

Resource Family Connection

News, Events and Information Benefiting
the Children of Waukesha County

October 2014



Community Trauma

By: Laura Cherone, MSW, LCSW, LCSAC

Director of Program and Clinical Services at Family Service of Waukesha

With news coverage of traumatic events such as the 12-year old stabbing incident last spring and the horrific details of beheadings and mass killings by terrorists, the term “community trauma” has been on the minds of many people. Community trauma is a traumatic psychological effect shared by a group of people in response to a traumatic event that stirs collective sentiment and causes in a shift in thinking, behavior or actions. It refers to a trauma that happens to large groups of individuals, the effects of which can be transmitted from one generation to the next or even across communities. The Holocaust and John F. Kennedy’s assassination are examples of community traumas that most people are familiar with. Community trauma involves physical, social, psychological demands of situations involving tragedy or mass casualty that are overwhelming (shock, pain, injury, destruction or devastation) or because of grotesque and incongruent elements.

When people are troubled by traumatic incidents that have personal relevance and they begin asking themselves questions like, “could this happen to me or to someone I care about?”

Traumatic events create a number of direct and indirect psychological effects. The sense of loss of territory or the loss of safety within a territory is troubling because it interferes with a basic sense of security. Attachment needs are activated with such a sense of loss along with fears of separation from loved ones or from things familiar. What once felt like a secure place now involves threat or horror. Events that create mass trauma often challenge our sense of meaning, justice, and order and shatter previously held assumptions about how the world should work (a senseless war, innocent victims of a horrible crime, for example.)

Transient stress following a traumatic event is normal and may even endure for years after the event. These reactions are not abnormal, pathological and they do not necessarily indicate the need for psychological help or counseling. In most cases, people eventually return to normalcy with adequate social support and by utilizing the community resources that are usually made available after traumatic events that affect an entire community. However, some people are more directly and seriously affected by traumatic events. There is a high prevalence of mental health problems among mass trauma survivors including acute stress disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, separation anxiety, incident-specific fears, phobias, and somatization (physical symptoms) traumatic grief and sleep disturbances.

The following five main principles have been known to be involved in helping people avert serious effects following a community trauma.

1. Promote a Sense of Safety

Community tragedies force people to respond to events that threaten their lives, loved ones or things they deeply value. Safety is a basic and important human need and threats of great magnitude cause children, parents and caretakers to mutually experience a disrupted sense of safety – the very safe environment that families try to create and maintain. Long-term, ongoing threats can result in a belief that the world is a dangerous place and this belief underlies the development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). People need to be safe from rumors, horror stories and protected from hearing too much bad or frightening news when they are already aroused and anxious by an event. The media can perpetuate psychological distress

by over-exposure to upsetting accounts of a tragic or traumatic event. It may be important to correct mis-information or faulty information so an affected person can develop a realistic appraisal of the actual threat to future safety. The sooner a person is helped to re-establish safety from a threat or reminders of a threat, the less likely they are to develop PTSD later.

2. Promote Calming

Heightened emotions and anxiety or numbing are normal, healthy responses that are necessary for vigilance in the face of a threat. These reactions insulate people from psychological overload in the early period after a traumatic event. Ongoing high level anxiety and fear responses that interfere with sleep, eating, decision-making, daily tasks indicate the need for professional help because unaddressed, they can lead to the development of anxiety or panic disorders or PTSD. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing increases anxiety, interferes with calming and hinders the regaining of equilibrium. Critical Stress debriefing does not prevent psychological disorders and is not recommended. What is helpful is to break problems or concerns down into small manageable parts to increase a sense of control and provide opportunities for small successes. Normalizing a person’s emotional reactions and paying attention to sleep management will help a person to recover more quickly. It is counterproductive to lie to protect someone from a horrible reality that they will eventually have to face. Be sensitive and considerate but tell the truth. Medications like benzodiazepines are generally not helpful to people trying to get back to normal after a traumatic event. Medications may actually increase the chances of developing PTSD.



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HAVE YOU HEARD?

Eve Altizer & Rebecca Hollister
Child and Family Division
Supervisors

Cornstalks and hay bales and pumpkins oh my! As the crisp fall air creeps upon us so does the spirit of autumn and the rejuvenation of spirits as we settle in and prepare our families for the beauty of the season. It seems timely to share with you the top **FIVE FALL FACTS** in our Child and Family Division.

