Building Trauma-Informed Children's Advocacy Centers

RESOURCE GUIDE

Western Regional
CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The Chadwick Center for Children and Families has been a long-time leader in developing tools for trauma-informed services and organizations. In 2019, its Advancing California's Trauma-Informed Systems (ACTS) project, (with support from the State of California, Office of Child Abuse and Prevention), partnered with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to create "Trauma-Informed Considerations when Engaging Children and Families Toolkit" (referred to as the TIC Toolkit).

The TIC Toolkit was designed to support child welfare professionals in developing collaborative partnerships with families based on mutual respect and a common commitment to healing. The resources were chosen to aid Los Angeles DCFS in implementing a trauma-informed approach when interacting with children and families locally and improving outcomes through increasing family engagement.

To advance cross-sharing of lessons among Chadwick Center projects, Western Regional Children's Advocacy Center (WRCAC) adapted the TIC Toolkit for use in a children's advocacy center (CAC) environment by adding CAC-specific resources created by the Regional Children's Advocacy Centers (RCACs). For example, new resources include the webinar series, "**Trauma-Informed Care and Practice in a CAC Setting,**" produced by WRCAC, "**Trauma-Informed Organizations Resource Guide,**" produced by Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center (NRCAC), and "**Trauma-Informed Organizational Change Manual,**" produced by The Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care (ITTIC) at the University at Buffalo, Buffalo Center for Social Research. Additional resources were curated from national centers, such as the National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health; National Center on Law & Elder Rights; and Trauma-Informed Legal Advocacy, with trauma-informed materials identified that are suitable for specific disciplines represented within the CAC and multi-disciplinary team (MDT).

The resulting document, "Building Trauma-Informed Children's Advocacy Centers: Resource Guide," includes dozens of resources relevant to a CAC and MDT audience, categorized by resource type as follows:

- **Publications** include guides, manuals, fact sheets, summary sheets, infographics, and other materials available in portable document format (pdf) or other formats that allow for distribution electronically and as a printable resource. Guides and manuals are longer documents that may require significant time to thoroughly review and are designed to assist CAC leaders in organizational and systemic change.

- **Web-based Resources** include webinars, micro-learnings, and self-paced interactive guides on various topics. Webinars are links to recorded, live events, typically 60 to 90 minutes in length and micro-learnings are web-based videos that can typically be reviewed in 5 to 7 minutes.
- **Assessment Tools** are used to assess the degree to which an agency, such as a CAC, is trauma-informed across a variety of domains. The assessment tools require a significant amount of time to review as they include planning for and conducting assessments across multiple domains, review of collected data, and consideration of strategies to improve organizational responses across domains.

The Resource Guide is geared to CAC directors and staff as well as representatives from MDT partner agencies. To assist in identifying which materials are most applicable to which audience, each resource is categorized by discipline as follows: law enforcement, child protection, medical, mental health, victim advocacy, prosecution, CAC directors and CAC staff (including forensic interviewers and MDT coordinator/facilitators).

BUILDING A TRAUMA-INFORMED FOUNDATION

Understanding how trauma impacts children and families is the cornerstone to quality care within a CAC. Additionally, MDT members are frequently exposed to trauma in the daily tasks of the job, and this exposure can increase the likelihood of experiencing secondary traumatic stress. Please see the resources below for understanding trauma and secondary traumatic stress.

Trauma 101 and Trauma-Informed Practice by CAC and MDT Professionals

MDT Audience: All
Source: Western Regional Children's Advocacy Center
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: Trauma
Released: September 2020
Use: In this introductory webinar, Al Killen-Harvey, LCSW (Chadwick Center for Children & Families) introduces terminology related to trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and builds the skills of professionals working with children who have experienced trauma.

Understanding Secondary Traumatic Stress

MDT Audience: All
Source: National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Secondary traumatic stress
Released: June 2017
Use: This fact sheet provides an overview of secondary traumatic stress (STS) and addresses professionals who are affected by STS, the impact of STS on the workforce, and how CACs can address STS.

Encouraging Staff Wellness in Trauma-Informed Organizations

MDT Audience: All
Source: Trauma-Informed Care Implementation Resource Center
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Secondary traumatic stress
Released: December 2016
Use: This infographic describes an organization's move toward becoming trauma-informed; ensuring emotional wellness among professional and non-professional staff is a crucial requirement for providing high-quality care.

