



WELCOME TO CEC'S

Fall PD Fair



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Lessons Learned: Bright Spots – Prevention of & Response to Maltreatment

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DIVISION OF
LEADERS &
LEGACY

Presentation Outline

- Presenter
- Definitions
- Guiding Concept
- Audience Poll
- Existing CEC Policy
- Problem
- Solution
- Results
- Use
- Challenge
- Strategy
- Q&A
- Handouts
- References

Presenter

- Deaf Education Teacher (1971-74)
- SPED School Administrator (1974-77)
- Deaf Education Faculty (1980-2013)
 - Kent State University
 - Michigan State University
- Maltreatment Research & Program Development (2006-present)
 - Progression of focus:
 - Level 1: Awareness & Understanding
 - Level 2: Observation & Reporting
 - Level 3: Prevention & Response

Definitions

- Maltreatment =
 - Neglect
 - Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Psychological abuse
 - Bullying

Guiding Concept

- **Reporting is NOT enough...**

- ...we must work to prevent the maltreatment of children, just as we work to prevent injury from car accidents through the use of seat belts.
- This is due to the fact that students with disabilities are three to four times more likely to experience maltreatment than their nondisabled peers (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000) with the resulting negative, life long impact of that experience upon the students health, learning, behavior, language and achievement (Morgart, Harrison, Hoon, & Floet, 2021)

Existing CEC Policy

- 2018 Prevention of & Response to Maltreatment
 - Recognizes “that all children and youth with disabilities have the right to live and flourish in a safe environment where they are protected and have support to protect themselves from neglect as well as physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.”
 - Advocates building awareness & understanding
 - Advocates enhancing mechanisms for recognizing & reporting
 - Advocates incorporating prevention & response in everyday practices

Problem

- Most educators lack the knowledge, skills, resources and support needed to implement maltreatment prevention and response strategies into their educational planning documents (i.e., IFSP, IEP & 504) and day-to-day instructional work.
- Insufficient SPED resources are available to research, design, and implement initial/ongoing professional development concerning maltreatment prevention and response.

Solution

- Identify, document, share, and collaborate with SPED professionals who are already actively and effectively working to enhance the safety and success of students with disabilities, i.e., “Bright Spots.”
- “Bright Spots” is a term used by Heath and Heath in their 2010 text entitled [Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard](#).



- Solution (cont.)

- Heath & Heath note that change is most effective from the “inside-out” vs. “top-down,” or “outside-in.”
- In this work, “Bright Spots” are “insiders” due to their direct, day-to-day interactions with students with disabilities, the parents of those students and/or the professionals who work with them.
- Each “Bright Spot” was nominated by an individual with direct knowledge of their work to enhance the safety and success of students with disabilities.

- Solution (cont.)
 - Each nominated “Bright Spot” was asked to document their work. That work was then reviewed and an interview was conducted with the “Bright Spot.”
 - The following information was documented during the “Bright Spots” interviews:
 - “Lessons Learned”
 - “Resources Developed”
 - “Resources Used”
 - “Collaborative interests”
 - This presentation will share a sampling of the existing 37 “Bright Spot” “Lessons Learned” and “Resources Used.”

Results: “Bright Spots” Lessons Learned

- **Level 1: Awareness & Understanding**

- Jenna Voss/University

- “Avoiding the topic (however you define it – e.g., adversity, harm, maltreatment, abuse, etc.) doesn’t make it go-away or not happen. Professionals need to directly confront their own biases and fears in order to protect children.”

- Brooke Winchell/University

- “Early interventionists often do not have training in trauma-informed care and rely on the child welfare system to assist in additional programming. Working across disciplines/agencies can add barriers and cause delays in necessary services for children and families in need.”

• **Level 1: Awareness & Understanding (cont.)**

- Kelly Carrero/University

- “Individuals with disabilities are often acting within their skill set, or competencies ... many genuinely do not know how to act in a more socially acceptable manner ... this puts them at risk to be both maltreated or to be offenders.”

- Carie Bires/State Policy Writer

- “There is low awareness about the rate of maltreatment among the very youngest children and the impacts on child development, which leads to lack of attention on the importance of connecting infants and toddlers to Early Intervention.”

- Marisa Fischer/University

- “Protective agencies and mandated reporters are underprepared and current training offerings do not focus on children with disabilities leading to underreporting and potentially impacting investigations and findings.”



- **Level 2: Observation & Reporting**

- Debbie Mood/University

- “The presentation of trauma symptoms in young children with reduced language and developmental disabilities is very frequently misunderstood by caregivers, teachers, and other allied health professionals and sometimes assumed to be a symptom of the developmental disability itself.”