1. There's a lot of excitement of expansion in our licensing program! We have been given the opportunity to add a half time Foster Care Coordinator to allow us to enhance our program. Susan Peck began her role of half ongoing CPS social worker and half Foster Care Coordinator on September 22 and we are excited to add Susan to our licensing team.
2. The celebration of another successful Backpack Coalition event and the beginnings of Christmas Clearing Council and gift events for children in foster care!
3. The Green Bay Packers kick off their season as our United Way Pledge drive moves into full swing. Our committed and generous staff pledge and raise money through events to support United Way funded agencies in our community.
4. We are in the process of developing a survey to send to all Resource Families. We will be seeking your feedback regarding the annual resource family recognition event and training needs.
5. The frosty air as we approach winter. With cooler temperatures comes a reminder from Wisconsin DCF Chapter 56.07 (6). (a) A foster home shall have a heating system that is capable of maintaining a comfortable temperature of not less than 68° F., or 20° C., in living areas. (b) No foster home may be maintained at any time at a temperature of less than 68° F., or 20° C., during waking hours or 58° F., or 14° C., during sleeping hours unless written approval has been obtained from the licensing agency.

There is simply so much about this season to celebrate. "Autumn... the year's last loveliest smile." William Cullen Bryant.

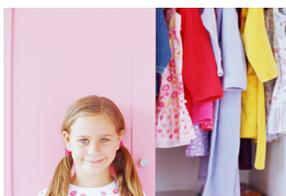
In Gratitude,

Eve and Rebecca

Clothing Closet Corner

We need the following items for the Clothing Closet:

- Gift Cards for Teens



Foster Family Holiday Party

- Wednesday, December 17, 2014
- * FREE Dinner Provided
 - * Kids Christmas Puppet Play
 - * Presents for all kids



Sign up at <http://www.coolkidsevent.com> or call [262-404-5092](tel:262-404-5092) to register your family

Making a Difference for Foster Children By Janis Mantel-Ramos

One of the most rewarding aspects of my position as foster care coordinator is to come in contact with residents of Waukesha County who want to make a difference in the life of a foster child. So many people make generous donations of much needed items or ask how they can help foster youth and children. It is particularly inspirational when it is a young person who recognizes the struggles of foster children and is driven to take action. Such is the case of Gunther, a young man who contacted me during the summer with his desire to provide backpacks for children. Not only was this a valued and generous gesture, but it was evident that he took a great deal of time during his summer break to work on this project. Each backpack was thoughtfully filled with age-specific materials for school along with some fun items. His desire to reach out to help a population of children who are in difficult family situations shows his compassion and desire to improve the lives of those in our society who are less fortunate.

We thank him for his service to the children and families of Waukesha County.

Here is Gunther's story:

I chose this cause as a service project for a variety of reasons. Mainly, we have a personal connection to the foster care system. We actually were a foster family and my parents and brothers opened our home to foster children. I remember several years ago when we were applying to be a foster family, and I was interviewed by a social worker. The social worker so kindly explained how foster families can really help children that are experiencing pretty severe family difficulties. The social worker explained the different situations that might place kids in the foster care system. I remember feeling I definitely wanted to help these kids that really need it. By living it, I learned first-hand how one family can make such a positive difference in the lives of less fortunate children. Although there are so many wonderful foster families out there, we know that still some foster kids—as well as kids that are heading in the direction of foster care—would really benefit from a fundraising drive such as "Gunther's Stuff a Backpack." Providing these stuffed backpacks might just lift their day and maybe even help them be better students and happier kids.

School can be so tough. Providing for kids in need not only helps kids and their families, but it also makes me feel happy and fulfilled. Looking back, there is no other way I could imagine spending time during my summer break.

Gunther T.
High School Junior



**Community Trauma
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3. Promote Self-Efficacy

Having a sense of control over positive outcomes is important for psychological health. Self-efficacy is the sense that an individual believes his or her actions will lead to positive outcomes, or the belief in one's ability to regulate troubling emotions or solve related problems. People need to believe that they have the skills that they need to overcome threats and solve their own problems. It is helpful to teach skills like emotional regulation and coping skills when faced by trauma reminders and problem-solving skills that relate to post-disaster issues. Knowing that others are available to provide emotional and other types of support mitigates a sense of vulnerability and empowers people to move forward with adaptive actions.