Trauma Lens

MDT Audience: All
Source: Trauma Informed Oregon
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Trauma
Released: 2016
Use: This resource contains a table providing examples of how professionals can reframe challenging behaviors through a trauma lens. The examples are some of the most frequently reported in Trauma Informed Oregon trainings and include challenging behaviors from service recipients and staff.

The 12 Core Concepts: Concepts for Understanding Traumatic Stress Responses in Children and Families

MDT Audience: All
Source: National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Trauma
Released: 2012
Use: This 5-page resource reviews 12 core concepts for understanding trauma in children and families, including understanding the complexity, pervasive effects, trauma reactions, and protective factors involved in trauma exposure and responses.

Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Fact Sheet for Child-Serving Professionals

MDT Audience: All
Source: National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Secondary traumatic stress
Released: 2011
Use: This fact sheet provides a concise overview of secondary traumatic stress and its potential impact on child-serving professionals. Included is an outline of options for assessment, prevention, and interventions relevant to secondary traumatic stress, and it describes the elements necessary for transforming child-serving organizations and agencies into systems that also support worker resiliency.

Reflect. Refuel. Reset

MDT Audience: All
Source: Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: Secondary traumatic stress
Released: 2020
Use: This web-based interactive tool is a hub for resources and tools designed to help prevent and alleviate the impacts of secondary traumatic stress, often affecting CAC and MDT professionals who serve victims of child abuse and their families.

CONSIDERATIONS IN TRAUMA-INFORMED RESPONSES

I. Considering Diversity in a Trauma-Informed CAC

A. Considering Race & Ethnicity

Resources to Support Children's Emotional Well-Being Amid Anti-Black Racism, Racial Violence, and Trauma

MDT Audience: Mental Health, Victim Advocacy, CAC Staff
Source: Child Trends
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: Resources to address racism
Released: June 2020
Use: This web-based guide leads users in understanding racism, preparing to talk to children about racism, listening and validating feelings, providing reassurance and hope, and limiting media exposure.

Culture and Trauma Brief: Preliminary Adaptations for Working with Traumatized Latino/Hispanic Children and their Families

MDT Audience: Mental Health, Victim Advocacy
Source: ACTS Project at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Culture and trauma with Latino/Hispanic children and families
Released: 2007
Use: This summary sheet was adapted from the NCTSN and will educate the reader on the Latino/Hispanic presence and experiences in the United States, make treatment recommendations for working with families, and think about future directions for treatment with Latino/Hispanic families.

Cultural Humility

MDT Audience: All
Source: National Child Welfare Workforce Institute
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Cultural humility
Released: Unknown
Use: This 1-page tip sheet reviews ways to create practice change with cultural humility in mind.

Effects of Refugee Trauma

MDT Audience: Mental Health, Victim Advocacy, CAC Staff
Source: National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: Refugee families
Released: Unknown
Use: This portion of the NCTSN website reviews general symptoms that children who have experienced war trauma or persecution may experience as well as the impact of exposure to traumatic events separated by age group and developmental stages.

B.   Considering Sexual Orientation

Adopting a Trauma-Informed Approach for LGBTQ Youth

MDT Audience: All
Source: National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: LGBTQIA+ Youth
Released: December 2020
Use: This 3-minute micro-learning was adapted to help schools and community agencies (1) understand why adopting a trauma-informed approach for LGBTQIA+ youth is needed; and (2) create trauma-informed environments that consider the unique trauma-related needs of LGBTQIA+ youth.

Trauma Among Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Youth

MDT Audience: All
Source: National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: LGBTQIA+ Youth and trauma
Released: February 2016
Use: This webinar raises awareness of the vulnerability to abuse and neglect among gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender adolescents. During the presentation, the stages of sexual identity development as they relate to LGBTQIA+ youth and the barriers to LGBTQIA+ youth coming to terms with their sexuality are identified. Issues that arise in the child welfare arena are also discussed.

C.   Developmental Considerations

Child Development and Trauma Guide

MDT Audience: All
Source: ACTS Project at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Child development and trauma
Released: December 2020
Use: This summary sheet was adapted and serves as a guide for MDT professionals to integrate knowledge from child development, child abuse and trauma and importantly to offer practical, age-appropriate advice as to the needs of children and their parents when trauma has occurred.

