Trauma-Sensitive Interventions for Sexually Exploited Youth

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THANK YOU!!!

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Hawaiian Parable

One day, an old woman was walking along a beach that was littered with thousands of starfish that had been washed ashore by the high tide. As she walked, she came upon a young girl who was eagerly throwing the starfish back into the ocean, one by one. Puzzled, the woman looked at the girl and asked what she was doing. Without looking up from her task, the girl simply replied, “I'm saving these starfish”. The old woman chuckled aloud, “daughter, there are thousands of starfish and only one of you. What difference can you make?” The girl picked up a starfish, gently tossed it into the water and turning to the woman, said, “I made a difference to that one!”
Data on Sexually Exploited Youth
Recent Data

- Comparison between youth in residential placement with a history of SE compared to youth with no SE exposure found:
  - Girls with SE history were more likely to be:
    - Involved in Juvenile Justice System
    - Report gang involvement
    - Report Risk Taking Behavior
    - Report more child sexual abuse exposure
    - More involvement in intimate partner violence
    - Report more drug/alcohol use
    - Report more difficulties in school
    - More likely to leave placement
    - Average age of first SE experience in this group was **14 years** (range 12-17)

Module: CSE Entry Points
Streams Of Influence

*{influence}*  To affect the nature, development, or condition of;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Survival</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Trafficker</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Recruiter</td>
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<td>E</td>
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<td>Media</td>
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Module: Coercion
Psychological Manipulation
“After a while, it was my choice.”

“I’m not a victim.”

“I chose this.”

“This is all I’m good at.”

“He’s been there when nobody else was.”

“The game is all I know.”

“I can’t be a square”

“He wasn’t that bad.”
Psychological Coercion – What is it? Method and Purpose

Isolation

Breaking Them Down

Emotional Physical Violence

Occasional Treats

Deprivation

All About Trafficker

Threats
Why Do Victims Go Back?

- Need for immediate money
- Distrust of law enforcement
- Misinformation and false promises
- Feelings of attachment to a trafficker
  
  **Traumatic Bonding/Stockholm Syndrome**

- Feelings of attachment to The Life/The Game
  
  **Identity Disturbance**
3 Core Identity Shifts

01
It’s better to get paid for sex than to do it for free.

02
Squares are losers (boring, broke, being taken advantage of by the system, weak)

03
“The life” is as good as my life will get so I should just make the best of it.
Coercion Process

- **Bend**
  - Isolate
  - Confuse, Push Boundaries
- **Break**
  - Strip hope for life without pimp/CSE
  - Decrease self-esteem
- **Build**
  - New rules, new language, new belief system
- **Lock**
  - Complete new identity, Positive and negative reinforcement
B.I.T.E.S. List

Behavior
Information
Thoughts
Emotions
Spirituality

These are the parts that make up a person; if you can manipulate any one of these parts, you can eventually manipulate the person.

-Combatting Cult Mind Control by Steve Hassan
BITES = Behavior, Information, Thoughts, Emotions, & Spirituality

- Sell the Fairytale
- Repeat Degrading thoughts
- Emotions
- Isolate
- Set up destructive behavior
- Identity
- Instill phobias & negativity

https://endingthegame.com/
Engagement, Safety, & Stabilization
Safety Planning

Common Safety Issues
• Suicide assessment
• Homicide assessment
• Current domestic violence relationship
• Active exploitation
• Severe drug abuse

Primary Components
• When to use plan
• Warning signs of behavior
• Internal & external coping plans
• Environmental safety
• Social contacts/emergency resources
• When to go to hospital/call the police
Engagement

- Psychoeducation regarding trauma, trauma symptoms, abuse/neglect, and sexual exploitation
- Non-judgmental stance (not our role to convince them to leave “the life”)
- Relationship building
- Harm reduction
- Assess for highest needs
Initial Engagement Strategies

“I know you may not want to be here right now but since you are, is there anything I can do to make you feel more comfortable?”

