

Trauma Informed Primary Care

Wisconsin Child Psychiatry Consultation Program (WI-CPCP)

By the Numbers:

- 59% of WI Residents have experienced at least one adverse childhood event (ACE)
- Increased ACEs are related to increased physical or mental health concerns, as well as mortality

Brain Structures Affected by Trauma and ACEs:

- Amygdala (Emotional Regulation, Reactivity)
- Prefrontal Cortex (Attention, Concentration and Focus)
- Hippocampus (Memory and Learning)

Behavioral Effects of Trauma and ACEs:

- Tantrums, aggression, defiance, intense irritability
- Inattention, concentration difficulties, impulsivity
- Anxious/avoidant coping style
- Difficulty with appropriate and effective social interactions

Screening:

- Identify a “whole-child” approach, maximizing supports in response to stressful events
- Recognize that child and family behaviors identified in the medical visit may reflect trauma reactions
- [Screening algorithm and response tool for child PTSD](#)
- [Screening for ACEs](#)
- Ask, “Since the last time I saw you, has anything really scary or upsetting happened to you or your family?”

Primary Care Interventions:

- Focus on 4 “C’s”: Calm, Contain, Care and Cope
- Take the approach, “What has happened to you?” rather than “What is wrong with you?”
- Assess and problem-solve regarding basic needs such as safety, food, housing or economic insecurity
- Give brief education on trauma’s impact on the brain, emotions and behavior
- Provide information for [calming, routines, sleep, and healthy activities](#): (also in Spanish)
- Offer [resources to help families advocate for school support](#)
- Provide referrals for [trauma-informed therapy such as TF-CBT](#)

Trauma-Informed Websites for Providers

- Wisconsin DHS: [Resilient Wisconsin](#)
- AAP: [Trauma-Informed Care](#)
- US DHHS: [Protective Factors to Promote Well-Being and Prevent Child Abuse & Neglect](#)
- [ACEs Aware: Screen, Treat, Heal](#)
- Mental Health Matters: [Shaping Destiny: Overcoming Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) by Building Youth Resilience](#)

Resources for Families:

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network: [Families and Caregivers](#)
- AAP: [Childhood Adversity: Buffering Stress & Building Resilience](#)
- SAMHSA: [Learning Materials and Resources](#)