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R M D L N M N S B T G A H G T

Emotional Fight Flight Freeze Memory Nurse Overwhelmed Practitioner Resiliency Response Secondary Stress Trauma Trigger Unpredictable

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New Oakland
NEWS
September 2018, Issue 31



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Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma

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Seeking Treatment

If a child's symptoms last more than a few weeks, or if they are getting worse, it is time to ask for help.

Once your child has been assessed and it has been determined that treatment is needed, a number of effective trauma treatments have been developed. Timely, effective mental and behavioral health interventions may help in the following ways:

- Increase your child's feelings of safety
- Teach your child how to manage emotions, particularly when faced with trauma triggers
- Help your child develop a positive view of him- or herself
- Give your child a greater sense of control over his/her own life
- Improve your child's relationships— with family members and others

It is important to look for a provider who understands and has specific training in trauma. Most providers will agree to a brief interview in their office or over the phone, to determine whether they are a good fit for your needs.

Helping Yourself and Your Family

Parenting a child or youth who has experienced trauma can be difficult. Families can sometimes feel isolated, as if no one else understands what they are going through. This can put a strain not only on your relationship with your child, but with other family members, as well (including your spouse or partner).

Learning about what your child experienced may even act as a trigger for you, if you have your own trauma history that is not fully healed. Being affected by someone else's trauma is sometimes called "secondary trauma."

The best cure for secondary trauma is prevention. To take good care of your child, you must take good care of yourself. Here are some things you can do:

- **Be honest about your expectations for your child and your relationship.** Having realistic expectations about parenting a child with a history of trauma increases the chances for a healthy relationship.
- **Celebrate small victories.** Take note of the improvements your child has made.

- **Don't take your child's difficulties personally.** Your child's struggles are a result of the trauma he or she experienced; they are not a sign of your failure as a parent.
- **Take care of yourself.** Make time for things you enjoy doing that support your physical, emotional, and spiritual health.
- **Focus on your own healing.** If you have experienced trauma, it is important for you to seek your own healing, separate from your child.
- **Seek support.** Your circle of support may include friends, family, and professional support. Don't be afraid to ask about resources available from the child welfare system, such as a caseworker or support groups. In order to take good care of your child, you must take good care of yourself.

Conclusion

Trauma can affect children's behavior in ways that may be confusing or distressing for caregivers. It can impact the long-term health and well-being of the child and his or her family members. However, with understanding, care, and proper treatment (when necessary), all members of the family can heal and thrive after a traumatic event.

Thinking About Trauma in the Lives of Our Kids . . . and Ourselves



By Kimberly Smith, LMSW
Senior Clinical Director
Macomb County

24-Hour Crisis Hotline
877-800-1650

This edition of New Oakland News is devoted to the important issue of trauma . . . as it appears in the lives of the people we encounter every day.

But "trauma" is one of those words we hear a lot these days, without always knowing exactly what it means.

As we discuss in this newsletter, fundamentally, trauma are the things that happen to us in our lives that trigger the "fight or flight or freeze" response in our minds and bodies.

Sometimes the long-term effects are minimal. It can even be good for us to experience a little "stage fright" in public speaking, for example. It helps us overcome fear when we learn how to manage it.

But the "fight or flight or freeze" response becomes dangerous and toxic when the effects are much more damaging — when individuals are abused or in danger or vulnerable for long periods of time without knowing the reasons why and without knowing when or how it will end.

These kinds of experiences can result in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health diagnoses, including depression, anxiety, ADHD and other conditions.

The good news is that the effects of trauma can be managed when they are identified and understood.

We hope you find our overview of trauma in this issue of New Oakland News informative and helpful. And, if you're a mental health professional, we hope you can join us on October 12 in Troy for our continuing education event on trauma — the next in our series of continuing education events.



To learn more about New Oakland's state of Michigan-licensed FACE to FACE Partial Hospital Program, visit us online at www.NewOakland.org

Meet Michael Hudson, NP-C, MSN, CCRN-CSC, CMC: Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner



New Oakland's Mike Hudson has a long career of leadership and achievement as a psychiatric nurse practitioner.

