

TRAUMA INFORMED SYSTEMS OF CARE

by

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for the

Complex Trauma Treatment Network Conference

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Goals of the Discussion

- Understand why a trauma-informed system of care is important
- Understand how our actions, on behalf of the child and family, can help or hinder healing, and can inflict additional trauma
- Learn what is a trauma-informed system of care
- Learn how to implement a trauma-informed system in your area

Prevalence in Child Welfare Population

- A national study of adult foster care alumni found higher rates of PTSD (21%), compared with the general population (4.5%). This was higher than rates of PTSD in American war veterans. ¹
- Nearly 80% of abused children face at least one mental health challenge by age 21.²

1. Pecora, et al. (December 10, 2003). Early Results from the Casey National Alumni Study. Available at: http://www.casey.org/NR/rdonlyres/CEFBB1B6-7ED1-44OD-925AE5BAF602294D/302/casey_alumni_studies_report.pdf.
2. ASTHO. (April 2005). Child Maltreatment, Abuse, and Neglect, Available at: <http://www.astho.org/pubs/Childmaltreatmentfactsheet4-05.pdf>

Prevalence in Child Welfare Population

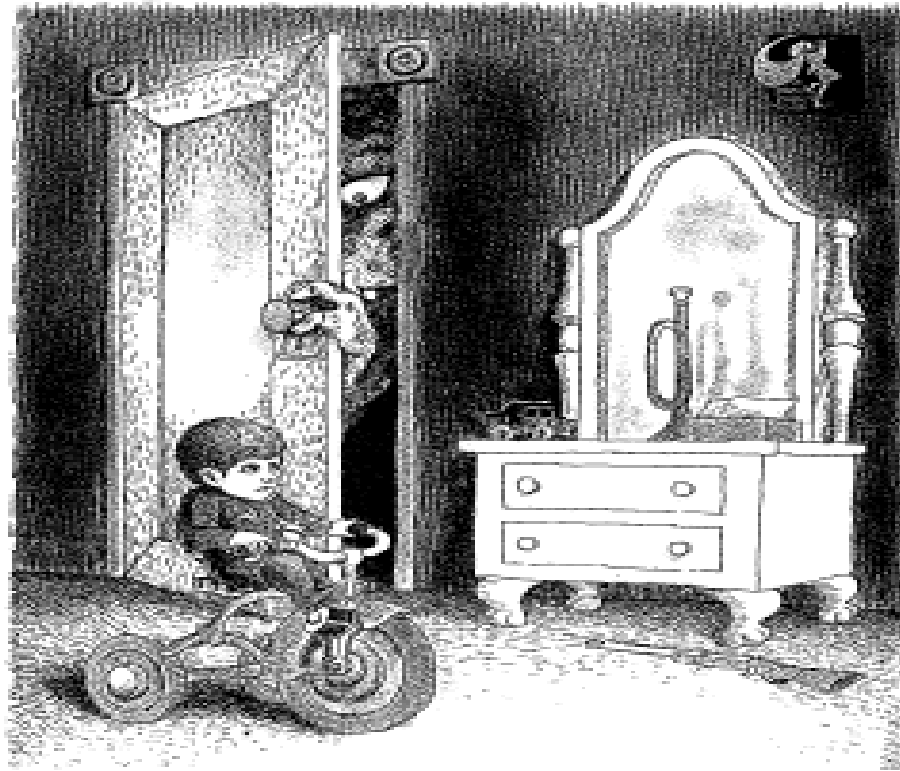
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- A study of children in foster care revealed that PTSD was diagnosed in 60% of sexually abused children and in 42% children who were physically abused.¹
- The study, also, found that 18% of foster children who had not experienced either type of abuse had PTSD,¹ possibly as a result of exposure to domestic or community violence.²

