Recognizing & Responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) in Home Visitation Programs: A Trauma-&-Violence Informed Approach to Care

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Session Objectives

• To summarize the evidence for how home visitation programs can respond to adverse childhood experiences of women enrolled in the program

• To provide practical examples from the Nurse-Family Partnership nurse home visitation program
Adverse Childhood & Community Experiences

“I've had a number of clients that have lived on the streets and so I think multiple traumas have happened as a result. [I am working with one client who] had problems with her biological family, temporarily in foster care, having a parent who was a drug user who neglected her child and she was then assaulted by a landlord at age 12.”

Nurse Home Visitor
ACES Influence Health Across the Lifespan

- Early death
- Disease, disability, social problems
- Adoption of health risk behaviours
- Social, emotional, cognitive impairment
- Adverse childhood experiences

Adapted from Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
Prevention of ACES

- Parent education programs (conducted outside of the home)
- Dual treatment programs for substance use
  - Substance use treatment + parenting program
- Home visitation programs

Academy Health (2016)
Scoping Review

• What are the current approaches to integrating content related to ACEs into nurse home visitation programs’ education, practice and supervision?

• What existing strategies are available to provide guidance on how to implement, assess, and address ACES within home visiting programs with pregnant women and/or mothers with infants experiencing social and economic disadvantage?
Organizational policies and professional practices that focus on preventing harm by creating a safe environment for people who have experienced (and may still be experiencing) violence and trauma.
Trauma & Violence Informed Care Principles

- Be trauma and violence aware (prevalence and effects)
- Create safe environments
- Foster client choice, collaboration, connection
- Adopt strengths-based and capacity-orient approaches (for clients and staff)
Home Visitation Practice: Be trauma and violence aware
Assessment & Screening for ACES

Gathering accurate and comprehensive data on a woman’s past experiences of trauma (including ACES) as well as current experiences of trauma and violence is complex.
### Understanding “What has happened?”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Practice Goals</th>
<th>Professional Nursing Practice</th>
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<td>Get to know your client</td>
<td>Establishing therapeutic relationship</td>
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| Discover “what has happened” to her as well as “what makes her strong?” | Nursing assessment  
  - Historical risks: adverse childhood experiences (ACES); adverse community exposures  
  - Identification of past/current risk indicators |
| Explore what she would like to get out of her involvement in the home visitation program | Care Planning  
  - Identify short-and-long term goals related to personal health, parenting, life-course development |
Life History Calendar

- Develop understanding of
  - The woman & the life events she has experienced & how these shape her current reality
  - The context and relationships in which these experiences occurred
- Guides discussion and reflection on how these events shape her vision & goals for her own life and for preparing to parent
Please describe 3 defining life events...

• What happened? Tell me about the periods before and after...

• Describe where you were you living? What were you doing at the time?

• Who were the critical people in your life at that point in time? What were your relationships like? What influence did they have on your life and critical decisions?

• How does this experience influence your goals for the future?
Home Visitation Practice:
Create emotionally & physically safe environments
Provide Anticipatory Guidance

Sharing information about:

• Why an action is occurring
• Who will be involved
• When it will occur
• What will happen next

What Happens Next?

Many people and agencies can help you. You may have questions. You wonder how to get the help you need. You want to know what to expect.

Agency Name:

How can they help me?

Will it cost me any money?

How do I make an appointment?

How long will it take to get an appointment?

What forms do I need to complete?

What will it be like when I go there?

What else do I need to know?

Key contact:

Phone number:

Address:

Agency hours:
Home Visitation Practice: Fosters opportunities for choice, collaboration & connection
The client is the expert on her life

- Offer appropriate and meaningful options that are tailored to the client’s needs and circumstances.
Home Visitation Practice: Use a strengths-based and capacity building approach to care
Focus on solutions

- Motivational interviewing
- Appreciate coping strategies that have been successfully used
- Be aware of “triggers” that create distress & teach new coping skills
Key Ingredients!

- Ensure all home visitors receive education about trauma
- Develop client-centered program principles that reflect TVIC
- Create opportunities for person-centered discussions
- Facilitate individuals to identify goals and collaboratively explore options
- Provide high-quality reflective supervision for home visitors
Thank you
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