4. Promote Connectedness

There is considerable research that verifies that social support, social support groups and sustained attachments to loved ones are effective in combating the effects of stress and trauma. Social or group activities that include practical problem solving, emotional understanding and acceptance, sharing traumatic experiences, normalizing fear reactions and experiences, and instructions about coping, can lead to sense of connectedness and of community competency to overcome or effectively respond after traumatic event. However, people may be especially vulnerable when this social support deteriorates after a period of time when helpers need to get on with their own lives. People providing support must guard against providing damag-

ing, destructive messages such as minimizing problems or needs, unrealistic expectations for a quick recovery or other invalidating messages that are strongly correlated to long-term post-traumatic stress.

5. Instill Hope

People who remain optimistic after experiencing mass trauma are much more likely to have favorable long term outcomes because they can hold on to a reasonable degree of hope for their future. Hope is a positive, action-oriented expectation that a positive future goal or outcome is possible. This hopeful view is directly opposite of the shattered worldview typical of people struggling in the initial period after a community trauma. Helping a person to remain optimistic and to have reasonable hope for the future is linked to favorable outcomes. Dispute any negative thinking that undermines hope with messages like, "I have seen people overcome things like this and I know you can be successful too" will help a person regain hope which is an important predictor of positive adaptation after a traumatic event.

These five principles are core elements to overcoming traumatic events that may be used as a guide to help individuals and entire communities overcome the negative psychological effects of community trauma. Many professional therapists are trained in the use of effective clinical strategies and interventions for those who develop PTSD.

(Derived from Five Essential Elements of Immediate and Mid-Term Mass Trauma Intervention: Empirical Evidence by Stevan E. Hobfoll, et al, published in *Psychiatry* 70 (4) Winter 2007.)



Is your child in the right car seat?

Rear-facing Infant Seat
Ride rear-facing until reaching the maximum height or weight of the car seat.

Rear-facing Convertible Seat
Ride rear-facing until reaching the maximum height or weight of the car seat or at least until 2 years old.

Forward-facing Convertible and Combination Seats
Ride forward-facing until reaching the maximum height and weight of the car seat or at least until 4 years old AND weigh 40 pounds.

Highback Booster Seat
Ride in a booster until 4'9" tall or are at least 8 years old or weigh 80 pounds. Use a highback booster seat with lap and shoulder belt combination.

Backless Booster Seat
Ride in a booster until 4'9" tall or are at least 8 years old or weigh 80 pounds. Use a backless booster seat with lap and shoulder belt combination. The backless booster must be used with good head support behind the child.

Seatbelt
Children younger than age 13 always should ride in the back seat. Usually, kids taller than 4'9" can fit correctly in lap and shoulder belts. The lap belt should fit low and snug on the hips, not up on the tummy. The shoulder belt should fit snugly across the shoulder.



Have your car seat checked for free by a car seat technician. Find locations statewide at www.safekidswi.org.



Training and Events



Training Offered By Waukesha County

Parent Café

Parent Café's are an educational opportunity for parents to come together and deal with the stressors, worries and challenges of parenting in a supportive environment.

October 7, 2014, and December 2, 2014
5:30 to 8:00 PM

Center for Excellence, N4W22000 Bluemound Road, Waukesha

To register for childcare, RSVP or for questions call, 262-521-0317.

Waukesha County Foster Parent Orientation

Waukesha Department of Health and Human Services invites you to attend a foster parent orientation meeting. These meetings are open to anyone who is interested in learning about our foster care program. **If you are currently in the process of becoming a licensed foster parent, you are required to attend an orientation session prior to approval of your foster care license.**

We encourage you to complete the online foster parent pre-placement training prior to attending this information session. The training can be found online at <http://wcpwps.wisc.edu/foster-parent-training/>. Please save the certificates after you have completed each module. These are required to become licensed.

When:

October 6, 2014, November 3, 2014, and December 1, 2014

All orientation sessions occur from 6:00- 8:00 PM

Where: Human Services Center, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI 53188

To register for an orientation session, contact your foster care coordinator.