“I need to be able to work with a team to best meet your needs because I can’t meet all of them in my job. Please let me know if there is something you don’t want me telling others on our team and we can discuss it.”

“I am (name) and my job is to do (role on team). I would like to figure out what would be helpful for you.”

“I understand that you are working with (name of professional). What is important for you in terms of (placement, treatment, needs)?”
HARM REDUCTION STRATEGIES
Harm Reduction Is:

- An approach based on a strong commitment to public health and human rights
- Targeted approach that focuses on specific risks and harms
- Evidence based, practical, feasible
- Incremental in nature
- Requires that one accepts youth how they are and avoid being judgmental
- Recognizes the value of all persons regardless of behavior
- Acknowledges ANY positive change an individual makes
Why Use it?

- There are inherent risks involved with any behavior
- Congruent with adolescent development
- Does not contradict with our primary goal
- Youth with a history of CSEC often come to us with low hopes/beliefs that they can do something else &/or low motivation to do so
- It neither condemns or condones

Canadian Pediatric Society, 2008
Harm Reduction: Practical Strategies

- Be a stable and consistent person despite the “going missing” episodes
  - Text client when they are gone stating you are thinking about them or they can call if needed

- Provide as many services as possible (employment, therapy, education, social resources, etc.) even if they are still connected to the perpetrator or experiencing sexual exploitation (with special emphasis on employment)

- Help set up appointments for STD testing and birth control (as soon as possible)

Hickle & Hallett (2016)
Harm Reduction: Practical Strategies

• Give out hygiene related items
  • Tampons, safe sex supplies, hand sanitizer, wet wipes, shampoo/soap, etc.

• Give out bus cards/tokens
  • Allows youth to get somewhere safer than getting rides from others

• Give water and healthy snacks at each visit
  • Do you know when your client last ate/drank something healthy?

• Help youth pack an “emergency bag”
Harm Reduction: Practical Strategies

Think about ways they can stay safe while being exploited

- Wear comfortable shoes, clothes you don’t have to take off, don’t wear jewelry that could be used to choke you
- Have a “safety place”
- Be aware of surroundings (street names, hotel check in)
- Jot down license plates (if it is safe)
- Arrange payment, etc. before you get in the car (stay enough distance away that you can’t be grabbed)
- Let a friend know where you are (someone other than your perpetrator/boyfriend)
Harm Reduction for Substance Use

- Practice safer sex
- Know your dealer
- Reduce the amount of drugs consumed
- Avoid using drugs alone (use with people you know)
- Use clean needles, fresh water, etc.
- Learn CPR and first aid strategies
- Recognize that relapse is a part of recovery

Safety Issues/Barriers to Trauma Treatment
Substance Abuse

• Assess severity and dependence

• May be primary treatment goal

• Need for inpatient treatment

• Use of Seeking Safety when substance abuse is primary concern

• May consider flexibility and compromise with marijuana use/abuse
Elopement/Running Behavior

• No “magic wand” or research to guide say what is most effective response

• Define/operationalize behavior

• Important to understand the function of the running away behavior for each youth

• Radical acceptance of behavior

• Externalize behavior without shaming youth

• Harm Reduction Approach
Elopement/Running Response

**Before**
- What are running away warning signs
- Monitor urge to run
- Make very clear safety plan with teen if urge is high
- Give youth places to go
- National Runaway Safeline (1-800-RUNAWAY)

**To Do:**
- Take care of yourself (it is hard when client’s run)
- Process intense thoughts and feelings with someone
- Meet with caregiver or systems involved to determine triggers, etc.
- Begin to prepare for their return

**After**
- Immediate needs first
- Give positive message
- Go back to Tier 1-3 Assessment
- Conduct chain analysis
- Get back to trauma work/therapy as soon as possible
Chain Analysis of Behavior

Running away perceived as a maladaptive survival behavior

Chains are used to get as many details as possible to help with:

- safety planning
- problem solving
- skill acquisition
Components of a “Chain”

