Supporting Parents: Special Issues Related to Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Today’s Talk...

Psychic Fair
Cancelled
due to unforeseen circumstances
“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead
Changing the World of Kids...
Taming the Three-Headed Monster?

- Trauma
- Mental Illness
- Substance Abuse

ECC TEAM
How Do We Tame the 3-Headed Monster?

I imagine many of you came here today hoping that I would provide you with arrows...or directions on how to shoot arrows.
Isn’t it “biological?”
- No question that genes play a role in risk for substance abuse

What this video reminds us is that our social world impacts our biology (physical self).
- Looked at another way: addicts can be treated...usually by social interventions alone.
Video brings up the 3 heads of the monster
Substance abuse travels with trauma/violence exposure, mental health conditions (The “Vietnam War Study”)...

But “treatment” for these conditions also requires social connection...
  Psychiatry has a few arrows for certain conditions
Why Have I Been Worried About This Talk...

- “It’s Not the Chemicals, It’s Your Cage…”
- Bad News: I have no magic arrow to offer ECC’s for substance abusing parents
- Good News: ECC Teams CAN BE the magic arrow…
Consider Two Questions

Given that social connection is the antidote to addiction...

1. At what stage of life do intense social connections begin?...

2. How does an ECC maximize its capacity to create or enhance the social connections of the caregivers we serve?
At what stage of life do intense social connections begin...?
Principles of Substance Abuse Prevention for Early Childhood
A Research-Based Guide

Chapter 1
Why Is Early Childhood Important to Substance Abuse Prevention?

Chapter 2
Risk and Protective Factors

Chapter 3
Intervening in Early Childhood

Chapter 4
Research-Based Early Intervention Substance Abuse Prevention Programs

NIDA,
2015
“Substance abuse and other problem behaviors that manifest during adolescence have their roots in the developmental changes that occur earlier—as far back as the prenatal period. While prevention can be effective at any age, it can have particularly strong effects when applied early in a person’s life, when development is most easily shaped and the child’s life is most easily set on a positive course.”

Timely Permanence with Caregivers who Provide Security is Setting a Positive Course...
Ok, So How Does This Apply to ECC?

1. By getting young children into safe, stable social environments you are breaking the addiction cycle.
2. How does an ECC maximize it’s capacity to create or enhance the social connections of the caregivers we serve?
"The Rat Park"...

- Reunification depends upon getting people out of their current social environment and into something healthier...
- NO ONE PERSON can do this...
When ECC’s TRULY function at full capacity—when they are well-oiled, well-functioning TEAMS—their rate of success with Bio Parents improves.
You Slay the 3-Headed Monster...

- With teamwork!
  - “small group of thoughtful, committed citizens” is your magic arrow...

- This is NOT JUST “doing your job”…it is “doing your job together”
  - Shared intervention plan individualized for parents
  - ALL team members make the plan together...
1. Therapeutic Jurisprudence—Carrot (big) and the Stick (small, but visible)—motivation for change

2. Care coordination/Case Mgmt—Jobs, housing, transportation, visitation, etc—directly decrease stress and isolation

3. Clinical intervention—BUILT on social connection—trauma “radiation” which opens space for motivation
Field of Dreams Fallacy

- If you have a model and good people, then you have TEAM
  - Not true and especially not true when you are battling the 3-Headed Monster...
What Does ECC Teamwork Mean?

- The Orlando Example
  - Wonderful group of people...dedicated Judge, experienced clinicians, energetic and committed community coordinator, wonderful case management personnel
  - ...BUT, they were all new to ECC model...
Survey of the Team

1. Communication/Implementation
2. Problem Solving
3. Meeting Management
4. Conflict Management

- Example: Problem Solving: When there are problems serving cases/families or within the team, we define the problems carefully, identify root causes, consider alternative solutions. We are all encouraged to contribute our ideas, which are evaluated on merit. Everyone participates in problem-solving.
Survey Results...

- Rated 3-6 by the team (1=rarely true, 7= always)

- Comments on Problem Solving: “must evaluate problems instead of place blame,” “we discuss problems but do not problem solve as a team,” “could better define problems, their root causes and address a lot sooner,” “sometimes communication breaks down and opinions are formed re: team members’ reasoning,” “still operating in silos but progress being made,” AND “all are encouraged to contribute thoughts and ideas.”
On Being Trans-Disciplinary

- Orlando team elected to start with having each team member pick another person’s job/role out of a hat and try to describe what that person’s responsibilities were...

- Many ECC team members have never really teamed up with each other
  - e.g., judges have ordered therapy and perhaps heard testimony or read therapy reports, but they don’t really know what therapists are up against....and vice versa
What Therapists Think of Judges
**I’m Kidding, but...**

- “must evaluate problems instead of place blame,” “sometimes communication breaks down and opinions are formed re: team members’ reasoning.”

- Opinions like: Are those guys doing their job right???
What I Hear About...

- Judges convinced therapists aren’t doing CPP with fidelity—not enough sessions
- Clinicians complaining “Well, the judge just decided to reunify…I didn’t think they were ready.”
- Clinicians complaining care coordinators may be “biased against” parents in certain cases
- Care coordinators complaining CLS attorneys are “biased against” parents in certain cases
- Clinicians not even reporting to the court...
- Substance abuse providers not at all engaged with ECC teams...
Team Dissension is Contagious

- Junkie!
- Worthless trash!
- Drop dead!
- SCUM!
- Stinky rat!
- Addict!
- Garbage!
- Go to hell!
- Idiot!
- Booo!
Being Team Means...

...creating a blame free zone
Summary—Way Forward
What is ONE thing you can do to enhance teamwork at your site?
Another Angle...

- Being Team has other important benefits...
Organizational changes which offer “better working conditions, more control over their schedule, good quality supervision and a reduced exposure to trauma.”
What works?

“a constructive and supportive team”
This Talk...
Saying for the Day

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- Margaret Mead