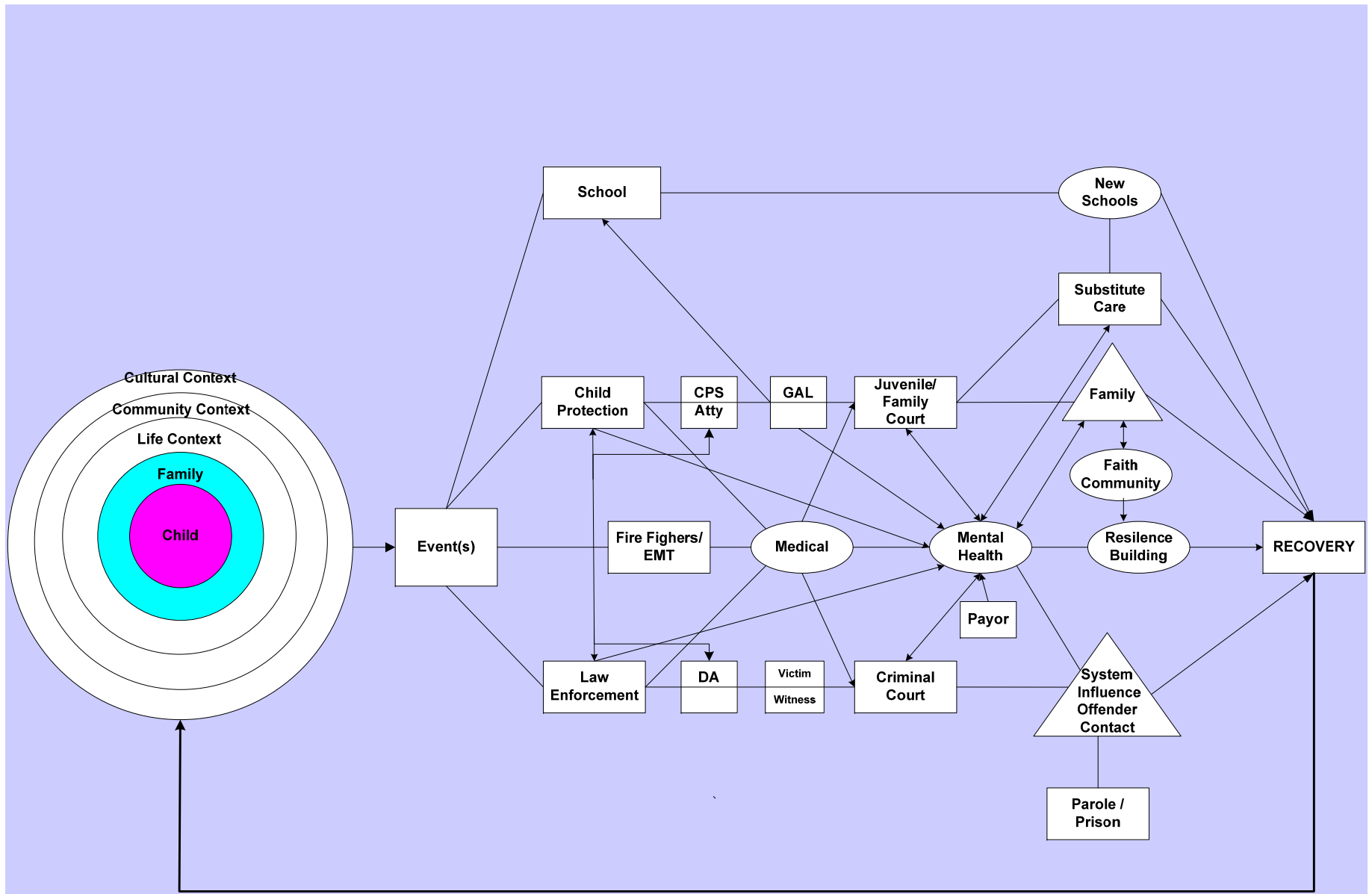
1. Dubner et al. (1999). JCCPsych, 67(3): 367-373.

2. Marsenich (March 2002). Evidence-Based Practices in Mental Health Services for Foster Youth. Available at: <http://www.cimh.org/downloads/Fostercaremanual.pdf>.