- Vulnerability (e.g., sleep, trauma symptoms)
- Context (situation)
- Prompting Event
- Links (at what point in chain did they think about problem behavior?)
  - Thoughts, emotions, environmental reactions
- Problem Behavior
- Consequences

©2002, Marcia Linehan. Graphic by Jaelline Jaffe, PhD
• For emotions/thoughts
  • Highlight
  • Observe and describe recurrent patterns
  • Comment on implications of behavior
  • Provide validation/psychoeducation
## Decisional Balance Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros of Running</th>
<th>Cons of Running</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pros of NOT Running</td>
<td>Cons of NOT Running</td>
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</table>
“Recruitment”

• Understanding that recruitment is part of survival AND it is harmful for the victimized youth

• Define/operationalize behavior

• Talk about recruitment openly and directly (avoid shying away from the topic)

• Monitor youth who you are suspicious of possible recruitment behavior
What you can do?!!!

• Validation & Consequences: “we know recruitment is part of survival and if it happens during your time _______ here are the consequences…”

• “We ask that you please do not recruit during your time here.”

• “Part of our job is to protect children. If children begin to be recruited here this is no longer as safe place.”
  • You also have personal limits – which may include providing therapy to someone who is actively exploiting others

• “I want you to think about the really, really bad times during your exploitation (you don’t have to share them with me)….now imagine that happening to your little sister or family friend. This is what could happen to this person if you recruit them.”

• Ignore any denial or recruitment. Give information if you are suspicious
Active Exploitation

• Consider it like other safety behaviors…6 weeks to 3 months of no active exploitation before Trauma Narration

• You could still do PRAC if client is actively being exploited
  • While paying attention to not removing all survival behaviors

• Take an “opt in” to trauma treatment and then consider spending more time in safety, slowing down modules, etc.
Questions about other barriers for trauma treatment??
TF-CBT Applications for Sexually Exploited Youth
Why TF-CBT for Sexually Exploited Youth?

• High rates of trauma history and symptoms

• Prioritizes safety and stabilization

• Caregiver involvement emphasized (but not required); effective with children in foster care

• Effective for youth with multiple traumas

• Used successfully in a wide array of settings – clinics, homes, residential facilities, inpatient units

• Effective with youth from diverse backgrounds; variety of languages/culture
TF-CBT for Sexually Exploited Youth: Is it Different?

TF-CBT core treatment goals and elements (underlying framework) are UNCHANGED!

Content and emphasis within the overall framework is CSEC-specific or CSEC-informed in order to target specific challenges as they present with the individual client.
TF-CBT for Sexually Exploited Youth

Significant benefit to proceeding through the model as efficiently as possible:

• Very high run risk priorities conveying as much treatment benefit as possible
• The faster they proceed through the model, the quicker symptoms reduction may be achieved.

There is nothing more engaging than symptom reduction!!

Facilitative Factors:
• “Ready” to work; Stable home/caregiver; Good premorbid regulation skills; “coherent” narrative
Complex Trauma Considerations

70% of population of sexually exploited minors had experienced multiple episodes of maltreatment such that trauma became a chronic condition in their childhood (West Coast Children’s Clinic, 2012)

Complex Trauma Applications May be Particularly Helpful

However, ASSESS not ASSUME chronic trauma or complex trauma presentations
Complex Trauma

Need Specific TF-CBT Application

Youth with Sexual Exploitation
Complex Trauma Applications

• Ordering of components: Safety first. May spend more time in safety and stabilization
  • STILL focusing on trauma psychoeducation

• Balance of treatment components may shift as more time may be needed in initial Stabilization Phase
  • Solution: ½ of session on PRACTICE component content; ½ of session on life issues/other needs
  • Even better solution: Can you use life issues to teach PRACTICE component content?

