

## Acknowledgments

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# About the Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit

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## What is the Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit?

This Toolkit consists of a *Trainer's Guide* and *Comprehensive Guide*. Together, they are designed to teach basic **knowledge, skills, and values** about working with children in the child welfare system who have experienced traumatic stress. It also teaches how to use this knowledge to support children's safety, permanency, and well-being through case analysis and corresponding interventions tailored for them and their biological and resource families.

## Who is the target audience?

The Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit is for use by child welfare workers nationwide. The *Comprehensive Guide* was developed by the Child Welfare Committee in the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. It was intended as a resource to help child welfare workers learn more about the impact of child traumatic stress among children in the child welfare system. CalSWEC adapted the *Comprehensive Guide* to produce the *Trainer's Guide*, which functions as a train-the-trainer manual. Though originally developed to be used by the counties participating in the California Trauma-Informed Child Welfare (TICW) Training Project, the current iteration of the *Trainer's Guide* is intended for the broader audience of child welfare workers. The training content, case vignettes, and activities were designed to be used flexibly with a range of child welfare workers, including administrators, clinicians, case managers, and other frontline staff.

## Pilot History

The Southwest Michigan Children's Trauma Assessment Center, a site of the NCTSN, originally piloted the Toolkit in late 2006. That training was delivered by NCTSN staff directly to frontline workers and supervisors. NCTSN sites in Delaware (i.e., Delaware Child Traumatic Stress Center) and Wisconsin, (i.e., Adolescent Trauma Treatment Project, Mental Health Center of Dane County, Inc.) have also used the Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit to train child welfare workers in their states.

Feedback from the first round of pilots was incorporated into the next generation of the Toolkit to create the *Trainer's Guide*, which was piloted in three counties in California (i.e., San Francisco, Riverside, San Luis Obispo).

In late 2007, the TICW Training Project commenced in California using a train-the-trainer model to better assess the suitability of the material for widespread distribution to child welfare systems across the nation. The California project is unique in that it is part of a broader *Trauma-Focused Child Welfare & Children's Mental Health Services Project*, which adds a concurrent implementation project involving Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). TF-CBT is the highest rated evidence-based trauma treatment model available for children with posttraumatic symptoms related to abuse and related trauma. TF-CBT has been rated as Effective (Scientific Rating 1) by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (<http://www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org/program/17>).

### **Who should facilitate this training?**

Facilitators of this training should be familiar with the field of child welfare, but not necessarily with the specific area of child traumatic stress.

### **What is the philosophy guiding the training content and activities?**

The learning activities in the Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit are designed to take advantage of well-known premises of adult learning:

- People learn best when new material links to what is already known.
- People are more likely to learn what you want them to learn if you present clear goals and expectations.
- Effective learning of skills requires modeling and practice.
- Useful and lasting acquisition of knowledge requires application of the knowledge.
- Attitudes are best learned by example and best changed by situations that challenge them.

Thus, for child welfare workers, knowledge of traumatic stress responses in children should build on what they already know about children, and be applied to what they know about the situations commonly encountered by their profession.

The trainer helps child welfare workers apply knowledge they gain from reading the *Comprehensive Guide* and experiencing the learning activities contained in the *Trainer's Guide*. Through small group exercises, analysis of vignettes, role plays, and discussion of actual cases, participants gain knowledge and practice skills required to analyze a case and develop a case plan. Training activities also encourage exploration of assumptions and attitudes that child welfare workers may bring to these cases that may help or hinder their

ability to do the work needed. The small group setting for many of these activities allows child welfare workers to immediately apply ideas, practice problem-solving skills, and learn from one another.

## **Components of the Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit**

The Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit consists of the *Trainer's Guide*, *Comprehensive Guide*, PowerPoint slides, audio clips, video clips, and supplemental handouts. The Toolkit, in its entirety, is included on the Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit Companion CD.

The first 10 tabs of the Toolkit designate sections in the *Trainer's Guide*. The *Comprehensive Guide* begins at the 11th and final tab. Each section is described briefly below.

### **Trainer's Guide: Introduction**

The *Trainer's Guide* is divided into seven modules and is supported by the *Comprehensive Guide*. The seven modules vary in length and together total approximately 12 training hours. The curriculum can be presented in two full days, 7.5 hours each day (including a one-hour lunch break and two 15-minute breaks); in stand-alone modules; or as a multi-session in-service. The sample Lesson Plan outlines a two-day training and suggests places for the trainer to stop for breaks and lunch.

The *Trainer's Guide* contains guidance and tips for presenting the content and conducting training activities. Training Activities are labeled to match the titles, numbering, and lettering in the suggested Lesson Plan and are indicated by separate headings in the *Trainer's Guide*. Each Training Activity is identified by a module number, and its order within the module is designated by an alphabetic sequence, e.g., *Training Activity 3C*. Under each Training Activity heading are detailed descriptions of the activity as well as tips for preparing, presenting, and processing the activity. The training activity description indicates the Supplemental Handouts that accompany the activity, and the time and materials required.