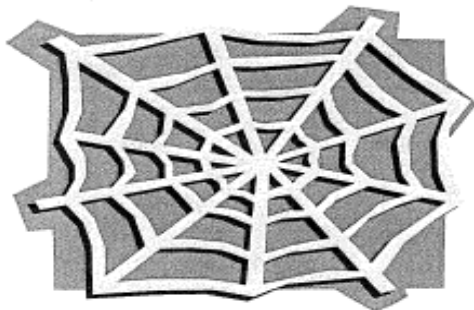
THERE'S A NIGHTMARE IN MY CLOSET



written and illustrated by **MERCER MAYER**



From: *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White



“Although it is made of thin, delicate strands, the web gets torn every day by the insects that kick around in it, and a spider, must rebuild it when it gets full of holes.”

Congress:

- Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA)

Administration on Children and Families

(ACF):

- Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR's)

Goals:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Well-Being

In 2001, Congress approved funding for a National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA), to *raise the standard of care and improve access to services* for traumatized children, their families, and communities throughout the U.S.

- “Organizations, like individuals, can be traumatized, and the result of traumatic experience can be as devastating for organizations as it is for individuals.”

(Sandra Bloom, M.D.)

A stressed system. . .

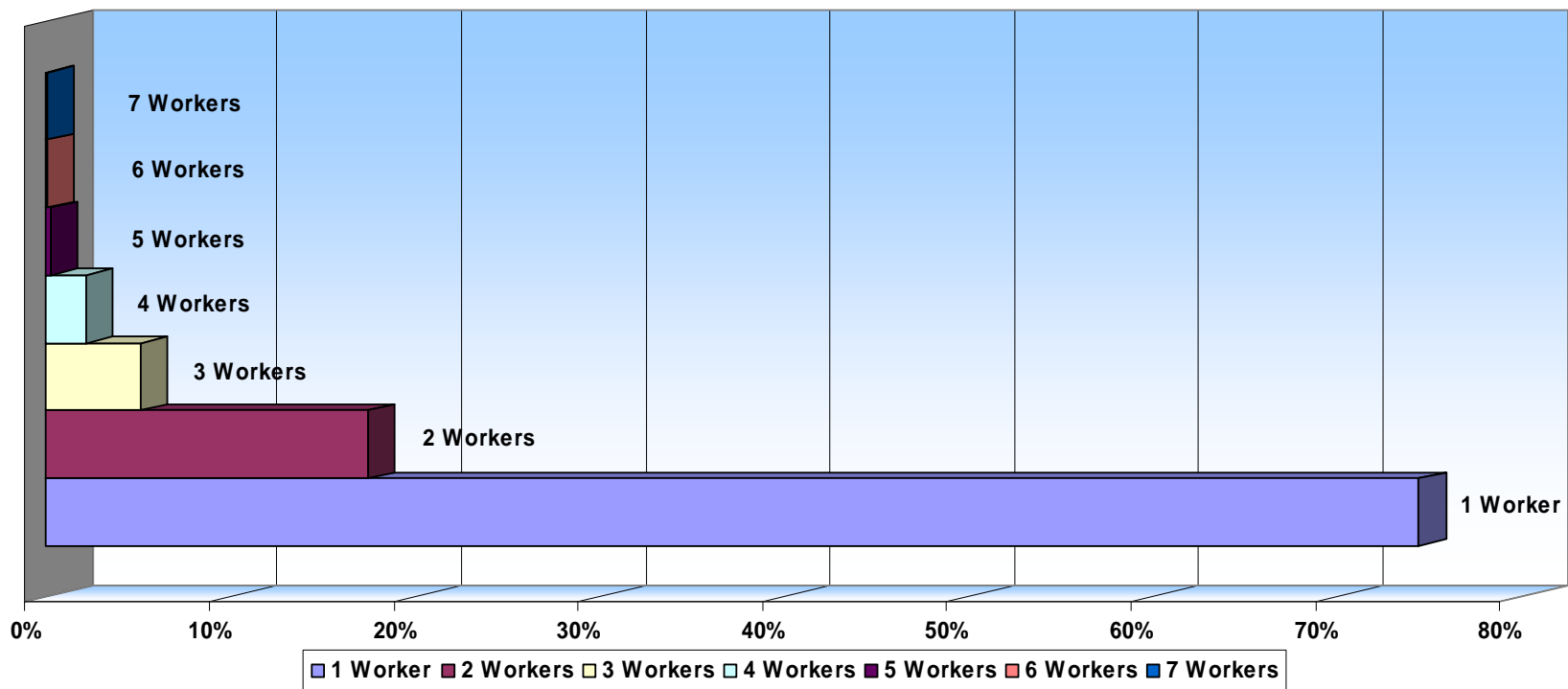


Trauma's Impact on Outcomes

- Impact on ability to assess safety and risk
- Impact on ability to self-care
- Distrust of colleagues/supervisors, distrust from colleagues/supervisors
- Increased absenteeism
- Decreased motivation
- Increased attrition
- Systemic pressures can exacerbate these responses, resulting in a negative feedback loop.
- Proposed solutions to poor casework practice (training, new protocols, increased oversight) often exacerbate the problem, as much as they help.

Fewer Changes In Caseworkers Increases the Chances of Permanency for Children

Children Entering & Exiting Care to Permanency from January 2003 through September 2004 (N=679)



Data reported represents 679 children entering and exiting to permanency from January 1, 2003 through September 2004. Data reported by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare.

Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System

A Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System has at least four broad dimensions:

1. Aware and responsive to child traumatic stress
