The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma on Black Fathers.

• Presenter:
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Background of Presenter

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Licensed Professional Counselor
- Certified Alcohol Drug Counselor
- Master Addiction Therapist
- National Certified Counselor
- Approved Supervisor, State of Missouri for LCSW’S, LPC’s, Alcohol/Drug Counselors’ Licensure and Certifications
- Mental Health Consultant for Mental Health Network, Military Division
- Mental Health Consultant for City of St. Louis, Homelessness Division
- Contractual Mental Health Provider for St. Louis City & County Family Court
- Mental Health Provider for Division of Children Services
- Clinical Director for Fathers’ Support Center, St. Louis, Missouri
Introduction

- Black males who are exposed to adverse childhood experiences before age eighteen may be at a higher risk for depressive disorders as adults. Black males who are exposed to trauma and childhood adversities that occur before the age of eighteen have shown to have severe negative impact in their lives as children as well as poor outcomes in their adult lives (Salinas-Miranda et al., 2015). The victim may be at increased risk of experiencing homelessness, drug misuse, suicide, and mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety at a higher rate than the regular population (Al-Shawi & Lafta, 2015).
Objectives of this Workshop

• Participants will be able to identify the ten indicators of adverse childhood experiences.

• Participants will learn the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma on Black fathers.

• Participants will learn evidenced based screening tools for identifying adverse childhood experiences, trauma, depression, and anxiety.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this workshop is to examine the relationship between the ten indicators of adverse childhood experiences, trauma and their impact on Black males.
Fathers’ Support Center

• Fathers’ Support Center provides comprehensive programs and services to help clients become better parents in order to improve their children’s futures. Prepare parents to become financially and emotionally involved in their children’s lives.

• Help parents attain the skills necessary to gain and maintain steady employment.

• Help parents develop the skills and behaviors that foster the well-being of their children.

• Build a foundation from which their children can develop into responsible and productive adults in their community.

• Fathers’ Support Center has consistently achieved these goals for nearly two decades, and thus has made a remarkably positive impact on the lives of nearly 16,000 fathers and made a difference for 40,000 children.
Services offered by FSC

• Parenting
• Legal Services
• Employment, Job Development and Job Readiness
• Case Management
• Drug Prevention and Drug Support Groups
• Financial Literacy
• Nutrition classes
• High set (GED)
• Computer Classes
• Aftercare Support Services
• The above additional services work in conjunction with the mental health counseling to stabilize the client in the 8 dimensions of wellness.
Types of Behaviors and Area of Concerns when the Client Enters the Fathers’ Support Program

- Depressed and feeling hopeless
- High levels of anxiety, stress, and other mental health concerns.
- High incidence of adverse childhood experiences & trauma
- Poor relationships combined with high levels of failed relationships
- Self-medicating behavior such as using drugs and alcohol.
- Low self esteem, poor self-concept, and poor coping skills
- Lack of family support
- Unemployed
- Legal concerns or history of incarceration
- Poor or lack of relationships with their children
Trauma

• Trauma is a traumatic event that the person may experience as distressing or frightening such as an accident, rape or natural disaster. Symptoms may include shock, denial, depression, post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, stress, unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships and physical symptoms like headaches or nausea. While these feelings are normal, some people have difficulty moving on with their lives (APA, 2015).
The Impact and Effects of Trauma

• Approximately 50 percent of the population will experience a traumatic event at some point in their lives.

• Trauma can alter brain functioning in many ways, but three of the most important changes appear to occur in the following areas:

  1. The prefrontal cortex (PFC), known as the “Thinking Center”
  2. The anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), known as the “Emotion Regulation Center”
  3. The amygdala, known as the “Fear Center”
What’s Going on in a Traumatized Brain

- Traumatized brains look different from non-traumatized brains in three predictable ways:
  1. The Thinking Center is underactivated,
  2. The Emotion Regulation Center is underactivated
  3. The Fear Center is overactivated.

Survivors of trauma will sometimes complain that they feel incapable of managing their emotions. If you are traumatized, you may experience chronic stress, vigilance, fear, and irritation. You may also have a hard time feeling safe, calming down, or sleeping. These symptoms are all the result of a hyperactive amygdala.
Impact Continued

• At the same time, individuals who are traumatized may notice difficulties with concentration and attention, and often report they can’t think clearly. This, not surprisingly, is due to the thinking center being underactivated.

• Finally, survivors of trauma will sometimes complain that they feel incapable of managing their emotions. For example, if someone scare them, they may experience a rapid heart rate long after the event is up, or may have a hard time “just letting go” of minor annoyances. Even when they want to calm down and feel better, they just can’t. This is in large part due to a weakened emotion regulation center.
Dr. David J. Pate Jr, a leading expert on low-income African-American men, fatherhood, and child support. Dr. Pate researched how black men were affected by the social welfare system, challenges that impeded their ability to be gainfully employed, engage with their children, and sustain a good quality of life. Dr. Pate conducted a 3-year Federal Research Study at FSC which concluded in 2016. Pate examined the impact of childhood adversity on employment. Pate et al. (2016) concluded that childhood adversity along with its developmental and health-related correlates may contribute significant variance to the problem of Black male joblessness. Exposure to serious and cumulative childhood adversities such as poverty and violence results in poor developmental trajectories, negative health outcomes, and ultimately low status attainments such as un- or under-employment. If adversity and stress overwhelm the individual as a child, impairments such as poor physical and mental health, homelessness, drug usage, and employment-related problems as adults may occur.
Deadbeat Dads or Fatherhood in Poverty: What Research Tells Us about Families Daily Lives (David Pate’s Research)

- Were not defined as the Breadwinner (or Financial Provider)
- Lack of Accessible Housing • Food insecurity
- Employment insecurity
- Educational barriers
- Unmet Mental Health needs
- Previous convictions of civil and criminal offenses
Adverse Childhood Experiences

Background

• Adverse childhood experiences were initially identified in the groundbreaking research conducted at Kaiser Permanente from 1995 to 1997 by Felitti et al., (1998). Data were collected from 17,000 patients from 1995 to 1997. Felitti found that most patients who were experiencing health concerns and related problems had also experienced a minimum of one of the ten indicators of adverse childhood experiences.

• Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect. The long-term effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) occurring during childhood or adolescence; may lead to a wide range of physical and psychological health issues throughout a person’s lifespan. The Consequences may be mild or severe which may affect the individual physically, psychologically, behaviorally, or in some combination all three areas may be impacted.
Adverse Childhood Experiences Research
Background

• Adverse childhood experiences may have an enduring impact in the lives of adults. The impact may be in the form of risky health behaviors, inappropriate alcohol and drug usage, homelessness, post traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, and other emotional and psychological concerns (Jenna & Vinay, 2017).

• Crouch, Strompolis, Bennett, Morse, and Radcliff (2017) found individuals who were exposed to adverse childhood experiences at an elevated rate to have a greater risk for poor health as adults. For example, experiencing abuse or witnessing domestic violence in childhood may have negative effects on the health of those individuals as adults.
Theoretical foundations

• The theoretical foundation of adverse childhood experience and trauma may be explained based on Alfred Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). Social Cognitive Theory is used to explain the behaviors of humans. Social Cognitive Theory states the behavior of humans is impacted by their environment and personal experiences.

• The individual is impacted biologically, affectively, and in the areas of cognition (Bandura, 1986). Individuals do not operate in a vacuum and their behavior is reciprocal and based on their interaction with their environment. The environmental factors will affect the individual’s behavior and their manner of thinking (Bandura, 1986).
The Ten Indicators of Adverse Childhood Experiences

Felitti (2002) identified the ten indicators in groundbreaking Kaiser Research Study as:

1. Physical neglect
2. Emotional neglect
3. Physical abuse
4. Emotional abuse
5. Sexual Assault
6. Substance misuse in the home
7. Mental illness in the home
8. Parental separation or divorce
9. Parent treated violently
10. Member in the household that is incarcerated
Adverse Childhood Experiences

**ABUSE**
- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual

**NEGLECT**
- Physical
- Emotional
- Mother treated violently

**HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**
- Mental Illness
- Incarcerated Relative
- Substance Abuse
- Divorce
Impact of Adverse childhood experiences and Trauma on the Fathers’

• Feeling hopeless, lack of family support, and poor relationships.
• Poor physical health
• Drug usage; self medicating to ease the pain.
• Poor interpersonal communication skills
• Lack of employment
• Unstable life styles.
• Risky sexual behaviors
• Low self-esteem, poor self-concept and lack of self confidence.
Is there a difference in depression for Black males based on experiencing the ten indicators of adverse childhood experiences.

Results of Research (Mean Scores)

Emotional Abuse (91.95) (64.26)
Physical Abuse   (93.18) (66.97)
Sexual Abuse     (88.52) (73.63)
Emotional Neglect (93.94) (66.85)
Physical Neglect (102.18) (70.04)
Mother Treated Violently (83.24) (60.46)
Household member Substance Misuse   (94.50) (69.56)
Household Member Mentally Ill     (91.62) (62.50)
Parental Separation   (97.55) (69.00)
Household Member Incarcerated (92.12) (66.77)
Assessment and Screening Tools

• PHQ-9-Patient Health Questionnaire (depression)
• GAD-7-Generalize Anxiety Disorder Scale (Anxiety)
• Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory (stress)
• ACE-10-Adverse Childhood Questionnaire (childhood adversity)
• BTQ-10-Brief Trauma Questionnaire (trauma)
• DAST-10 Drug Misuse Screening Tool (drugs usage)
• Drug Testing
• Audit Screening Tool (alcohol usage)
• MMSE-Mini Mental Status Examination
Eight Dimensions of Wellness

Join us in building healthy communities of wellness. Through its Wellness initiative, SAMHSA pledges to promote wellness for people with mental health and substance use disorders by motivating individuals, organizations, and communities to take action and work toward improved quality of life, cardiovascular health, and decreased early mortality rates. Wellness connects all aspects of health.

Source: Adapted from Swarbrick, M. (2009).
Therapeutic Intervention Approaches

• **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy;** the goal is to reframe the client’s faulty thinking and to let go of the past and focus on the present.

• **Reality Therapy;** Assist the clients to regain control of their lives and environment and to take the steps to initiate change and growth.

• **Daily Groups (What’s Up);** the client talk about their progress on a daily basis with the focus on learning and practicing productive choices. The therapeutic goal of the group is to build a bond with group members and a support system. The FSC client learn how to choose effective behaviors to verbalize their Interpersonal needs and to be empowered with interpersonal social skills to build healthy relationships. The focus is to assist the clients to concentrate on the things they can control in their relationships and realize what they cannot control.

• **What’s it been like for you as a father;** the FSC client in the 3rd week of the program tells his life story to the class and what’s it been like for him as a father. This exercise usually assist the clients to become unstuck emotionally and psychologically and to move their lives forward in a positive manner.
Questions and Discussions
References