- Lonna Moline/University

- “Critical to be aware of signs of maltreatment and reporting them. Feel comfortable with reporting even suspicions-you don’t need to be the one making the final decision but so important to make the call.”



- **Level 2: Observation & Reporting (cont.)**

- Paul Garcia/Teacher

- “Children experiencing maltreatment may be withdrawn or quiet. With these children it is important to be vigilant and to find a few moments daily to connect with them.”

- Kristen Grender Grenderk/Teacher

- “Teachers need to be trained to be culturally sensitive, understanding that different cultural backgrounds may impact the perception and disclosure of maltreatment.”

- Ana Adl/Teacher

- “Our CPS system to protect our most vulnerable individuals is broken.”



- **Level 3: Prevention & Response**

- Mia Chudzik/University

- “Trauma-informed care is not a checklist of practices, but a mindset shift towards how we view and respond to behavior and children’s needs.”

- Christine Griffin/Parent

- “Given tools and strategies Parents and Caregivers can help keep their child safe by increasing their use of language, to express their feelings/emotions, and name body parts, that are safe and unsafe to touch.”

- Megan Hendrick/Parent

- “Behavior is communication. Look and listen for changes in behavior and mood and respond in a caring, open way.”



- **Level 3: Prevention & Response (cont.)**

- Megan Hillegas/Teacher

- “I have learned that instead of asking, “What is wrong with this child?”, I reframe the question as “What happened to this child?”

- Michael (Ben) Curtis/Teacher & Amy Curtin/School Psychologist

- “The biggest mitigating factor in helping children heal from trauma is the quality and amount of positive, supportive, attentive, and attuned relationships they have with caring adults.”

- Dustin Bindreiff/School Administrator

- “Behavior is communication. When our students behave in unexpected ways- it’s our job to teach them the skills to communicate their needs safely.”

- **Level 3: Prevention & Response (cont.)**
 - Jamie Hopkins/Retired SPED Professional
 - “Children can learn to advocate for themselves and to report their concerns to trusted adults.”
 - Janine Darragh/University
 - “All students can benefit when teachers thoughtfully incorporate trauma-sensitive practices into their pedagogy and practice.”
 - Chad Rose/University
 - “Social and communication skill deficits are two of the strongest predictors of bullying involvement and should be considered when designing and implementing bullying prevention programming.”

Results: “Bright Spots” Resources Used

- Level 1: Awareness & Understanding
 - [The Risk & Prevention of Maltreatment of Children with Disabilities](#)
 - 2018 Summary Document: “This bulletin for professionals describes the scope of the problem, risk factors, and strategies for prevention.”
 - [Maltreatment and disabilities: A population-based epidemiological study](#)
 - 2000 Research Study: “Children with disabilities are 3.4 times more likely to be maltreated than nondisabled peers.”



- Level 1: Awareness & Understanding (cont.)

- Global estimates of violence against children with disabilities

- 2022 Research Study: “...children with disabilities experience a high burden of all forms of violence, despite advances in awareness and policy in the past 10 years.”

- About Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

- CDC explanation of the incidence & impact of maltreatment + risk & protective factors + prevention



- Level 2: Observation & Reporting

- What is Child Abuse & Neglect: Recognizing the Signs & Symptoms

- 2019 Summary Document: “This factsheet...the Federal definition of child abuse and neglect; learn about the different types of abuse and neglect, including human trafficking; and recognize their signs and symptoms. ”

- How to Report Child Abuse & Neglect

- State Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Phone numbers

- “Lists contact information to report maltreatment to local agencies.”



- How to Report Child Abuse & Neglect (cont.)

- Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline

- “Provides information on the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline (**Call or text 1.800.4.A.CHILD [1.800.422.4453]**). Professional crisis counselors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in over 170 languages. All calls are confidential. The hotline offers crisis intervention, information, and referrals to thousands of emergency, social service, and support resources.”

- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

- “Provides information about **how to report online sexual exploitation of a child** or if you suspect that a child has been inappropriately contacted online. The center will make the information available to law enforcement so they can investigate.”



- Level 3: Prevention & Reporting

- Stop Bullying

- U.S. Government Website: “Learn how to identify bullying and stand up to it safely.”

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network

- National Collaborative Network: “...raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families and communities throughout the United States.”

- Level 3: Prevention & Reporting (cont.)
 - SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma & Guidance for Trauma-informed Approach
 - The purpose of this paper is to develop a working concept of trauma and a trauma-informed approach and to develop a shared understanding of these concepts that would be acceptable and appropriate across an array of service systems and stakeholder groups.
 - Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom
 - 2016 text designed to "...help you cultivate a trauma-sensitive learning environment for students across all content areas, grade levels, and educational settings."

