

# Today's Presentation~ New Initiatives on Child Protection 1) Tertiary Prevention: Helping traumatized children Restorative Parenting Therapeutic Interventions Vale Domestic Violence-Home Visit Intervention Project 4) Implications to Hong Kong: What we can do further?

### What is trauma?

• When a child feels intensely threatened by an event he or she is involved in or witnesses, we call that event a trauma. Child traumatic stress (CTS) is a psychological reaction that some children have to a traumatic experience.

~The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)



# Trauma and Child Traumatic Stress

### acute traumatic events

- School shootings
- Gang-related violence in the community
- Terrorist attacks
- Natural disasters (for example, earthquakes, floods, or hurricanes)
- Serious accidents
- Sudden or violent loss of a loved one
- Physical or sexual assault

### chronic traumatic situations

- Some forms of physical abuse
- Long-standing sexual abuse
- Domestic violence Wars and other forms of political violence



# Child traumatic Stress

- occurs when children and adolescents are exposed to traumatic events or traumatic situations, and when this exposure overwhelms their ability to cope with what they have experienced.

  - disturbed sleep, difficulty paying attention and concentrating, anger and irritability,

  - Withdrawal or Aggression repeated and intrusive thoughts,

  - extreme distress—when confronted by anything that reminds them of their traumatic experiences. posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and a variety of behavioral disorders.



## What about Resilience?

- · Not all children are negatively affected
- 63% of children exposed to DV show worse outcomes than children not exposed
- 37% do not differ from comparison group (Kitzman, 2003)



# Child Predictors of Resilience

- Good relationships with Consistent caregivers
- · High self esteem
- · Internal locus of control
- · External attribution of blame
- · Above average cognitive abilities (Heller, et al., 1999)



# Impact of Trauma on Caregiver-Child Relationship

- · Loss of sense of caregiver as reliable protector
- Disturbed mental representations of who is safe and who is dangerous
- Loss of capacity to sustain representations of caregiver as secure base
- Often intense and contradictory emotions



(Lieberman & Van Horn, 1998)

# Impact of Trauma on the Caregiver

- · When the caregiver has experienced interpersonal trauma:
  - The ability to establish and maintain an empathic relationship with the child may be impaired
  - The caregiver may have a decreased capacity to recognize danger or stress
  - The caregiver may need to protect him/herself from feelings of vulnerability & trauma

The caregiver may have trouble tolerating the child's sadness, anxiety or aggression

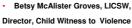
### Helping traumatized children -Including parents is important

- Remember that the parent is the child's most important source of comfort and stability
- Work through the parent rather than directly with the child
- Attend to the parent's emotional state
- Don't take over the parent's function
- Focus on parent-child relationship



# Fostering Responsive Parenting

- · Help parents understand symptoms and behaviors
- Provide specific strategies for behavioral intervention
- · Help parents read and respond to cues, enhance parent/child interactions
- Help parent talk to child about traumatic experience





## Restorative Parenting-Domestic Violence Project (DVP)

- To establish a process for restoring the relationship between parent and child in the aftermath of violence toward a sense of wholeness for each person
  - 2 priorities:
    - Safety for all participants
    - Establishing or increasing accountability measures



David Mathews, Psy.D, LICSW, Domestic Abuse Project, 2006

# Restorative Parenting Assumptions

- Parents are able to change
- Parents desire the best for their children
- Children view their parents differently after violence
- "Normal" parenting programs needed to be modified



# Targets of RP

- Parents whose families and children have experienced a major life transition, trauma or loss
- Men who have been abusive to family members and are parents
- Women who are survivors of abuse and are parents



# Unique Themes for Intervention

- Understanding violence
- · Accountability and responsibility
- Awareness of self and other parent
- Understanding of their children
- Restoration of relationship process
- Experience with and application of new behaviors



# Therapeutic Interventions for child victims or witnesses

- 1. Trauma Assessment
- 2. Evidenced-Based Therapy Services



- 1) Trauma Assessment for children:
- All children who have been abused should be assessed to determine if they are in need of trauma informed therapeutic services
  - √ Standardized assessments
  - ✓ A clinical interview of the child
  - ✓ Interview of parents and other caretakers



# 2) Evidenced-Based Therapy Services

- Promote healing and not be forensic
- Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Parent-child Interaction Therapy
- Therapists should be trained in Evidence Based Treatment
- Support from Parents is essential



# Yale Domestic Violence —Home Visit Intervention Project

- The Child Development-Community Policing Program
- To increase officer awareness of the needs of children exposed to violence and trauma
- To link traumatized children to immediate developmentally appropriate services
- Increase coordination of services for famlies and eliminate duplication
- Decrease long-term effects of trauma by providing early intervention



# What they do?

- Home visit to the homes of families who have reported DV to the Police
- Visits are made within 1 week but typically within 72 hours
- Engage battered women through community- based outreach
- · Concern for children



# Program Result (Sept,06)

- Program implementation areas: North Tryon (1998), Freedom and Steele Creek (2001), Westover (2004), Eastway(2006)
  Over 6730 cases referred, average 2 children per case
  Over half of the cases include at least one child 5 years old or younger
- 50% are DV victims
- · Evaluation results: children felt the police helped their families and felt safer after intervention

(Charlotte-Mecklenburg, 2005)



# Adult's responsibility of protecting children

- "Schools have program to teach children about sexual abuse prevention-but what about adults? Shouldn't they be more responsible than a six-year-old?"
- More than 80% of sexual abuse cases happened in one-adult/one-child situations
- Only 29% of parents ever mentioned or discussed sexual abuse with their children
- A child's safety is an adult's job



# Mandated Reporting of child victims and witnesses

- · Mandated Reporting and reporting procedures
  - Mandated reporters:
    - School personnel, health practitioners, employees of child protective agencies, commercial film or photographic print processors, child visitation monitors, etc
    - Physical Abuse, Neglect, Emotional Abuse, Sexual



# Reporting Procedures



- Listen Carefully
- Questions & Tone
- Verbal Support and Reassurance
- Contact
- Complete report
- Notify
- Send (within 36 hours)



# From dialog to action: the implications to Hong Kong • What we can do further for parents with traumatized children? • Mandated parenting groups for batterers? • Enhance adult's responsibility on child abuse prevention? • Mandated reporting across child welfare service professionals?