This Introduction section includes the Materials Checklist, Goals and Objectives, and sample Agenda and Lesson Plan. For an overview of the training, it is recommended that trainers first review the sample Agenda and Lesson Plan. After this overview, trainers can proceed to review the training content, tips, and activities in each module in order to familiarize themselves with the topics and the suggested training activities. It is important to note that the Agenda, Lesson Plan, and Activities are provided as tools for the trainer. They are designed to be used flexibly, keeping in mind the particular needs of the training participants. Many of the Activities have been included as "optional," depending on the type of training and time available. The training is designed to be completed in two days. However, if all the optional activities are included, the training may take one additional day.

## **Materials Checklist**

In order to facilitate the training preparation process, the Materials Checklist provides a complete listing of all the materials needed for the *entire* training. Multi-media materials include such items as video and audio clips, posters, and other audiovisual aids. Materials are also indicated below the main headings of individual Training Activities, as applicable.

## **Goals and Learning Objectives**

The Goals and Learning Objectives serve as the basis for the content that is provided to both the trainer and participants. The Learning Objectives are subdivided into three categories: knowledge, skills, and values. They are numbered in a series beginning with K1 for knowledge, S1 for skills, and V1 for values. The Learning Objectives are also indicated in the suggested Lesson Plan for each module of the curriculum.

*Knowledge Learning Objectives* entail the acquisition of new information and often require the ability to recognize or recall that information. *Skill Learning Objectives* involve the application of knowledge and frequently require the demonstration of such application. *Values Learning Objectives* concern attitudes, ethics, and desired goals and outcomes for practice. Generally, *Values Learning Objectives* do not easily lend themselves to measurement, although values acquisition may sometimes be inferred through other responses elicited during the training process.

## **Sample Agenda**

The sample Agenda in this guide provides a simple, sequential outline indicating the order of events for a two-day training, including the coverage of broad topic areas, training activities, evaluation activities, lunch, and break times.

## **Sample Lesson Plan**

The sample Lesson Plan maps the structure and flow of the training, and is offered as an aid for organizing the training. It presents each topic in the order recommended and indicates the duration of training time for each topic.

The Lesson Plan contains three column headings: Topic/Time; Learning Objectives; and Methodology. The Topic/Time column is divided into training modules. The Learning Objectives column reflects only the *primary* objectives that are covered in each module. Additional objectives may be covered or repeated. The Methodology column indicates training activities that may accompany each module. As applicable, each activity is numbered sequentially within a module, with activities for Module 1 beginning with Activity 1A; Module 2 beginning with Activity 2A; and so forth. The numbering schema of Day, Module, and Activity is mirrored in the labeling of materials in the Training Content and Tips.

### **Module 1: Creating Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice: Introduction to the Essential Elements**

The module begins by making connections between trauma-informed practice and the Department of Health and Human Services' Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) goals of safety, permanency, and well-being. It utilizes a small group discussion and large group report-back activity. Next, participants are given an overview of the Essential Elements of trauma-informed child welfare practice in the form of a lecture. This presentation is followed by an opportunity for participants to review the *Comprehensive Guide* and identify ways in which the Essential Elements may translate into practice.

The CFSR goals and presentation of the Essential Elements provide the framework for the development of trauma-informed child welfare practice. The review of the *Comprehensive Guide* reinforces the Essential Elements, affirms what participants are already doing, and exposes them to new ideas that are already being implemented by others in the field. The trainer points out that trauma-informed child welfare practice does not require more time from child welfare workers, but rather, a reframing, or redirection, of their time.

### **Module 2: What is Child Traumatic Stress?**

A foundational lecture, supported by PowerPoint slides, is the primary medium for this module, augmented by an audio clip and a vignette discussion. The slides introduce and define child traumatic stress, complex trauma, trauma and the brain, resiliency factors, and what child welfare workers can do to mitigate the impact of trauma. Developmental and cultural influences on trauma responses are also discussed.

### **Module 3: The Impact of Trauma on Children's Behavior, Development, and Relationships**

Module 3 emphasizes the first three Essential Elements: maximize the child's sense of safety; assist children in reducing overwhelming emotion; and help children make new meaning of their trauma history and current experiences. Significant time is spent exploring how trauma affects developmental trajectories and the role that symptoms and behaviors play in a child's attempts to cope and self-regulate. Participants distinguish between physical and psychological safety, and the child welfare worker's role in aiming to secure both. The module utilizes lecture and PowerPoint slides, small and large group discussions, a simulation activity, and case vignette analysis. Workers are also given an opportunity to apply lessons learned to actual cases that they provide.