• Length of treatment may be extended
  • From 12-16 session to 25-30 sessions
Complex Trauma Applications

- Recognition of –
  - Significant safety challenges
  - Severe dysregulation
  - Complexity of caregiver involvement
  - Multiple (often more restrictive) treatment settings
  - Emphasis on internal and external trauma reminders
National Child Traumatic Stress Network Webinars

• Developmental Trauma Disorder: Identifying Critical Moments and Healing Complex Trauma

• Polyvictimization: Speaker Series
  • Trafficked Youth
  • Sexual Exploitation of Young Boys and Men
  • LGBTQ Youth and Adults
  • Urban Communities of Color

• Client Dramatizations
  • When a crisis occurs in session
  • Dissociation and self harm
  • When a client shuts down
  • Engaging sexually traumatized youth
  • Loss and betrayal
  • Family violence and addiction
Psychoeducation Fundamentals

Rapport, building and management

the ABC-CB
Psychoeducation

• Barnabos UK Resources
  http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/sexual_exploitation.htm

• GEMS Survivors' Guide to Leaving

• Videos
  • Making of a Girl
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvnRYte3PAk
  • Flesh  http://humantraffickingsearch.org/resource/flesh/
  • What I've been though is not who I am
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmmRTjoL3R0
Psychoeducation Options

- Domestic Violence, Healthy Relationships & Sexuality
- Sexual Abuse & Sexual Exploitation
- Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity
- Traumatic Grief, Loss & Abandonment

- Psychological Coercion & STREAMS of influence
- Physical abuse, emotional abuse,
Psychoeducation

What to include and what to leave out?

Things to consider:
- What is causing the most symptoms?
- What does the youth want to know about?
- What does the caregiver need to know about?

Psychoeducation is not used to convince youth of their exploitation!!
Psychoeducation & Parenting for Caregivers

• Caregivers need information about the dynamics of trauma, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation

• Caregivers often need more specialized parenting skills to effectively manage complex needs of youth with a history of sexual exploitation and potentially severe trauma symptoms

• Caregivers need validation and support regarding their experience in parenting youth who have been sexually exploited
Obvious Fact:
Parenting Teenagers is HARD
Common Caregiver Reactions *(Project Intersect, Georgia CAC)*

- Worry
- Guilty
- Angry
- Uncertainty
- Confused
- Ashamed
- Isolated and Alone
- Frustrated
- Hopeless
- Afraid
- Overwhelmed
- Reminded of their Own Trauma History
Parenting Sexually Exploited Youth: Negative Impacts

• ** Very little research about the impact of CSE on the families of sexually exploited young people*** (non offending parents)

• Some anecdotal data from Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (2013; 2016):
  
  • Intimidation and trauma
  • Relationship tensions and family breakdown
  • Negative effects on other children in the family
  • Parental guilt and self-blame
  • Health impacts
  • Legal impacts
  • Blaming attitudes from professionals

(Unwin & Stephens-Lewis, 2016)
Figure 2: Elements of support

- **Support for their relationship with their child**: Understanding teenage development, perpetrators' grooming, and how parenting can help.
- **Support for their own emotional needs**: Dealing with CSE trauma, the impact of past experiences, and parent relationships.
- **Support for dealing with systems**: Understanding police, legal, and child protection systems, and advocacy for parents.
- **Support for building their resilience**: Identifying sources of support, accessing professional and peer support.

Needs of parents of sexually exploited young people:

Important Parenting Strategies

- How to manage running away behaviors
- Basic Parenting Strategies
- How to monitor cell phone, social media and internet access
- Balance of independence & dependence
- Validation & Limit Setting
- Vicarious Trauma, STS, Self-Care
Relaxation

• Often need to go beyond “standard” relaxation skills

• Distress Tolerance Skills
  • ACCEPTS Skill
  • TIPP
    • Self-Soothe (kinesthetic and sensory exercises)

• Mindfulness/Grounding

• Distraction
Mindfulness

Why
• Reduce suffering
• Helps control impulses
• Gives more control

What
• Observe
• Describe
• Participate

How
• Non-judgmental
• One Mindful
• Effective
Grounding

• Name 5 (colors, objects, bodily sensations, etc.)

• Speak truths out loud (My name is ___, I am ___ years old, I am sitting in ___).

