

NEGLECT AND TRAUMA: EXPLORING DIFFERENCES IN SYMPTOM BEHAVIORS

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Executive Summary

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

All forms of child maltreatment are harmful to children and impact their development in significant ways. However, there are specific differences between the effects of neglect and the effects of abuse and trauma. These differences result in different symptomatic behaviors that point us to the harm that's been done and the challenges the victim is facing. The differences also indicate the need for different therapeutic interventions to facilitate healing. During this workshop we will explore how neglect and trauma impact development, and how we can intervene to assist children and youth to cope with the pain caused by abuse and neglect, and to develop successful coping strategies to enable more effective adjustment to the demands of life.

Topics include:

- Overview of forms of neglect
- Pre-natal neglect and exposure to drugs and alcohol
- Early neglect and the development of attachment disorders
- Parenting neglect and difficulties adjusting to social interactions, limits and boundaries, and self-awareness
- Cognitive and affective distortions arising from neglect
- Ingredients in traumatic abuse
- Symptoms and symptom patterns related to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
- Cutting and other forms of self-harm and how they fit into PTSD symptom patterns
- Eating disorders and how they relate to traumatic abuse
- Therapeutic interventions for neglect and trauma

TARGET AUDIENCE

The content of this workshop will be useful for all professionals and caretakers involved in the care and treatment of children and youth who have been abused and/or neglected. These include special educators, therapists, foster and kinship care providers, adoptive parents, and professional and volunteer persons working in community intervention programs.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To distinguish between symptoms of abuse and symptoms of neglect
- To learn to use symptom behaviors as indicators of challenges a child or youth is struggling with
- To use symptom behaviors to inform treatment interventions
- To help children/youth make a connection between harm they have endured from abuse or neglect and their emotional and behavioral difficulties
- To explore specific interventions to enable more successful coping strategies for dealing with the pain caused by abuse and neglect

Ways that Supervisors can support the transfer of learning from the classroom to the job:

Before the training: Workers should be encouraged to come to the workshop prepared to discuss specific clients who are demonstrating behavioral symptoms of abuse and neglect. If they can prepare to apply the information provided in the training to specific concerns the application of principles and specific suggestions will likely be more effective.

After the training: Supervisors should be prepared to follow-up with workers who have attended the training to see if they have implemented any of the suggestions arising from discussion in the workshop.

TRAINING METHODS

- Review of literature and research related to early understanding of the impact of neglect
- Videotape demonstrations of infant cognitive responses to neglect
- Videotape demonstrations of symptomatic responses to neglect, including both grief, rage, and impaired social relationships
- Videotape demonstrations of responses to trauma
- Review of case histories from clients being served by workshop participants
- Group discussion
- Review of DSM-IV related to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder symptom categories

TRAINING OUTLINE

- I. Neglect and symptoms of neglect
 - A. Introduction and operational definition
 - B. General characteristics of neglect
 - C. General effects of neglect
 - D. Substance abuse, neglect and impact on the developing Brain
 1. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders
 2. A.D.H.D.
 3. Learning Disabilities
 - E. Impact of neglect on development of the "self"
 - F. Neglectful parents
- II. Emotional neglect and attachment problems
 - A. Depression and rage in infants
 - B. Attachment as a cognitive-affective disorder
 - C. Working with and correcting thinking distortions

III. Remediating the effects of neglect by meeting basic needs

IV. Abuse, trauma and symptoms of P.T.S.D.

A. Characteristics of traumatic experiences

B. Symptom categories and mental and behavioral expressions of each

1. Re-experiencing symptoms

2. Avoidance symptoms

3. Arousal symptoms

C. Specific symptoms related to sexual abuse (eating disorders, cutting, etc.)

D. Therapeutic goals for trauma victims

E. Treatment interventions for abuse and trauma

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