., attendance, grades, test scores, classroom behavior).
    - Be able to identify students who are in need of help due to trauma.
    - Be able to respond to the needs of traumatized students.
    - Recognize the importance of self care and the potential impact of secondary traumatic stress.
-





# Creating a Trauma Informed School and Community System





# Creating a Trauma Informed Child Welfare System

- In coordination with other systems, professionals within the child welfare system should:
    - Maximize the child's sense of safety.
    - Assist children in reducing overwhelming emotion.
    - Help children make new meaning of their trauma history and current experiences.
    - Address the impact of trauma and subsequent changes in the child's behavior, development, and relationships.
    - Coordinate services with other agencies.
    - Utilize comprehensive assessment of the child's trauma experiences and their impact on development and behavior to guide services.
    - 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.
-



# Creating a Trauma Informed Juvenile Justice System

- Juvenile justice and judicial staff and administrators should:
    - Undertake systematic efforts to assess posttraumatic stress and psychological trauma among detainees.
    - Implement trauma-focused interventions for youth.
    - Protect juveniles from victimization while detained.
    - Pay special attention to high-risk populations, such as girls in juvenile justice settings.
-



# Creating a Trauma Informed Legal Enforcement System

- Police Officers should know:
    - All children who witness domestic violence are affected by it. However, each child reacts in a different way.
    - Children living with domestic violence often have complicated feelings about their parents.
    - Children often worry that they are responsible for the violence in their homes.
    - Police officers really matter to kids.
    - There are simple things police officers can do while on the scene to help reduce the impact of domestic violence on children.
-



---

Ministry of Social and Family Development

## Slide 20

---

j1

Not sure how much we can/are able to highlight programmes we are running within MSF?

jasvang, 13/08/2014



# Take home message

- Children and adolescents are often at risk of being exposed to potentially traumatic experiences
  - There is a need for all involved in their care to have an awareness of the impact of these experiences on their physical, social, psychological, emotional and educational development
  - There is also a need to recognise, prevent and cope with the impact of working with children and adolescents exposed to trauma
  - Trauma informed care is important for everybody
-





# Online Resources

- <http://www.crisisprevention.com/Blogs-CPI/Blog/April-2012/Top-10-Recommended-Trauma-Informed-Care-Online-Res>
  - <https://www.childwelfare.gov/responding/trauma.cfm>
  - <http://www.nasmhpd.org/TA/nctic.aspx>
  - <http://www.nctsn.org/>
-



The End