• Create an unharmful physical sensation (hold ice cubes, eat something sour, wash your hands)

• Sensory mindfulness (touch, taste, smell, etc.)
Possible Relaxation Challenges

• Sometimes youth with complex trauma can’t distinguish between tense and relaxed states.

• Feeling relaxed can create a sense of vulnerability

• Competing with maladaptive Tension Reduction Behaviors (TRBs)
Managing Tension Reduction Behaviors

- Validate use of TRB and connect it to desire to reduce trauma-related responses

- Engage youth in conversation related to long term consequences of TRBs

- Compromise on what/when/how TRBs are used (Harm Reduction Approach)

- Engage youth in strategies to identify trauma triggers related to TBRs

- Teach URGE SURFING
Affect Expression and Modulation: Key Points

• Identify emotions as useful and provide information about the environment, come in different strengths, and can experienced at one time

• Negative affect states are temporary and can be tolerated until they pass

• Communicating emotions can alleviate intensity and secure support

• Identify previous emotional modulation skills as survival
Affect Expression & Regulation

• Attunement is Critical

• Therapist might be main model of regulation

• Radical acceptance of painful emotions

• Practice labeling

• Connect affect to trauma-related triggers
## Affect Regulation Skill: Opposite Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Action Urge</th>
<th>Opposite Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear/Anxiety</td>
<td>Avoid, Flight, Retreat</td>
<td>Approach, face the fear, Over and Over again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Fight, Attack, Hurt</td>
<td>Gently avoid, do something intentionally nice, find common ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad/Depressed</td>
<td>Avoid emotion, lay in bed, over focus on negative</td>
<td>Get active, allow self to feel emotion, increase pleasurable events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame/Guilt (Justified)</td>
<td>Avoid, Make excuses,</td>
<td>Repair, apologize, commit to different behavior, then let it go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame/Guilt (Unjustified)</td>
<td>Punish self, Avoid</td>
<td>Approach, Do what makes you feel shameful over and over again</td>
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</table>
Affect Regulation Skill: Emotion Surfing

Step 1: Focus on the painful/difficult/challenging emotion (while committing to not follow through with action urge)

Step 2: Label as specifically as possible the feeling that arises (look out for primary and secondary emotions)

Step 3: Take note of any bodily sensations that are occurring

Step 4: Pay attention to how the emotion waxes and wanes as you maintain your focus
Cognitive Coping

Complex trauma = deeply ingrained survival thinking

Survival Thinking
• Can occur in non-survival situations
• Can result in feelings/actions that do not fit the situation
• Often elicit negative reactions from others

Dysregulated youth may not have much awareness of their thoughts.
Cognitive Triangle & Survival Thinking

• First must identify thoughts and recognize that thoughts are NOT facts
• Distinguish survival thoughts and connect to survival vs. non-survival situations
• Validate survival thinking when linked with survival situations; Help challenge thoughts when in non-survival situations
• May need to supplement Cognitive Triangle
  • Functional Behavioral Analysis
  • Chain Analysis
Common Core Beliefs

- Defective
- Unlovable
- Abandonment
- Entitlement
- Self-sacrifice
- Helpless
- Powerless

How to Identify Core Beliefs

• Identify Core Beliefs
  • Assessment – Child Posttraumatic Cognitions Scale; Informal Core Beliefs Scale (Henry Grayson)

• Downward Arrow/Laddering Strategy
  • Take a situation from the week that was distressing and likely has negative automatic
  • Ask questions about what does it mean if the ANT comes true until you get to the core belief
CC Strategy: Downward Arrow Questioning

Client: I can’t contain my anger at school
Therapist: What if you can’t control your anger? What does that mean?

C: It means that I will get kicked out and not be able to meet my goals
T: What if you do get kicked out? What does that mean?

C: I won’t be able to make any money or get anything I want
T: What does it mean if you never make any money?

C: It means I will be a loser. No one will want to be with me.
T: What if you never find anyone to be with? What will it mean?

C: It means I am worthless.