### **Module 4: Assessment of a Child's Trauma Experiences**

This module covers the next three Essential Elements: address the impact of trauma and subsequent changes in the child's behavior, development, and relationships; coordinate services with other agencies; and utilize comprehensive assessment of the child's trauma

experience and its impact on the child's development and behavior to guide services. Significant time is spent discussing trauma-informed care, including the importance of trauma assessment and trauma-focused, evidence-based treatment. The *Child Welfare Trauma Referral Tool* is introduced with the goal of providing a way for child welfare workers to organize information and make informed decisions about the type and appropriateness of mental health referrals. Participants' understanding and skill in using the tool are measured using structured vignettes.

### **Module 5: Providing Support to the Child, Family, and Caregivers**

The module begins with a brief lecture about Essential Elements 7 and 8: support and promote positive and stable relationships in the life of the child; and provide support and guidance to the child's family and caregivers. Suggested video clips (see links in Resources list) and a handout expose participants to the importance of stable relationships in children's lives, and furnish child welfare workers with tools for supporting caregivers. Participants then apply these Essential Elements to a case vignette.

### **Module 6: Managing Professional and Personal Stress**

This module contains a brief lecture about secondary traumatic stress (STS), followed by a case illustration. The vignette discussion addresses worker susceptibility to STS, its warning signs, and strategies for managing stress. The module concludes with participants completing a Self-Care Inventory, Work/Life Balance handout, and/or an opportunity to practice a relaxation/stress reduction exercise.

### **Module 7: Summary**

This module provides a menu of concluding activities that can be used by the trainer, as time permits.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A, *Optional Follow-Up 1–3 Months After The Training*, outlines a plan for following up with participants one to three months after completion of the training. Appendix B, *Additional Case Vignettes*, provides three extra vignettes that may be used as supplemental material or as substitutes for the vignettes that are suggested throughout the training. Appendix C, *References and Bibliography*, lists the sources that were accessed and reviewed by the curriculum designer(s) to prepare and to write the main, supplemental, and background content information; training tips; training activities; and any other information conveyed in the training materials. This section also includes web sites and other helpful resources. Appendix D provides a brief description of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) and California Partners.

### **Supplemental Handouts**

Supplemental Handouts refer to additional resources that may be used with participants. For example, they include PowerPoint printouts that accompany presentations or worksheets for training activities. Before conducting the training, some trainers may prefer to insert the Supplemental Handout pages into the corresponding Modules of the *Trainer's Guide*.

### **Comprehensive Guide**

The *Comprehensive Guide* provides background reading material that is consistent with the *Trainer's Guide*. It is intended as a resource to help child welfare workers learn more about the impact of child traumatic stress among children in the child welfare system. The *Comprehensive Guide* defines child traumatic stress; provides information about the incidence and impact of trauma on children in the child welfare system; describes the Essential Elements of trauma-informed child welfare practice, and explains the importance of trauma assessment and how to identify trauma-informed providers.

### **Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit Companion CD-ROM**

The Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit includes a CD-ROM with the entire *Trainer's Guide*, *Comprehensive Guide*, Supplemental Handouts, and PowerPoint slides. Additionally, it includes an audio file of the Lisa 9-1-1 audio clip used in Activity 2A.

### **Evaluation Activities**

This training includes an evaluation that is embedded throughout the Trainer's Guide (i.e., in the Summary of Essential Elements sections of Modules 3–7). It is intended to assist trainers and/or county staff development personnel in supporting further integration of knowledge into practice by asking participants to select specific strategies that they plan to use to implement each Essential Element.

Trainers should review the instructions in Activities 3E, 4H, 5E, 6E, 7B, and Appendix A in their entirety before attempting to facilitate these activities. Please note that Appendix A is an optional activity that outlines a plan for following up with participants one to three months after the training. A decision about whether or not the Follow-Up Activity will be conducted should be made prior to the training, as it will impact Activity 7B. Thirty-minute segments have been allotted for activities 3E and 7B and fifteen-minute segments have been allotted for activities 4H, 5E, and 6E. These enable trainers to emphasize the learning of strategies that can be implemented in support of each of the Essential Elements. Activity 7B allows participants time to review all the strategies for each of the Essential Elements, and to select three strategies that they would like to commit to implement daily in their child welfare practice.

Instructions and handouts are also included for county staff development personnel or child welfare administrators who may want to arrange for follow-up interviews with participants to assess the extent to which they were able to implement the strategies that they selected (i.e., Appendix A).

## How should trainers prepare for the training?

Prior to implementing the curriculum, trainers should:

- Review the sample Agenda and Lesson Plan.
- Read the *Comprehensive Guide* to become familiar with the majority of training content.
- Review the *Trainer's Guide* to understand the philosophy and organization of learning activities.
- Familiarize themselves with the evaluation activities in the Summary of Essential Elements sections in Modules 3–7 (i.e., Activities 3E, 4H, 5E, 6E, and 7B) and in Appendix A.
- Prepare needed materials.
- Preview audio and video clips to be used in the training.
- Read some of the resources in the bibliography (books, publications, and web sites) to update your knowledge of child traumatic stress.