Before joining New Oakland last year, Mike's recent staff assignments as a psychiatric NP have included Henry Ford Macomb Hospital, Pathways 2 Christian Counseling and Crossing Paths Christian Counseling.

Mike received his Master of Science in Nursing with a focus on adult and gerontological practice from Walden University in Minneapolis.

"It is an exciting time to be a part of the New Oakland

team," Mike says. "The important role of psychiatric nurse practitioners is helping our organization serve more people than ever before . . . and make a tremendous positive difference in the communities we serve."

While Mike serves the entire New Oakland system, he can most often be found at our Clinton Township location.

"The best part of my job is being able to help people find the kind of care that is right for them," Mike says. "Any day

I can help make a difference in the lives of our clients and families, that's a good day for me."

Mike is a member of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, Michigan Council of Nurse Practitioners, American Association of Nurse Practitioners and the American Psychiatric Nurse Association. He is also a veteran of the United States Air Force, where he served from 1985 – 1997.

New Oakland to Host Continuing Education Event on Trauma Oct. 12 in Troy

On Friday, October 12, New Oakland Family Centers will host the next in our successful series of continuing education events mental health professionals.

Trauma Assessment in Children/Adolescents: A Clinical Approach will be hosted in Troy at the Michigan State University Management Education Center (811 West Square Lake Road, Troy, MI 48098, map below)

The course will help mental health professionals better understand how to test for, identify and understand the impacts of trauma on the lives of the people they serve. The continuing education event will feature presentations from two of our region's leaders in trauma care.

Our featured presenter will be **Dr. James Henry**, the co-founder and director of the Children's Trauma Assessment Center (CTAC) at Western Michigan University. Dr. Henry CTAC is among the nation's leading authorities on the identification and impacts of trauma in the lives of individuals, especially children. Under his leadership, CTAC has similarly developed to become a leading center for training mental health professionals in techniques for trauma identification and testing.

He has a professional history that includes more than 17 years as a child welfare and protective services worker. He has been a professor in WMU's School of Social Work for 15 years, with a focus on developing and providing trauma-informed instruction in the social work curriculum.

www.NewOakland.org

He has also served on two national committees of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network that developed trauma-informed curricula for child welfare workers and resource parents. He is co-chair of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network Child Welfare Committee and on the Steering Committee for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. He is a co-author of a book, "Seeking Justice," which explores best models of system intervention in child sexual abuse.

Dr. Henry has trained more than 50,000 professionals, caregivers, and community members on child maltreatment and trauma-informed practices. He recently has developed a secondary trauma training focusing on understanding the impact of secondary trauma, grief and building resiliency.

Joining Dr. Henry will be **Kimberly Smith, LMSW**, a senior member of New Oakland's clinical team and experienced trauma diagnostician and treatment professional.

The Oct. 12 event is approved for 3.0 CEUs by the Michigan Social Work Continuing Education Collaborative (approval #081418-00).

Cost to attend is only \$35 and includes all materials, breakfast and break-time refreshments.

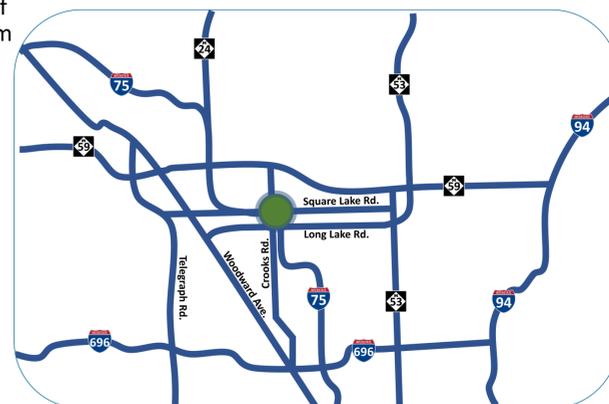


Featured Presenter

James Henry, PhD
Co-founder and project director
Children's Trauma Assessment Center (CTAC)
Western Michigan University

There are three ways you can register for the Oct. 12 event:

1. The preferred method is online at www.NewOakland.eventbrite.com. (Click the green "Tickets" button and the site will walk you through the process.)
2. You can also email New Oakland at TraumaCEUEvent@NewOakland.org and we will contact you by phone. Please also use this email if you have any questions about registering or attending.
3. Or you can contact us by phone at **800-395-3223** to leave a message. We will return your call.



Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma

Trauma is an emotional response to an intense event that threatens or causes harm. The harm can be physical or emotional, real or perceived, and it can threaten the child or someone close to him or her. Trauma can be the result of a single event, or it can result from exposure to multiple events over time. Potentially traumatic events may include:

- **Abuse** (physical, sexual, or emotional)
- **Neglect**
- **Effects of poverty** (such as homelessness or not having enough to eat)
- **Being separated from loved ones**
- **Bullying**
- **Witnessing harm to a loved one or pet** (e.g., domestic or community violence)
- **Natural disasters or accidents**
- **Unpredictable parental behavior** due to addiction or mental illness

For many children, being in the child welfare system becomes another traumatic event. This is true of the child's first separation from his or her home and family, as well as any additional placements.

Understanding Your Child's Behavior

When children have experienced trauma, particularly multiple traumatic events over an extended period of time, their bodies, brains, and nervous systems adapt in an effort to protect them. This might result in behaviors such as increased aggression, distrusting or disobeying adults, or even dissociation (feeling disconnected from reality). When children are in danger, these behaviors may be important for their survival. However, once children are moved to a safer environment, their brains and bodies may not recognize that the danger has passed. These protective behaviors have grown strong from frequent use (just as a muscle that is used regularly grows bigger and stronger). It takes time and retraining to help those "survival muscles" learn they are not needed in their new situation (your home), and that they can relax.

Reprinted and adapted from the **Child Welfare Information Gateway** and available online at www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/child-trauma.pdf

It might be helpful to remember that your child's troublesome behavior may be a learned response to stress—it may even be what kept your child alive in a very unsafe situation. It will take time and patience for your child's body and brain to learn to respond in ways that are more appropriate for his or her current, safe environment.

Trauma Triggers

When your child is behaving in a way that is unexpected and seems irrational or extreme, he or she may be experiencing a trauma trigger. A trigger is some aspect of a traumatic event that occurs in a completely different situation but reminds the child of the original event. Examples may be sounds, smells, feelings, places, postures, tones of voice, or even emotions.

Youth who have experienced traumatic events may reenact past patterns when they feel unsafe or encounter a trigger. Depending on whether the child has a

"fight," "flight," or "freeze" response, the child may appear to be throwing a tantrum, willfully not listening, or defying you. However, responses to triggers are best thought of as reflexes—they

are not deliberate or planned. When children's bodies and brains are overwhelmed by a traumatic memory, they are not able to consider the consequences of their behavior or its effect on others.

Trauma and Mental Health

Trauma symptoms that are more severe or disruptive to a child's ability to function at home or at school may overlap with specific mental health diagnoses. This may be one reason why nearly 80 percent of children aging out of foster care have received a mental health diagnosis.

It may be necessary to treat these diagnoses with traditional mental health approaches (including the use of medications, where indicated) in the short term. However, treating the underlying cause by addressing the child's experience of trauma will be more effective in the long run.

(continued on next page)

New Oakland locations to serve you

Center Line Center
26522 Van Dyke Avenue
Center Line, MI 48015
586-759-4400

Clarkston Center
6549 Town Center Drive
Clarkston, MI 48346
248-620-6400

Clinton Township Center
42669 Garfield Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038
586-412-5321

Farmington Hills Center
32961 Middlebelt Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
248-855-1540

Flint Center
2401 South Linden, Suite A
Flint, MI 48532
810-957-4310

Livonia Center
31500 Schoolcraft Road
Livonia, MI 48150
734-422-9340

Okemos Center
2300 Jolly Oak Road
Okemos, MI 48864
517-679-2050

Southfield Center
20505 W. 12 Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48076
248-849-9999

Southgate Center
13305 Reeck Road
Southgate, MI 48195
734-225-2090

Warren Center
8150 E. 13 Mile Road
Warren, MI 48093
586-825-9700

FACE to FACE Crisis Services
877-800-1650
(24 hours/day)

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