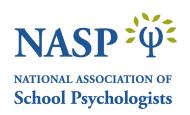
10/20/2019 Trauma



Trauma

Brief Facts and Tips

- 1. Trauma is a serious problem. Nearly 35 million children have experienced at least one event that could lead to childhood trauma (Child and Adolescent, 2012). About 72% of children and youth in the United States will have experienced at least one stressful event (e.g., witnessing or being a victim of violence; experiencing sexual, physical, or emotional abuse; suffering a serious injury or medical condition; death of a parent or sibling) before the age of 18 (Deryck, Silver, & Prause, 2014).
- 2. **Trauma can have a lasting impact.** Childhood trauma can increase the risk for psychological, behavioral or emotional problems (depression or PTSD), substance abuse, low occupational attainment or academic failure, social maladjustment and poor medical health.
- 3. There are several types of trauma including:
 - · Community, domestic, and school violence
 - · Physical and sexual abuse
 - Neglect
 - · Complex trauma (multiple traumatic events and severe impact)
 - Early childhood trauma (any traumatic event experienced by children aged 0-6)
 - Medical trauma
 - Natural disasters
 - · Terrorism, refugee and war zone trauma
 - Traumatic loss
- 4. If a child perceives the event as threatening, there is an increased likelihood that the child will be traumatized. These threat perceptions are influenced by (1) the nature of the crisis event itself, (2) crisis exposure, (3) relationships with crisis victims, (4) adult reactions to the trauma, and (5) a variety of individual/personal vulnerability factors.
- 5. **Trauma Risk Factors.** Certain characteristics are associated with an increased likelihood of experiencing a traumatic event, such as:
 - · Proximity to a traumatic event
 - Past exposure to trauma
 - Current or past mental health problems or the presence of a disability
 - Parental substance abuse or mental illness

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Limited social support or isolation

- · Family stress
- · Loss or fear the loss of a loved one
- · Community characteristics
- · Developmental level
- Poverty level
- 6. **Common Reactions to Trauma:** Shock or disbelief, fear, sadness, guilt/shame, grief, confusion, pessimism, or anger. *In most cases these reactions are temporary and lessen over time.*
- 7. **Warning Signs.** If any of the following symptoms do not decrease over time, if they severely impact the child's ability to participate in normal activities, or if significant changes are noted, a referral to a mental health professional may be necessary.
 - Disruption or withdrawal from peer relationships
 - · General lack of energy or lack of interest in previously enjoyed activities.
 - Strained family relationships (increased misbehavior, lashing out against family members, refusal to participate in normal family routines).
 - · Decline in school performance, school avoidance, or difficulty concentrating
 - · Physical complaints with no apparent cause
 - Maladaptive coping (drug or alcohol use, severe aggression)
 - Repeated nightmares and reporting strong fears of death, violence, etc.
 - · Repetitive play re-enacting the traumatic events
 - Low self esteem, negative talk about self (if this was not apparent prior to the trauma)
 - Sleeping (difficulty falling or staying asleep) and eating disturbances
 - · Increased arousal (easily startling or quick to anger), agitation, irritability, aggressiveness
 - Regression in behavior (thumb sucking, bedwetting, clinginess, fear of the dark)
- 8. Schools have an important role in decreasing the impact of a traumatic event on a child. Children spend the majority of their day in school where caring adults are available to help them. Educators can help children by providing the structure of a usual routine, providing a safe place to share concerns, being sensitive to cues in the environment that may trigger a traumatic response, and providing additional supports.
- There is help available. There are crisis hotlines for a wide range of traumatic events, such as child
 abuse and domestic violence. In addition, there are a number of interventions specifically designed to
 address trauma related symptoms.
 - Child Sexual Abuse: 1-888-PREVENT (1-888-773-8368)
 - Crime Victims: 1-800-FYI-CALL (1-800-394-2255)
 - Domestic Violence: 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)
 - Runaway and Homeless Youth: 1-800-RUNAWAY (1-800-786-2929)
 - Suicide Prevention: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

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References:

Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. (2011/12). *National survey of children's health*. [Data Query]. Retrieved from www.childhealthdata.org/ browse/survey?q=2257&r=1

Deryck, F., Silver, R. C., & Prause, J. (2014). *Examining adversity in the lives of adolescents: An analysis of a nationally representative sample*. Unpublished research memorandum.

Suggested Resources:

- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- Helpguide.org
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study
- National Center for PTSD

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