2. Aware and responsive to the impact of past and current trauma on the adult family members with whom we interact
3. Aware and responsive to the impact of exposure to child traumatic stress on helping professionals and resource caregivers
4. Aware and responsive to the traumatic impact that policies and practices in the Child Welfare System, itself, can have on children, families, and professionals working in the field

(Child Welfare Committee of NCTSN)

Key Philosophy

“A person’s a person no matter how small.”



By Dr. Seuss

Trauma Informed Systems

- Recognize that coercive interventions cause traumatization and re-traumatization and are to be avoided
- Take into account knowledge about trauma—its impact, interpersonal dynamic, and paths to recovery—and incorporate this knowledge into all aspects of service delivery
- Employ evidence based and best practice treatment models that have been proven to facilitate recovery from trauma.

(Fallot and Harris, 2002, Ford, 2003, Najavits, 2003)

Criteria for Building a Trauma-Informed System

- **Administrative Policies / Guidelines Regarding the System of Care**
 1. Trauma function and focus in department
 2. Trauma policy or position paper
 3. Workforce Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention
 4. Workforce orientation, training, support, job competencies and standards related to trauma
 5. Consumer / Trauma Survivor involvement

Criteria for Building a Trauma-Informed System cont'd

- Administrative Policies / Guidelines Regarding Services
 6. Financing criteria and mechanisms to support the development of a trauma-informed service system
 7. Clinical practice guidelines
 8. Policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and standards to support access to trauma-informed services
 9. Needs assessments, evaluation, and research

Criteria for Building a Trauma-Informed System cont'd

- **Trauma Services**

10. Universal trauma screening and assessment

11. Trauma-informed services

12. Trauma-specific services, including evidence based and promising practice treatment models

(Blueprint for Action: Building Trauma-Informed Mental Health Service Systems, Abt Associates, Inc., 2007)

