Child and Adolescent Mental Health Amid COVID-19: Reflection, Response, and Resiliency

Program Description
Without question, the global pandemic of 2020-2021 has had a significant impact on children, adolescents, and families across North Carolina. Key indicators of mental health and well-being suggest that children and adolescents, in particular, are experiencing declines in mental health and academic performance and have inadequate access to services to support their complex needs. But how can we best understand how children and youth have experienced the effects of the pandemic, and how do we respond effectively as human service professionals?

In this presentation, we will review what we know about the current state of child and adolescent mental health in North Carolina and will link this to policy and practice applications for our everyday work. We will explore how the pandemic highlighted existing health disparities for children and families with marginalized identities and link this to a need for advocacy work within North Carolina. We will also underscore the importance of remaining resilient as professionals amid a challenging practice landscape and will discuss how to implement lessons learned from the pandemic to drive practice innovations aimed at supporting child and family well-being.

Learning Objectives
Upon completion of this workshop, participants should be able to
1. Describe the current research on mental health outcomes for children and adolescents in North Carolina amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Explore human service policy and practice implications for responding effectively to impacts of the pandemic on children, youth, and families.
3. Examine "lessons learned" from providing human services to children and families over the past two years and identify innovations in policy and practice that may serve youth and families in the coming months.
4. Discuss the strain on human service professionals navigating changing practice landscapes and highlight strategies for supporting personal and professional well-being.
5. Define and describe health disparities and other issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion related to the impact of COVID-19 on child and family wellbeing.

Target Audience
This workshop will benefit mental health practitioners, educators, human service professionals, and community advocates interested in this topic.

Contact Hours
3.0 Contact Hours

Program Agenda

Reflection:

- Welcome, introductions, and initial reflection activity (20 minutes)
- Current data on North Carolina child mental health outcomes, 2021 (20 minutes)
- Linking child outcomes with family and community wellbeing (20 minutes)
- Activity: Your experience with families in recent months (10 minutes)

BREAK (15 minutes)

Response:

- Policy and practice implications to support child mental health (30 minutes)
- Discussion activity: What needs to change in North Carolina? (20 minutes)

Resiliency:

- Lessons learned: Supporting resilience in children and families (20 minutes)
- Discussion activity: How has your practice changed? (10 minutes)
- Remaining resilient as a human services professional (30 minutes)

Faculty

Amy Levine, MSW, LCSW, is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work, where she teaches courses in child welfare and mental health and serves as a faculty member in the field education program. Amy has a practice background in both public and private child welfare services as well as mental health and worked for 12 years as a child, adolescent, and family therapist. Amy is also a North Carolina Certified Clinical Supervisor, providing supervision and consultation to LCSW-A's in North Carolina. Amy's practice and research interests include trauma-informed models of care, child and adolescent mental health, and the intersection of child welfare and behavioral health services. Amy enjoys providing training on a variety of practice topics and appreciates learning from and further supporting the important work carried out by our human service professionals.