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May is...

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE
AWARENESS MONTH



Become Trauma-Informed

I've had the privilege of working in the foster care system throughout my whole career, from my internship at DCFS while getting my BSW at CSULB to now as a clinical supervisor at Families Uniting Families, Foster Family Services Agency. I have worked with birth families, foster parents, foster children, Children's Social Workers directly as a social worker, intake/placement worker, a supervisor, therapist, group facilitator, prospective foster parent trainer, and parenting educator, and indirectly by supervising workers and by educating the community with trauma-informed workshops.

Through this experiences, I have learned that everyone involved in the foster care system has a significant role in helping families heal from trauma and has the responsibility to be kind and trauma-informed within their role. That includes foster parents, social workers, supervisors, teachers, doctors, therapists, parenting facilitators, service providers, and the children who are stuck in out-of-home care until they can return home or go to an alternative permanent placement. Unfortunately, I have seen firsthand how families and children suffer further trauma due to team members that are supporting them lacking knowledge on trauma and not applying trauma-informed practices. Thus, I urge anyone that works with children and families in any capacity, to become trauma and foster care aware as undoubtedly you will come across a family impacted by trauma or involved with the child welfare system at some point in your workplace. Websites like www.NCTSN.org or www.childwelfare.gov, offer great information to gain a better understanding of those topics to help in identifying and addressing the needs of the families you come across in your line of work.

Wouldn't it be amazing if we would all be on the same page, teachers, childcare workers, nurses, coaches, receptionists, case managers, administrators, therapists, group facilitators... It would make our work much easier and more effective. It's my dream, that one day we all will be trauma-informed and be more understanding with each other, which will make for a supportive environment not just in child welfare but in the world.

Marilyn Mejia-Peña, LCSW



FOSTER FAMILIES NEEDED

According to the children's Law Center of CA there are about 60,000 children in out-of-home care in California alone (let the number sink in.) Those children need families that will support them and their parents in their journey to healing their trauma wounds. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of foster families to provide the needed care. If you have space in your home, patience and heart to foster or adopt a child please do. You become a foster parent through a foster family agency like Families Uniting Families or through your local child protective services agency (DCFS, CPS)

An enormous thank you to the amazing foster parents, social workers, and anyone involved in supporting families in the foster care system. Your efforts, dedication and amazing work are greatly appreciated even though you are rarely recognized. Please know that you are essential in ensuring the safety, wellbeing and thriving of families.



IT'S OK TO NOT BE OK AND IT'S OK TO ASK FOR SUPPORT

Most of us are not OK, and that's expected after the past 2 years we have been through. Our mental health has suffered as a collective and it's not just children that have been impacted, but us, the grown ups have been too. We have had to stay afloat and have been threading water for a while with little or no rest. We have been dealing with this pandemic the best we can and have been adjusting to all the changes it brought with it at work, home, relationships and social life, while dealing with the possibility that we or our loved ones could die of COVID or could kill someone of COVID through exposure. (I know it sounds dramatic but that's truly how I see it.) So it's no wonder we are not feeling like ourselves at times or most of the time and that's ok, but it is important to know that it is ok for us to seek support too. Whether it is professionally through therapy, support group, hotline, EAP, or by sharing the challenges we face with our friends and supportive colleagues, we should not be suffering in silence or be embarrassed or ashamed for feeling how we feel. Please use whatever way you find easier and accessible to you to meet your mental health needs and know that you are not alone in this journey, we are all walking alongside with our own challenges. Being open about it, will diminish the stigma and fear of seeking support. Mental health is part of our overall health and essential to our wellbeing, therefore, let's care for it. Let's celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month by nurturing our own mental health.



Upcoming Events

IG LIVE

LET'S TALK ABOUT TRAUMA

Monday May 9th at 11 a.m.

HABLEMOS SOBRE EL TRAUMA

Miercoles, 11 de Abril a las 11 a.m.

@RESILIENCESOCIALWORK

WORKSHOPS

TRAUMA ASSESSMENT & DIAGNOSIS

Thursday, May 12 from 11 a.m. –1:00 Cost: \$35

ANTI- BURNOUT STRATEGIES

Thursday, May 26 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Cost: \$20

Register at:

<https://resiliencesocialwork.com/events>

COACHING

Skill Building Therapists' Coaching Group

Wednesdays May 11 & 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$20 p/group or \$30 a month

Sign up at:

<https://resiliencesocialwork.com/events>

By the way I am available to provide in-service staff development trainings in-person or virtually, as well as consultation services and professional coaching. For questions or referrals contact me via social media, website, email or phone provided in the first page

Every year 4,000 youth age out of foster care in California and 65% of them leave with no place to call home.

Source: Finallyfamilyhomes.org



www.ilponline.org

Offers resources for transitioning age youth (TAY) on housing, education, financial aid, jobs/career, health resources for youth that are currently or have been previously in foster care. Please share this resource with youth that could benefit from it or with others that may work with TAY.

ADOPT

IF YOU CAN'T ADOPT:

FOSTER



IF YOU CAN'T FOSTER:

SPONSOR



IF YOU CAN'T SPONSOR:

VOLUNTEER



IF YOU CAN'T VOLUNTEER:

DONATE



IF YOU CAN'T DONATE:

EDUCATE



Adoptionmamblog.com

Happy Mother's Day!