[Defective Core Belief]
Cognitive Coping Strategy: Check your Thoughts

• Begin to help youth identify their core beliefs and challenge them

• Use the Helpfulness/Accuracy Quadrant

• Focus on balanced thinking not necessarily “positive thinking”

• You can challenge general core beliefs that may have stemmed from exploitation without processing specific thoughts and distortions that occurred during exploitation
Socratic Question to Challenge Core Beliefs

- What is the evidence for your thought?
- What is the evidence against your thought?
- Is the thought a habit or a fact?
- How is your thought related to your experiences/trauma?
- Is your thought taking into consideration ALL the part of the story/situation?
- Is the thought black/white?
- Is the thought extreme/exaggerated?
- Does the thought fall into another negative thinking pattern?

- Is the source of this thought dependable?
- Is the thought confusing possible with probable?
- Is the thought based on feeling or facts?
- What's the worst thing? Best thing? Most likely thing?
- What benefits does this thought have?
- What are disadvantages to listening to this thought?
Cognitive Coping: CSEC Considerations

- Maladaptive cognitions & core beliefs can contribute to risk of victimization

- Example: Core belief of “I am unlovable” puts youth at risk for psychological coercion from exploiter who shows affection and verbalizes “love”

- Youth often think exploitation/sex work is “all they are good for” which may lead to lower motivation to leave or risk of returning
Trauma Narration: Review of Rationale

Telling story to:

• Unpair thoughts and reminder of the trauma with overwhelming negative emotions

• Uncover and process inaccurate or unhelpful thoughts about their experiences

• Understand, process, synthesize and move forward in a health way from traumatic experiences (meaning making)
Trauma Narration: Addressing Dysregulation in TN

WHEN?
- Can’t wait for **PERFECT** self-regulation
- TN can improve regulation
- Must carefully attend to the “therapeutic window”
- Broken windows happen, but should be repaired

HOW
- Use of de-escalation skills (e.g. LOW AND SLOW)
- Process in “waves”
- Make it predictable
  Give appropriate control/avoid power struggles
Trauma Narration: Therapeutic Window

• Hypothetical psychological midpoint between inadequate and overwhelming activation of trauma-related emotions

• Co-regulation by therapist and use of coping strategies allow youth to manage intense emotions without becoming flooded

• Any form of dysregulation in session may indicate a “broken window.”

• Repair broken windows as soon as possible
Trauma Narration: Process over Product

• For all youth, but especially youth with complex trauma/CSEC

• Gradual Exposure levels
  1) Direct: addresses explicit memories
  2) Relational: address implicit trauma memories

• Possible to address both (to a degree) in TF-CBT
Trauma Narration: Process of Product

• Make interactions fundamentally **different** from past interactions

• Providing “safe containment” for client’s emotions

• Must demonstrate
  • Acceptance vs judgement
  • Empathy vs pity
  • Emotional regulation vs dysregulation (not too hot or too cold)

• Lots and lots of validation!!
Trauma Narration: Challenges with Sexually Exploited Youth

• May not identify CSEC as trauma or most traumatic experiences

• Difficulty establishing chronological order

• Memory may be confused, indistinct, fragmented

• Tends to be an “interaction effect” between traumatic experiences

• Exploitation may be connected to traumas—directly or indirectly

• May not be feasible/appropriate to complete detailed account of all trauma
Trauma Narration: Forest vs Trees

**EVENTS**

“Trees”
Desensitization
Behavioral/Emotional
Direct
Who, What, Where
When How

**THEMES**

“Forest”
Making Meaning
Cognitive/Emotional
Relational
Why
Trauma Narration Continuum

Desensitization

Making Meaning
TN: Processing Traumatic “Trees”

- Event-focused exposure work may still be needed to reduce symptoms
  - Think about trauma triggers/re-experiencing symptoms

- Often the “trees” aren’t related to sexual exploitation

- Address hierarchically (per usual) as needed
  - Symptom reduction is a key indicator of when it is “enough”
TN: Processing “Trees:” CSEC Applications

• Life before “the life”
• Worst experience
• Day in “the life”
• Final (making meaning) chapter