Helping Young Children Who Have Experienced Trauma

MDT Audience: All
Source: ACTS Project at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Young children and trauma
Released: December 2020
Use: This summary sheet was adapted from Child Trends (2017; Publication # 2017-19) and describes early childhood trauma and its effects, offers strategies for early childhood programs, and presents recommendations to support trauma-informed care for this vulnerable group.

Helping Children Cope After a Traumatic Event

MDT Audience: Mental Health, Victim Advocacy, CAC Staff
Source: Child Mind Institute
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Coping and trauma
Released: 2016
Use: This guide was assembled by psychiatrists, psychologists, and mental health experts who specialize in crisis situations. It offers simple tips on what to expect, what to do, and what to look out for in the wake of a traumatic event. There are general suggestions as well as age-specific information.

How Can Trauma Impact the Brain?

MDT Audience: Mental Health, Medical
Source: CBT+
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Stress and the brain
Released: 2014
Use: This 2-page guide reviews different parts of the brain that are affected by trauma as well as tips for helping children who have experienced trauma.

II.   Building Trauma-Informed Rapport

A.   Building Trust

Trauma-Informed Lawyering

MDT Audience: Prosecution
Source: National Center on Law & Elder Rights
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Rapport building strategies
Released: September 2019
Use: This tip sheet reviews an introduction to trauma, secondary traumatic stress, and strategies to build rapport with clients. A trauma-informed legal practice aims to reduce re-traumatization and recognize the role trauma plays in the lawyer-client relationship. Integrating trauma-informed practices provides lawyers with the opportunity to increase connections to their clients and improve advocacy.

Trauma-Informed Legal Advocacy: Trauma, Memory & Trust-Building

MDT Audience: Prosecution, Victim Advocacy
Source: Trauma-Informed Legal Advocacy (TILA)
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Delayed disclosure and dissociation
Released: March 2015
Use: This resource provides education on delayed disclosures, dissociation, trauma's impact on memory, and language to use with clients to build rapport to increase accurate disclosures. The TILA Project is designed to offer guidance to legal advocates and lawyers on applying trauma-informed principles to doing legal advocacy with survivors of domestic violence.

Trauma-Informed Legal Advocacy: Frustration & Anger

MDT Audience: Law Enforcement, Prosecution, Victim Advocacy, CAC Staff
Source: Trauma-Informed Legal Advocacy
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Regulating emotions and reflective practice
Released: March 2015
Use: This resource provides information on perspective-taking and compassion for the client and reviews burnout and secondary traumatic stress for providers. Additionally, it provides an activity to engage in reflective practice with a co-worker to improve staff well-being.

Preparing for Court Proceedings with Survivors of Domestic Violence: Tips for Civil Lawyers and Legal Advocates

MDT Audience: Prosecution, Victim Advocacy
Source: National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Court preparation
Released: March 2013
Use: This resource provides tips for civil lawyers and legal advocates to recognize and adjust to the challenges survivors experience in the courtroom.

Preparing for Court Proceedings: An Info & Worksheet for Survivors, Legal Advocates and Lawyers

MDT Audience: Prosecution, Victim Advocacy
Source: National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Court preparation worksheet
Released: August 2013
Use: This worksheet can be utilized with clients to help prepare them in a trauma-informed way to the stressors of the courtroom.

Trauma and Behavior Part 3: The Importance of Relationship

MDT Audience: Law Enforcement, Mental Health, Victim Advocacy, CAC Staff
Source: Family and Children's Resource Program
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: Building relationships
Released: June 2013
Use: This 5-minute micro-learning reviews steps to build trust, develop empathy, increase predictability, and increase engagement with children who have experienced trauma.

Practical Interventions to Help Children Affected by Trauma

MDT Audience: Mental Health, Victim Advocacy, CAC Staff
Source: ACTS Project at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: Rapport building strategies
Released: 2010
Use: This 5-minute micro learning is adapted from Multiplying Connections is focused on teaching children's services professionals the impact of trauma on development; how to recognize children's reactions to trauma; and how to promote healing through trauma-informed care.