- Level 3: Prevention & Reporting (cont.)
 - The School Discipline Fix: Changing Behavior Using the Collaborative Problem Solving Approach
 - 2018 text designed to “...provides everything needed to implement the program, including reproducible assessment tools to pinpoint skill deficits in areas like frustration tolerance and flexibility that are at the root of students' challenging behaviors.”
 - Center for Culturally Proficient Ed. Practices
 - Website “...providing and supporting educators with an equity-based professional learning framework that ensures high quality teaching and learning experiences exist for all learners.”



- Level 3: Prevention & Reporting (cont.)

- Children's Alliance: Protective Factors

- Website “The Strengthening Families approach and protective factors framework is a research-informed, strengths-based approach that prevents child abuse and neglect by focusing on the well-being of all families and helping families identify and build on their own protective factors.”

- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations

- “...a focus on promoting the social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of young children birth to five, reducing the use of inappropriate discipline practices, promoting family engagement, using data for decision-making, integrating early childhood and infant mental health consultation and fostering inclusion.”

• Level 3: Prevention & Reporting (cont.)

• O.U.R. Children Project

- National **parent organization** Website designed to enhance student safety and success, e.g.,
 - Parent Safety Toolkit
 - Recommended Book List
 - ++ Articles & Webinars

• kidpower International

- International Non-profit organization designed to “...prepare children, teens, and adults, including those with special needs, with the **skills and knowledge they need to prevent and stop harm** such as bullying, abuse, harassment, assault, and other emotional, social, or physical ...”
 - Protecting kids
 - Preparing teens
 - Empowering adults

Use

- Educators **cannot address** all of the causes of maltreatment.
- Major causes of child maltreatment such as:
 - parental drug addiction, mental health, criminality;
 - spousal abuse;
 - housing insecurity & unstable home settings
 - ...are beyond the scope of what an educator can address during the course of their day-to-day instructional work.

- This is in contrast to the maltreatment **causes educators can address...**

- Early Intervention:

- Parents knowledge of child development and use of effective parenting skills (Sprague-Jones, Singh, Rousseau, Counts, & Firman, (2020), i.e.,
 - Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development; and
 - Social & Emotional Competence of Children.
- Parents establishing and monitoring “circles of trust,” i.e., individuals who are permitted to provide care for their child in the absence of the primary caregiver;

- Early Intervention: **causes educators can address...**
 - Parents recognizing “grooming” attempts by individuals who seek to maltreat their child;
 - Parents recognizing the behavioral indicators that a child may have experienced a maltreatment experience; and
 - Parents use of face-to-face and online help, e.g., the ChildHelp Hotline (1-800-4-A-CHILD), if they are concerned about the safety of their child or themselves.

- K-12 Education: **causes that educators can address...**
 - Students knowledge and use of:
 - The interactions of loving and supportive family and friends vs. that experienced during maltreatment (Lightfoot, 2014);
 - Their right to say “NO” and what to do if that right is not respected (Hibbard & Desch, 2007);
 - The skills to effectively convey their full range of emotions, e.g., happy, scared, sad, afraid, excited, etc. (García, Díez, Wojcik, & Santamaría, 2020);

- K-12 Education: **causes that educators can address...**
 - Students knowledge and use of...
 - Skills to effectively gain the attention of a trusted adult and express the who, what, when, and where of their experiences, including incidents of maltreatment (Bae, Kang, Hang, Cho, & Cho, 2017; Wetcott et al, 1999);
 - The ability to recognize and avoid “risky” face-to-face and online situations (Briggs, 2006; Palusci, Datner, & Wilkins, 2015; Hershkowitz, Lamb, & Herowitz, 2007);
 - Strategies to gain age-appropriate friends which, in turn, reduces their loneliness and tendency to accept any attention, including attention experienced during maltreatment (Palusci et al, 2015);

- K-12 Education: **causes that educators can address...**
 - Students knowledge and use of...
 - The changes that occur during/following puberty to both their body and their emotions and how to respond to those changes in a safe, age-appropriate manner (Guo, Chen, Yu, Jiang, Song, & Jin, 2019; Jemta, Fugl-Meyer, & Oberg, 2008).

