Building Safety When Parents Use Substances

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Round Robin Introductions

- Name & Role

- What is your biggest challenge related to substance use and child welfare practice?

- What are you hoping to take away from this session?
Danger & Protective Capacity

• Substance Use ≠ Unsafe

• Non-Detected Use ≠ Safe

• What is the danger?
  • Clearly articulate the danger - different than risk.

• Protective Capacity
  • Caregiver actions over time that increase safety.
  • Behaviors that mitigate the danger.
  • Caseworkers must clearly articulate what protective capacity looks like and the expectations of the family to mitigate the danger.
Variation in Substance Use

U.S. Adult Alcohol Use Estimate
Potential consequences of risky drinking: multiple health, work and family issues

- Alcohol dependent
  - Referral to Treatment
  - 5%

- Risky drinkers
  - Brief Intervention
  - 25%

- Abstainers or low-risk drinkers
  - Positive reinforcement
  - 70%

Source: HealthTeamWorks, “SBIRT Guideline”, 2011
Risk Factors for Addiction

- Biology/Genes
  - Genetics
  - Gender
  - Mental Disorders

- Environment
  - Chaotic Home & Abuse
  - Parents Use & Attitudes
  - Peer Influences
  - Community Attitudes
  - Poor School Achievement

- DRUG
  - Route of Administration
  - Effect of Drug Itself

- Brain Mechanisms

- ADDICTION

Spectrum of Substance Use

In small groups, using the handout, brainstorm:

• Spectrum of Substance Use/Misuse/Disorder
• Patterns of Use (How often)
• Physical & Behavioral Impacts
• Multiple Areas of Functioning
# Substance Use Spectrum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NO ISSUE</th>
<th>MINOR ISSUE</th>
<th>MODERATE ISSUE</th>
<th>MAJOR ISSUE</th>
<th>SEVERE ISSUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PATTERNS OF USE</td>
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<td>LEVEL OF IMPAIRMENT</td>
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<td>CONTROL / JUDGEMENT</td>
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<td>RELATIONSHIPS</td>
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No/Low Risk Use → Harmful Use

- **Low Risk Use, No Use**: Consumption of any amount of alcohol or other drug below the amount identified as hazardous, and use in circumstances not defined as hazardous
- **Hazardous (Risky Use)**: Use that increases the risk for health consequences
- **Harmful Use**: Use with health consequences in the absence of addiction

Substance Use Disorder

A substance use disorder is marked by a cluster of cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms indicating that the individual continues to use alcohol, tobacco, and/or other drugs despite significant related problems.

Substance Use Disorder

**Symptoms include:**
- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Use in larger amounts or over a longer period of time than intended;
- Persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control use;
- A great deal of time spent in activities related obtaining or using substances or to recover from their effects;
- Relinquishing important social, occupational or recreational activities because of substance use; and
- Continuing use despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by such use

Addiction

Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory, and related circuitry. Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social, and spiritual manifestations. This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors.

Characteristics of Addiction

- Inability to consistently **Abstain**
- Impairment in **Behavioral control**
- Craving; or increased “hunger” for substance
- Diminished recognition of significant problems with one’s behaviors and interpersonal relationships
- A dysfunctional **Emotional** response.

Danger & Protective Capacity

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Impact of Parental Substance Use

• Basic Needs
• Relationships
• Health & Mental Health, including Behavior
• Development & Education

How do impacts vary by age (under 5, 6-12, 13+)?
Factors to Consider

• Age & Vulnerability of the Child
• Children’s Medical & Developmental Needs
• Accessibility of the Substance
• “Sober” Caregivers
  • Use Patterns, Level of Impairment
  • Presence of Other Caregivers
• Environmental Aspects
  • Second Hand Smoke, Living Conditions
  • Distribution, Manufacturing, Cultivation Aspects
  • Domestic Violence, Criminal Activity
Articulating Impact

Risk Statement: Child could be harmed how if Caregiver (does/doesn’t) behavior impacting child.

Layla could be neglected due to lack of supervision (lack basic care, food, and medical care) if Sara continues using alcohol and heroin in a manner that causes her to be incoherent (asleep, or otherwise unable to recognize and safely respond to the baby’s cues.)

Goal Statement: Child will be cared for by parent/caregiver who new protective action that mitigates risk so that new positive impact.

Layla will be cared for by a parent/caregiver who consistently and reliably attends to Layla’s basic needs (feeding, diapering, medical care) so that Layla is able to meet developmental milestones and develop healthy attachment.
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The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families

- **Core Functions**
  - State, system, agency, program and community leaders
  - Work across systems to:
    - Build parent partnerships
    - Deepen knowledge and understanding
    - Shift practice, policy and systems
    - Ensure accountability

- **Program Practice**
  - Programs that serve children and families:
    - Shift organization culture to value and build upon families’ strengths
    - Make policy changes to support changes in worker practice
    - Implement everyday actions that support families in building protective factors

- **Worker Practice**
  - Individual workers:
    - Have knowledge of protective factors and skills to help families build them
    - Change their approach to relationships with parents
    - Implement everyday actions that support families in building protective factors

- **Protective Factors**
  - Families are supported to build:
    - Parental resilience
    - Social connections
    - Knowledge of parenting and child development
    - Concrete support in times of need
    - Social and emotional competence of children

- **Results**
  - Strengthened families
  - Optimal child development
  - Reduced likelihood of child abuse and neglect
## Strengthening Families 
### Protective Factors

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<th>Protective Factor</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<td><strong>Parental Resilience</strong></td>
<td>The ability to recover from difficult life experiences, and often to be strengthened by and even transformed by those experiences.</td>
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<td><strong>Social Connections</strong></td>
<td>Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development</strong></td>
<td>Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development.</td>
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<td><strong>Concrete Support In Times of Need</strong></td>
<td>Access to concrete support and services that address a family’s needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.</td>
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<td><strong>Social and Emotional Competence of Children</strong></td>
<td>Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships.</td>
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RECOVERY
Stages of Change

- Precontemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Maintenance
- Relapse
What is Recovery?

• Recovery does not mean only abstinence or sobriety
• The process of trying to recover what was lost in addiction or toxic compulsive behaviors.
  • Includes: alcohol, drugs, sex and porn, over eating, tobacco use, gambling, hoarding.

What might someone lose during their addiction?
Different Approaches to Recovery

- 12 Step Programs
- Support Groups
- Religion/Spirituality
- Treatment
- Health and Wellness
- Medication Assisted Treatment
- Mandated Intervention
Dimensions of Recovery

Recovery is a process of change through which people improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential. There are four major dimensions that support recovery:

- **Health**—overcoming or managing one’s disease(s) or symptoms and making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being.
- **Home**—having a stable and safe place to live.
- **Purpose**—conducting meaningful daily activities and having the independence, income, and resources to participate in society.
- **Community**—having relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

SAMHSA, Recovery & Recovery Support, 2019
Parenting in Recovery is Complex

• Coping With Daily Stress/Trigger
• Developing New and Supportive Relationships
• Discipline Issues
• Overindulgence as a Coping Mechanism for Guilt
• Rebuilding Parent - Child Trust
• Preoccupation with Maintaining Recovery
• Overcoming Social Stigma
• Talking with Kids about Addiction
Parenting Support

Parents, especially those in recovery, need -

• Positive Social Network
• Sustainable
• Supportive
• Reduces Fear and Stigma
• Reduces Isolation
• Empowering
QUESTIONS
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