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Helping Children Through Evidence-based Trauma Treatments, Initial Findings from the Massachusetts Child Trauma Project (MCTP)


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Et al.

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Title: Helping children through evidence-based trauma treatments, initial findings from the Massachusetts Child Trauma Project (MCTP)

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◦Background

The Massachusetts Child Trauma Project (MCTP) is a statewide collaboration to implement improvements to the Massachusetts child welfare system in order to increase access to trauma services for children within the system.

◦Purpose

This analysis compares PTSD symptoms and other behavioral and functional impairments at baseline and at 6-month follow-up/discharge among children enrolled in MCTP.

◦Methods

The 166 clinicians trained in MCTP were required to enroll 2-3 children in the care of DCF into the evaluation process. Descriptive statistics were performed on the 300 children enrolled at baseline, as of Fall 2013. Paired t-tests were performed on the 73 children who had follow-up data to assess longitudinal differences in symptoms, behaviors, impairments, and functioning.

◦Results

The baseline results indicate that children enrolled in MCTP present with clinical levels of symptoms of PTSD and behavioral/functional impairment. There were statistically significant decreases in PTSD severity ($p=0.005$), according to the UCLA PTSD Index Child/Adolescent Version. Additionally, internalizing behaviors, such as anxiety and/or depression, decreased ($p=0.05$), as assessed by the Child Behavior Checklist. However, the UCLA PTSD Index Parent Version and the externalizing measure of the Child Behavior Checklist showed symptom reduction, but were not statistically significant. Clinician reported progress, ascertained by the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS), showed mixed findings.

◦**Conclusion**

While there was no comparison group, these results suggest that the trauma treatments provided by MCTP trained mental health providers is reducing symptomatology and improving functioning among children in DCF care who experienced trauma. Baseline findings indicate that most children present with symptoms in the clinical range of PTSD and other trauma-related impairments, while longitudinal results show that these children are experiencing symptom reduction, and improved functioning, suggesting that the trainings that MCTP has provided have been effective.