Challenge

- Most SPED educators:
 1. **Have not been prepared** to incorporate maltreatment prevention goals/objectives into the IFSP or IEP documents of their families or students;
 2. **Lack sufficient peer and administrative support** to address the prevention of maltreatment within their work; and
 3. **Do not have access to maltreatment prevention resource prevention content and strategies.**

Strategy

1. Inform:

- A temporary Web page for the [“Bright Spot” Project](#) has been established on the [Division of Leaders and Legacy](#) Web site.
- The “Bright Spot” Project is scheduled to be added to the CEC Web by January 2025. The new site will provide a searchable index of:
 - “Bright Spot” interviews, collaborative interests & contact information
 - Maltreatment focused presentations, Websites, and research studies.



2. Focus:

- A CEC “Position Statement’ concerning the prevention of and response to maltreatment has been drafted and is currently under review. A publication decision is expected by January of 2025.
- The published statement has been designed to enhance the existing 2018 [CEC Policy on the Prevention of and Response to Maltreatment](#) by providing SPED educators with more specific guidance concerning the design and implementation of programs designed to both prevent and respond to the maltreatment of children with disabilities.

3. Apply:

- The “USE” section of this presentation identified specific, IFSP and IEP maltreatment prevention knowledge and skills, e.g., “...students know they have the right to say “NO” and what to do if that right is not respected.”
- Use these knowledge and skill statements to enhance IEP documents, e.g.,
 - ***IEP Objective for Social Skills & Self Advocacy:** “By the end of the IEP period, [Child's Name] will demonstrate an understanding of personal boundaries and the right to refuse by effectively communicating “NO” in two out of three role-playing scenarios and identifying appropriate steps to take if their right to say “NO” is not respected.”
 - ***Measurement Methods:**
 - “Observations during role-playing activities.
 - Checklists completed by teachers or staff observing the interactions.
 - Anecdotal notes highlighting moments of success and areas needing support.”



- 3. **Apply:** (cont.)

- ***Support Strategies:**

- “Provide visual supports (e.g., pictures/signs of "NO" and respectful boundaries).
- Engage in regular discussions about feelings, boundaries, and the importance of personal rights.
- Encourage practice in safe environments with peers and trusted adults.”

- ***Summary Statement:**

- “This objective promotes self-advocacy and ensures that [Child's Name] learns the importance of his personal right to refuse, while also equipping him with strategies to stay safe and respected.”

- *This information was generated by [ChatGPT](#). [Imagine how this technology has the potential to support educators drafting of IEPs.](#)

4. Collaborate:

- **Use:**

- As of 10/24/2024 thirty-seven individuals have been documented as “Bright Spots” in the prevention of and response to the maltreatment of students with disabilities. By January of 2025 their contact information and interviews will be available via a new, searchable section of the CEC Web site. Use this information to both inform and guide your work.
- In addition to sharing their information, each “Bright Spot” has identified several areas on which they would like to collaborate. A summative list of those areas, plus the “Bright Spots” contact information is included in the “Handouts” for this presentation. Use this list of collaborative interests to find a “Bright Spot” who shares your interest and then contact them to discuss common interests and goals.



- 4. Collaborate (cont.)

- **Grow:**

- The more “Bright Spots” we have, the better informed we will be and the faster that we can begin to systematically enhancing the safety and success of students with disabilities.
- Your help is needed to identify additional “Bright Spots,” i.e., individuals who are actively and effectively working to enhance the safety and success of students with disabilities.
- Due to your participation in this Webinar, you will receive copies of the existing “Bright Spot Newsletters.” In addition to sharing information from selected “Bright Spot” newsletters, you will also learn how identify and nominate individuals to be recognized as a “Bright Spot.” ...**PLEASE do so!**

5. Share:

- The prevention of, and response to maltreatment, begins with a conversation. If you are not willing to have such a conversation, you are not ready to prevent, or respond to the maltreatment of your students. Share the information in this presentation to start a conversation with a colleague. Inform them, as you prepare to act on the behalf of your students.



Handouts

- “Bright Spots”
 - Summative list of collaborative interests & contact information.
 - Newsletters



Questions & Answers

- Let's talk....



THANK YOU

I hope to have the opportunity to both work with and learn from you to achieve our common goal of enhancing the safety and success of children with disabilities.

Harold Johnson/3hajohnson@gmail.com

Wrap-Up from CEC

A graphic designed to look like a chalkboard with a wooden border. At the top left is the Council for Exceptional Children logo. To its right, the word 'WEBINAR' is written in large, white, 3D block letters. Below the logo, a yellow sticky note contains the text 'Check out our upcoming webinars:' and a QR code. To the right of the sticky note is a white calendar icon with 'FALL 2024' written inside. In the bottom right corner of the chalkboard is a smaller version of the Council for Exceptional Children logo.

 Council for Exceptional Children

WEBINAR

Check out our upcoming webinars:



 **FALL 2024**

 Council for Exceptional Children

References

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