Remember to:
• Elicit deepest feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations
• Cognitions at the time and “looking back now”
• Gently challenge maladaptive cognitions
• Establish end of session positive ritual
TN: Processing Traumatic “Forests”

• Human strive to make sense of experiences and want to “connect the dots” between events

• This results in “themes” that tend to be present across multiple traumatic experiences
  • Do you remember the 5 primary concepts interrupted by trauma?
  • Safety, trust, intimacy/love, power/control, self-worth/identity

• How?
  • Use timeline
  • Genograms
  • Life story divided into themes
TN: Processing Traumatic “Forests:” CSEC Applications

- Incorporate both positive and negative interactions and experiences
- Discuss survival instincts during exploitation
- Times when values were still held despite harm to others
  - Small acts of kindness
  - Helping protect younger survivors, etc.
  - Feelings of guilt/responsibility and how they are doing things “different”
Cognitive Processing: CSEC Applications

• Regret vs. Responsibility

• Focus on “CSEC Survivor” status

• Trauma experiences may include harm to others
  • Recruitment
  • Participation in discipline
  • Containment
  • Physical or sexual violence
Cognitive Processing: Making Meaning

• Encourage themes of hope and strength and positive expectations for present and future

• What have they learned?
• How have they changed?
• What they would tell others?
• How they can use their experiences to help others?
Last Reflections on Cognitive Processing

- Complex trauma beliefs are COMPLEX
  - Important to VALIDATE maladaptive cognitions before finding balance

- Balance vs. correction is important
  - Healthiest thoughts found in the “gray”

Balanced Thinking
- Has few absolutes
- Is flexible
- Takes a broader perspective
- Is based on facts and not assumptions
- Considers emotions and reasons “Wise Mind”
- Focus on what is not what could or should be
In-Vivo Exposure

• Remember key of in-vivo exposure is to assess if the avoidance is affecting life functioning

• Common Trauma Triggers that may affect well being
  • Hotels, certain areas of town, bedrooms, etc.
  • Healthy relationships, consensual sex
  • Certain races/ethnicity/genders
  • School
  • Typical adolescent activities
Conjoint Session

• To share or not to share?
  • Collaboratively determine

• Same red, yellow, green light caregiver assessment

• Can be very difficult for caregivers to hear

• Remember sometimes YOU are the supportive person for the youth. Have a “final read through” as a conjoint together even if no caregiver is involved
Enhancing Safety

• **Goal:** Develop, enhance, and reinforce knowledge and skills that will promote safety and growth beyond the formal conclusion of therapy

• Even if you covered some in psychoeducation review:
  • Healthy relationships/sexual decision making
  • Internet safety
  • Alcohol and drugs
  • LGTBQ+ issues

• **Other topics:**
  • Personal safety skills: assertiveness training, coping with peer pressure
  • Vigilance vs. Hypervigilance
  • Safety assessment: people, places, things
  • Body ownership and boundaries
Enhancing Safety: CSEC Considerations

- Often have grossly impaired “uh-oh” danger detection feeling
- At very high risk for revictimization
- Difficult differentiating safe persons – overly trusting or overly guarded
- Often live in high risk families and communities
- May have limited supportive caregivers
Enhancing Safety: CSEC Specific Situations

What to do if:
- Your exploiter contacts you
- Someone tries to recruit you
- Someone finds out about your past and is shaming you

You have high urges to return:
- Money problems
- Loneliness
- Boredom
- Conflict with caregiver

Intensive safety planning for youth going to lower level of care
Safety Enhancement: Integration & Consolidation

Psychoeducation & Parenting

- Normalizing future life challenges
- Expecting triggering people, situations places
- Life skill training opportunities
- May need ongoing support/return to therapy
- Plan for future (aging out) issues
- Appropriate expectations and responsibilities
- At least one trusted adult

Relaxation, Affect Regulation, Cognitive Coping

- Generalize coping strategies to "normal" stress
- How skills might be used in the future
- Plans for natural setbacks