Trauma Informed Parenting

Many caregivers keep hearing about Trauma Informed Care or TIC and are left wondering what it exactly means. This training will do more than help caregivers understand what TIC means, it will also offer concrete suggestions for how Foster Parents can implement TIC in their work with the children and families they serve. The training introduces caregivers to TIC and engages caregivers in thoroughly understanding it and talking about steps they can take to improve the behaviors they see from the kids in their care.

When: Thursdays, Sept. 25, 2014 to October 30, 2014
5:30 to 8:00 PM

Where: Waukesha County Human Services Center, 514 Riverview Avenue, Waukesha

A Minimum of 6 people is required to have the training. Register online at <https://pdsonline.csod.com/client/pdsonline/default.aspx>

This series will provide 18 hours of foster care training hours.

Relative Caregivers Support/Education Group

Third Tuesday of each month.

October 21, 2014

6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Parents Place, 1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI 262-549-5575

Free childcare available. Please call Parents Place to reserve your spot.

Waukesha County Relative Resource Families Please RSVP to Janis (262-548-7267) or Libby (262-548-7277)

Training

Parents Place Programs

262-549-5575 www.ppacinc.org

- **Love and Logic®**
Mondays, Oct. 20 - Nov. 10 from 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- **Professional Educators to present: Personality Plus**
Wednesday, Oct. 8 from 6:00 - 7:00 PM
- **Special Therapies to present: Calming Activities**
Wednesday, Oct. 22 from 6:00 - 7:00 PM
- **Professional Educators to present: Five Love Languages**
Wednesday, Oct. 29 from 6:00 - 7:00 PM

Coalition for Children

www.coalitionforcyf.org

For other training opportunities, see the Coalition for Children, Youth & Families website:

www.coalitionforcyf.org. They offer interactive webinars that count toward the required face to face training hours.



What: NAMI Waukesha's 2014 **BASICS** Class
When: Start Date: Saturday morning, October 11, 2014
 End Date: Saturday morning, Nov.15, 2014
Where: NAMI Waukesha (downtown office)
 217 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite #300
 Waukesha, WI 53186
Time: 9:00 a.m. -- 11:30 a.m.
Instructors: Robyn Hardt-Schultz and Christi Bowden

This is a FREE 6 week course that is taught by trained family members who have lived with a loved one diagnosed with mental illness. The course offers education and support for family members and is specifically designed for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illness. The Basics program provides critical information and strategies related to caregiving and is taught by a team of trained teachers. It is designed to plant seeds of hope!

To register for this class, please contact Barb at (262) 409-2743 or e-mail at barb@namiwaukesha.org

Contact Numbers:

Waukesha County
 Health & Human Services
 262-548-7212

Eve Altizer, Supervisor
 262-548-7272

Rebecca Hollister, Supervisor
 262-548-7271

Kathy Mullooly, Supervisor
 262-896-6832

Janis Ramos, Foster Care Coord.
 262-548-7267

Susan Peck, Foster Care Coord.
 262-896-8574

Libby Sinclair, Relative Licensing
 262-548-7277

Social Workers:

Jennifer Adler..... 262-548-7265

Tracy Clark..... 262-548-7270

Megan Fishler 262-896-8570

Laura Jahnke..... 262-548-7359

Becca Kuester 262-896-6857

Jessica Larsen 262-548-7346

Melissa Lipovsek..... 262-548-7348

Amy Mantey..... 262-548-7341

Maria Maurer 262-548-7345

Jessica McDonald 262-548-7639

Chelsey Nisbet..... 262-896-6896

Stacy Pawlak 262-548-7262

Michael Reed..... 262-548-7347

Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349

Kim Sampson..... 262-548-7273

Linda Senger 262-548-7698

Kinship Workers:

Linda Finn..... 262-548-7254

Jessica Morris..... 262-548-7256

Children's Mental Health Outreach
 262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911

Family Emergency: 211

Foster Parent Mentor

Jen Mersfelder 262-542-2926

David Mersfelder 262-542-2926

If an Allegation of Abuse or Neglect has been made against you, please call:

FASPP
 Norma Schoenberg
 920-922-9627

August 2014 Placements

Level 2 Placements: 45 Children	Juvenile Corrections: 0 Children	Group Homes: 2 Children	Residential Care Facilities: 4 Children
Level 1 Placements: 46 Children	Level 2 Foster Homes: 99 Homes	Level 1 Foster Homes: 50 Homes	Total Children in OHC: 100 Children