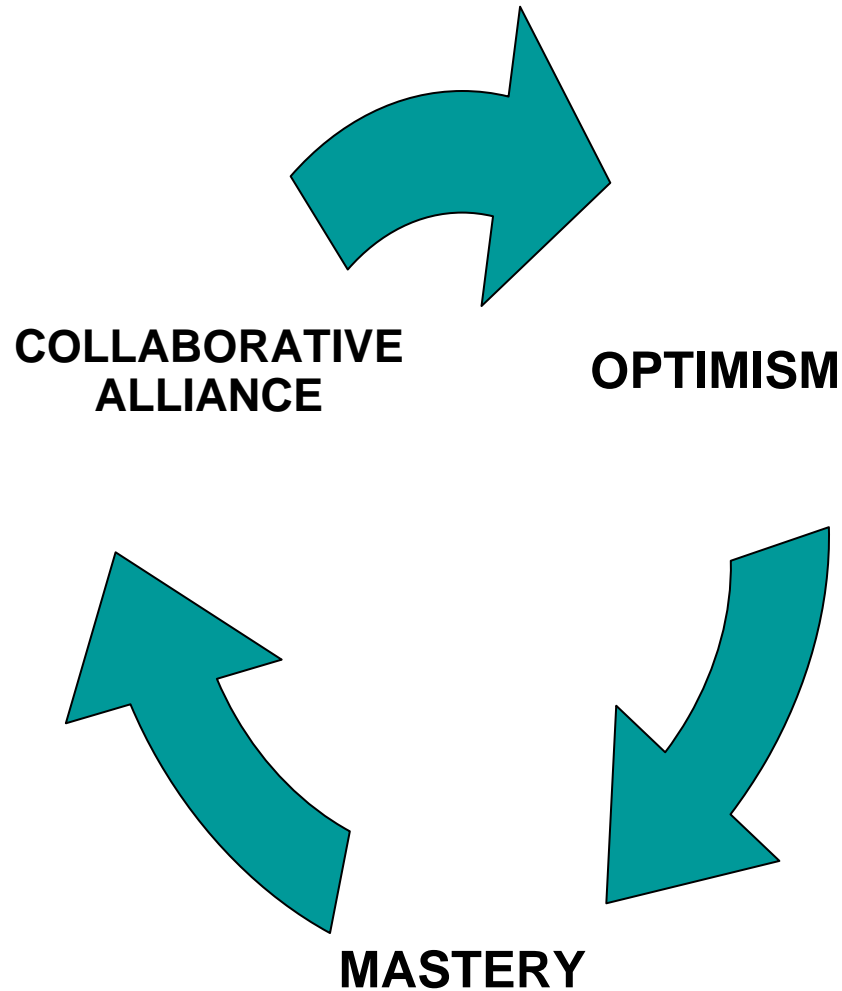
- “Successful programs do not contain the seeds of their own replication.”
(Lisbeth Schorr: *Within Our Reach*, 1993)

Leading Change

- Establish a sense of urgency
- Form a powerful guiding coalition
- Create a vision
- Communicate the vision
- Empower others to act on the vision
- Plan for and create short-term wins
- Consolidate improvements
- Institutionalize new approaches

(Kotter, Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail,
Harvard Business Review, 2007)

How to manage a stressed system. . .



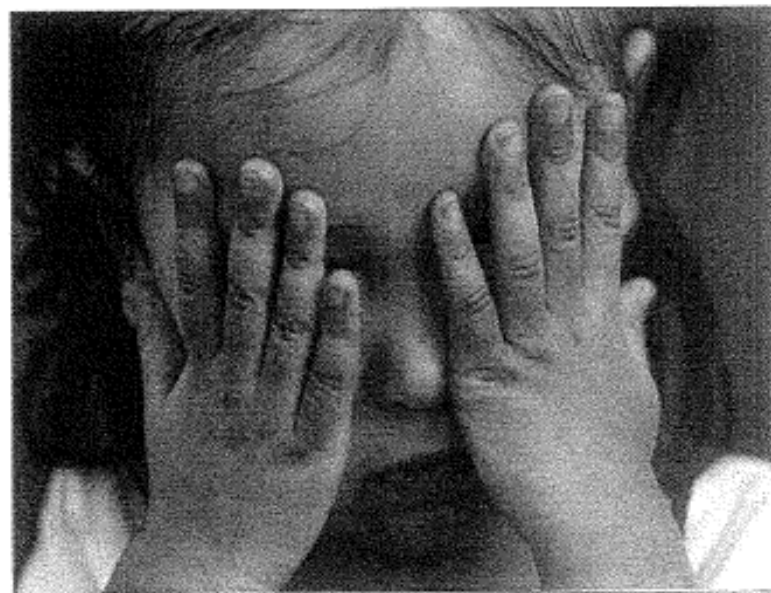
Core Components of Trauma-Informed Evidence-Based Treatment

- 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

From: *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good,
Very Bad Day*

by Judith Viorst

“I am having a terrible, horrible,
no good, very bad day. I told
everybody. No one even
answered.”



- “Without vision the people perish.”

(Proverbs 29:18)

NCTSN



The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