B. **Understanding a Child's History**

Tips for Identifying and Addressing Trauma Re-enactment with Children, Youth, and Young Adults

MDT Audience: Law Enforcement, Mental Health, Victim Advocacy, CAC Staff
Source: Center for Trauma Informed Child Welfare Policy, Programs and Practices
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Addressing challenging child behaviors
Released: 2020
Use: This 2-page tip sheet defines trauma re-enactment behaviors in children and youth and identifies strategies to respond to challenging behaviors.

What Do I Do?

MDT Audience: All
Source: Echo Training
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Seven steps for building rapport with children
Released: June 2017
Use: This infographic describes seven steps to walk a provider through how to create safety, regulate the nervous system, build relationships, and foster growth for children who have experienced trauma.

The Invisible Suitcase

MDT Audience: All
Source: ACTS Project at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: Understanding a child's trauma history through an analogy
Released: March 2008
Use: This self-paced micro-learning was adapted from the NCTSN and educates the reader on what the "invisible suitcase" represents, how it impacts behavior, what resource parents and providers can do, and understanding compassion fatigue.

III.   Using Trauma-Informed Language

Building Rapport with Sex Trafficking Survivors

MDT Audience: All
Source: Journey Out
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: Youth sex trafficking
Released: January 2020
Use: This 7-minute micro-learning guides the audience on how to approach or relate to someone who has been through extreme trauma, such as sex trafficking. Tips include staying neutral in your language, self-compassion, setting limits, use of humor, and deep breathing.

Language to Use with Survivors of Youth Sex Trafficking

MDT Audience: All
Source: International Organization for Adolescents
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Youth sex trafficking
Released: 2018
Use: This fact sheet can be used as a guide for conversations while working with youth potentially trafficked for sex. When working with vulnerable youth it is important to be empathic and use empowering trauma-informed language. Language and terms should mirror the youth's language.

What Every Judge Needs to Know About Trauma

MDT Audience: Prosecution
Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Courtroom communication and language
Released: 2013
Use: This issue brief provides information, specific strategies, and resources that many treatment court judges have found beneficial. Recognizing the impact of past trauma on treatment court participants does not mean that you must be both judge and treatment provider. Rather, trauma awareness is an opportunity to make small adjustments that improve judicial outcomes while minimizing avoidable challenges and conflict during and after hearings.

IV.   Responding to Trauma Reactions

A.   Understanding Difficult Emotions

Understanding Trauma Reactions and Behavior Problems

MDT Audience: Mental Health, Victim Advocacy, CAC Staff
Source: Advancing California's Trauma-Informed Systems
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Recognizing trauma reactions
Released: December 2020
Use: This PowerPoint presentation describes the fight-flight-freeze response and associated behavior challenges that trauma-exposed children experience. It also helps providers differentiate between general behavior problems and trauma reactions.

Tips for Identifying and Addressing Trauma Reminders with Children, Youth, and Young Adults

MDT Audience: Mental Health, Victim Advocacy
Source: Center for Trauma Informed Child Welfare Policy, Programs and Practices
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Trauma reminders
Released: 2020
Use: This resource can guide providers to help identify trauma reminders among children, youth, and young adults. It is important to explain what trauma reminders are and to know how to ask them about their possible trauma reminders.

Trauma-Informed Legal Advocacy: Legal Interviewing and Traumatic Triggers

MDT Audience: Prosecution, Victim Advocacy
Source: Trauma-Informed Legal Advocacy (TILA)
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Trauma triggers
Released: March 2015
Use: This resource provides education on survivors' common responses to trauma triggers and how to apply trauma-informed principles to support clients by reducing possible triggers in the environment and responding to client while being triggered. The TILA Project is designed to offer guidance to legal advocates and lawyers on applying trauma-informed principles to doing legal advocacy with survivors of domestic violence.

Trauma-Informed Legal Advocacy: Emotional Safety Planning for Court

MDT Audience: Prosecution, Victim Advocacy
Source: Trauma-Informed Legal Advocacy (TILA)
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Safety planning
Released: March 2015
Use: This resource provides four practical steps to help someone emotionally prepare for court. The TILA Project is designed to offer guidance to legal advocates and lawyers on applying trauma-informed principles to doing legal advocacy with survivors of domestic violence.

Understanding and Helping Children who Dissociate

MDT Audience: Mental Health
Source: Liana Lowenstein, MSW
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Dissociation
Released: 2014
Use: This 3-page handout describes what dissociation looks like in children who have experienced trauma and provides brief, practical, strategies providers can use to respond to dissociation. While the handout was developed for therapists, the information and strategies are relevant to all helping professionals.

