

Challenges and Successes

Or – How it works in the real world.....

Laura Merchant, MSW

Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and
Traumatic Stress

Lmerchan@u.washington.edu



Southern Regional learning Collaborative

- ▶ Albany Georgia
- ▶ Nashville Tennessee
- ▶ Jackson Mississippi

Implementation of our own version of
a regional learning collaborative

Process

- ▶ Initial 2-day training session to teach the basic components of trauma based, evidence informed treatment
- ▶ Monthly 1 hour telephone consultation sessions per program for a limited amount of time (6 – 9 months)
- ▶ Two additional 2-day training sessions approximately 3 months apart

What we Figured Out Pretty Quickly

Phone Consultations were essential. They taught us what we couldn't have learned through straight trainings

- ▶ People had strong interest but lack of clarity about when to use trauma focused therapy
- ▶ Complex trauma was the norm
- ▶ Often programs had only “windows of opportunity” with child/family. Fits and starts
- ▶ People had trouble conceptualizing what key problems were, how to prioritize issues and which interventions to use to maximize successful outcome – *Assessment, Assessment, Assessment!*

What Participants struggled With

- ▶ What do I prioritize when there are so many unmet needs for this child/family?
- ▶ Who are the people I should be treating?
- ▶ How do I know when exposure work should be done?
- ▶ What do I do when all of life's problems come to roost every week in the therapy session ?



What Participants Excelled At

- ▶ Bringing tough cases for consultation and sharing their struggles
- ▶ Knowing what questions to ask
- ▶ Embracing the principles of trauma focused therapy and using the skills with clients
- ▶ Following through with recommendations and seeing resulting successes
- ▶ Recognizing COWS

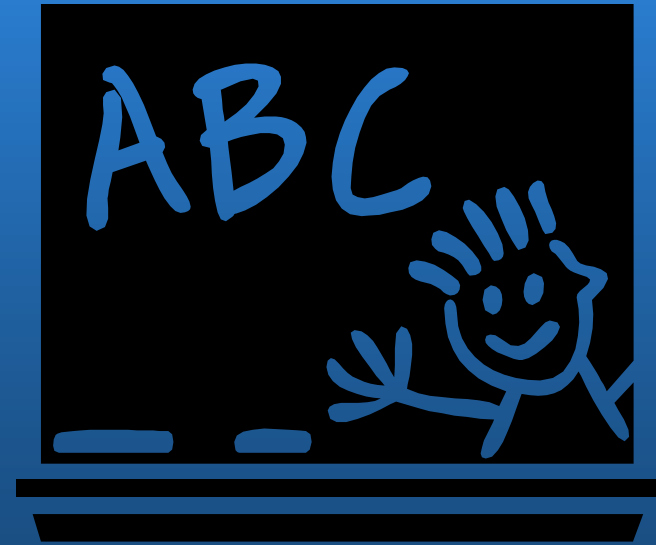


How Has Clinical Practice Changed?

- ▶ Clear understanding of the components of evidence informed trauma focused therapy
- ▶ Better identification of when TFT is indicated
- ▶ More appropriate use of specific interventions for specific symptoms (exposure work, cognitive processing)
- ▶ More focused symptom identification, goal setting and treatment planning
- ▶ More focused treatment sessions

Lessons Learned From SRLC

- ▶ Importance of Peer to Peer Learning
- ▶ Developing Specific track for leadership
- ▶ Impact of feedback loop on teaching faculty



Recommendations for On-going Success

- ▶ On-going evidence based trauma focused therapy training
- ▶ Developing documentation that specifically identifies components used in therapy and what homework was assigned/completed
- ▶ Having clinical consultation that specifically reinforces the components and challenges workers to consistently have to say how their treatment addresses specific targeted trauma symptoms