

NEARI NEWS:

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

An Essential Tool for Professionals Working with those who Sexually Abuse or... A Great New Way to Stay Current with Cutting Edge Sexual Abuse Research.



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Dear Colleague,

This month's issue explores the Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency (ARC) Approach to working with children or adolescents with severe multiple early trauma histories. The approach offers a number of strategies for working with this population and their caregiver systems, challenging us to look at each individual child and the environment in which he/she lives.

We also wanted to let you know that we are starting up our newest webinar series. This year, we plan to host 9 webinars with internationally recognized experts such as Robin Wilson, Phil Rich, Geral Blanchard, Kevin Creeden and Pat Wilcox.

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As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at info@nearipress.org or call us at 413-540-0712 x14.

Sincerely,
Joan Tabachnick and Steven Bengis

Effective Interventions for Children and Adolescents with Multiple Early Trauma Histories

by Steven Bengis, David S. Prescott, and Joan Tabachnick

Question

Are Manualized Approaches to Trauma Treatment Best Practice?

The Research

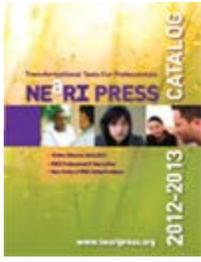
In a briefing paper for the British Psychological Society, Margaret E. Blaustein and Kristin M. Kinniburgh outline the theoretical and practical implications of their Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency (ARC) model for children with severe multiple early trauma histories. The children they consider in this paper have experienced ongoing and severe trauma at an early age, and later engage in sexually abusive behaviors. Recognizing the impact of trauma, as outlined by van der Kolk and others, the ARC framework identifies 10 key "building blocks" or intervention targets, within the three broad domains of Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency. For each target, the ARC guidebook provides a menu of possible strategies for both the child or adolescent and their caregiver.

When describing ARC, the authors specifically differentiate this approach from other "one-size-fits-all" manualized trauma treatment interventions. Rather than provide a session-by-session sequence of intervention, ARC-informed treatment is meant to be tailored to the needs and resources of each individual child or adolescent and their caregivers. A unique strength of this program is ARC's open-ended approach that reflects the current state of knowledge more than the perspective of any one researcher or for-profit treatment approach. Initial results indicate a significant decrease in key targeted symptoms (e.g., PTSD symptoms and behavior difficulties) as well as a significant increase in the caregiver's adaptive skills.

Implications for Professionals

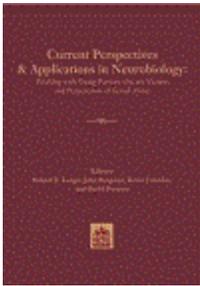
The ARC model provides practitioners with a framework within which to craft highly individualized treatment interventions for children and adolescents who are severely traumatized during critical developmental periods. It is a "strengths-based model, which emphasizes the importance of building or re-building safe relational systems attending to both the child or teen and their caregivers. In the context of that safer system, the model focuses on skill building, stabilizing internal distress and enhancing regulatory capacity[ies]".

The model pushes us toward careful assessments across multiple



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FEATURED NEARI RESOURCES



[Perspectives & Applications in Neurobiology: Working with Young Persons who are Victims and Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse](#)

by Robert E. Longo, David S. Prescott, John Bergman, and Kevin Creeden

One of the most important scientific advancements of the past few decades is our increased understanding of the brain and the impact of the environment and other interventions on this complex neurobiology.

This new volume by some of the leading experts in the field compiles a comprehensive overview of the core factors we need to understand that impact on neurobiology and treatment outcomes for sexually abusive youth as well as the children and adolescents who are victimized. According to one well-know practitioner, " *This text of evidenced-based practice and practice-based evidence is the most accessible neurobiological*

domains and challenges those who use prescribed manualized approaches for these clients to rethink that approach based on the important differentiations present in the wide range of clients and families coming forward into treatment. The one area this model does not fully address is the growing number of neurobiological interventions that effectively help clients achieve self-regulation and emotional competency. This latter approach can be critical for many of our traumatized clients.

Implications for the Field

Manualized approaches often offer comfort to some practitioners and program administrators of a consistent method and model that will be offered to every client walking through their door. At their best, a treatment manual approach provides clear, prescribed, and replicable (when delivered with careful fidelity) treatment delivery. But, too often, that consistency comes with a price, the failure to understand and adapt to the differences between each individual child or adolescent and may fail to consider the family and caregiving systems surrounding and influencing that child.

Embracing individualization requires more intense training, more thoughtful diagnostics and a larger "toolkit". However, it is our view, that failing to embrace complexity weakens treatment outcomes, placing both clients who have sexually abused and future victims at greater risk. Such an approach does require more training and experience, but given the difference in ages, the changes developmentally, the diversity of experiences (especially with trauma), the variety of supports and protective factors across this age group, it is essential to consider the multiplicity of factors that affect our clients.

Citation

- Blaustein, M. and Kinniburgh, K. (2007). Intervention beyond the child: The intertwining nature of attachment and trauma. *British Psychological Society briefing paper 26*, 48-53.

Abstract

The goal of the ARC framework is to promote thoughtful, flexible approaches to clinical work with complex traumatized youth and their families, that draws from a theoretical and empirical knowledge base, while honoring the individual skill set of the practitioner. ARC-informed intervention does not focus on a single diagnostic category or symptom presentation. It recognizes that the child is not simply a composite of their deficits but rather a whole being, with strengths, vulnerabilities, challenges, and resources. ARC seeks to recognize the factors that derail normative development, and to work with children, their families and their systems to build or rebuild healthy developmental pathways.

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FIVE-DAY TRAINING

Best Practices for Addressing Sexual Harm by Youth

by Joann Schladale

The NEARI Press Training Center brings back a Five-Day training by Joann Schladale to be held on October 7-12 in Albany, NY.

Best Practices for Addressing Sexual Harm by Youth will provide participants with an overview of best practices with in-depth training covering the key research, skills to accurately assess and manage risk, consideration of a developmental approach for intervention and treatment across a full continuum of care that involves the youth, his or her family, and any available social supports.

Cost is \$1,100 due by October 1.

To register for this important program, contact Diane Langelier, NEARI Training Coordinator, at 413.540.0712 x14 or email Diane at info@nearipress.org.