B.   De-escalation Strategies

What To Do with Heavy Feelings

MDT Audience: Mental Health, Victim Advocacy
Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Emotion Regulation and Feeling Identification
Released: 2020
Use: This 1-page guide summarizing feeling identification and helping children regulate a range of emotions.

Simple Strategies for Intervening with Traumatized and Dysregulated Youth

MDT Audience: Mental Health, Victim Advocacy, CAC Staff
Source: ACTS Project at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: Strategies to help with regulation
Released: 2017
Use: This 5-minute micro-learning is adapted from a presentation by Dr. Rebecca Ezechukwu, University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, and describes how self-regulation and dysregulation develop and introduces strategies to build attunement and manage de-escalation.

Coaching on Coping Skills Handout

MDT Audience: All
Source: University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Creating a sense of safety for children
Released: 2014
Use: This 1-page handout describes the fight-flight-freeze response and ways helping professionals can create a sense of safety to help children experiencing a traumatic response de-escalate.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN BUILDING A TRAUMA-INFORMED CAC

The resources below are aimed at helping organizations understand the degree to which they are trauma informed. These resources may be particularly helpful for CAC directors as they consider how to build trauma-informed CACs.

Ensuring Children's Advocacy Centers are Trauma-Informed Organizations

MDT Audience: CAC Directors
Source: Western Regional Children's Advocacy Center
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: Trauma-informed organizations
Released: October 2020
Use: In this webinar, Melissa Bernstein, Ph.D. (Chadwick Center for Children and Families, ACTS Project) discusses the framework for systems change that incorporates trauma-informed decision-making and responses by organizations that serve children and families who have experienced trauma.

Trauma-Informed Organizations Resource Guide

MDT Audience: CAC Directors
Source: Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center & New York State Children's Alliance
Type of Resource: Publication
Topic: Trauma-informed organizations
Released: January 2019
Use: This resource guide outlines the 10 key development areas for trauma-Informed organizations, provides tools to assist CAC leaders in organizational change, and highlights successful efforts by CACs in the Northeast region.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The following measurement tools are used to assess the degree to which an agency, such as a CAC, is trauma-informed across a variety of domains.

Assessing and Improving Trauma-Informed Care in Children's Advocacy Centers

MDT Audience: CAC Directors
Source: Western Regional Children's Advocacy Center
Type of Resource: Web-based Resource
Topic: Organizational assessment
Released: October 2020
Use: In this webinar, Jennifer Hossler, MSW (Project Intersect) reviews the use of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) Trauma-Informed Organizational Assessment (TIOA) tool for assessment of a CAC. The webinar covers how changes in the organization can improve staff skills and services provided to children and families who have experienced trauma.

Trauma-Informed Organizational Change Manual

MDT Audience: CAC Directors
Source: University at Buffalo – Buffalo Center for Social Research
Type of Resource: Assessment Tool
Topic: Trauma-informed organizations
Released: January 2019, Updated October 2021
Use: This manual provides a step-by-step guide with assessment tools for anyone interested in implementing a trauma-informed approach. The purpose of the manual is to guide organizations and systems in planning for, implementing, and sustaining trauma-informed organizational change.

NCTSN Trauma-Informed Organizational Assessment

MDT Audience: CAC Directors
Source: National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Type of Resource: Assessment Tool
Topic: Organizational assessment
Released: 2020
Use: NCTSN's Trauma-Informed Organizational Assessment (TIOA) tool helps organizations assess their current practices in the context of serving children and families who have experienced trauma. Results from the assessment can drive organizational change to identify, prioritize, implement and sustain trauma-informed practices.

Secondary Traumatic Stress Informed Organizational Assessment (STSI-OA)

MDT Audience: CAC Directors
Source: University of Kentucky, Center on Trauma and Children
Type of Resource: Assessment Tool
Topic: Organizational assessment
Released: 2014
Use: The STSI-OA is an assessment tool that can be used to evaluate the degree to which an organization is secondary traumatic stress-informed and able to respond to the impact of such stress in the workplace. The STSI-OA identifies specific areas of strength and opportunities to implement secondary traumatic stress-informed policies and practices. The results of this tool can be used as a roadmap for future training and implementation activities in the area of secondary traumatic stress and trauma-informed care.