Group Attachment-Based Intervention: A model to prevent a cycle of intergenerational child maltreatment in families that have experienced trauma

Vered Bar On, Anne Murphy, Howard Steele & Miriam Steele

The lecture will deal with the link between child maltreatment and an intergenerational cycle of trauma using attachment theory. It will discuss using AAIs classified U/CC as a predictor of the most troubling infant-parent relationships and will introduce the Group Attachment-Based Intervention. GABI is an intensive model for dealing with socially isolated, marginalized families, which focuses on the child, the parent and the parent-child relationship. GABI was developed by Dr. Anne Murphy and is delivered at the Center for Babies, Toddlers and Families (CBTF) at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. From an attachment perspective, GABI focuses on mechanisms by which individuals with histories of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can be helped to alter established negative trajectories and work toward resolving adverse experiences in order to achieve greater attachment security. GABI's effectiveness is being empirically studied in collaboration with the Center for Attachment Research under the direction of Prof. Howard Steele and Prof. Miriam Steele at the New School for Social Research. The assessments by the research team evaluate the parent-child relationship and the quality of attachment at the beginning, middle, and end of treatment, as well as the emotional wellbeing of parent and child and the child's developmental trajectory, and is measuring the efficacy of GABI in comparison to the usual treatment (i.e., STEP-Systematic Training for Effective Parenting).

Keywords: intergenerational, attachment theory, child-maltreatment, ACEs

Name: Vered Bar-On, PhD, Clinical Psychologist, Postdoctoral fellow the Center for Attachment Research, New School for Social Research New York NY. Clinical psychologist, assisting in delivery of Group Attachment Based Intervention (GABI) at the Center for Babies, Toddlers and Families (CBTF), Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, NY

Anne Murphy, PhD, Associate Professor, Clinical Pediatrics, & Director of Clinical Services, Rose Kennedy Center, Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Responding sensitively to children who are reluctant to disclose abuse: an evaluation of a nationwide training program for forensic interviewers

Uri Blasbalg, Yael Karni-Visel, Irit Hershkowitz, Michael E. Lamb, Beth C. Ahern, & Michal Briteman

Researchers have recently begun to examine the effects of training interviewers to supportively manage reluctance during forensic interviews with alleged victims of child abuse. The Revised Protocol (RP) was designed to increase interviewers’ use of support because many victims of intra-familial abuse are reluctant to disclose and interviewers struggle to respond appropriately. Although the RP was associated with more support than the standard NICHD Protocol, the provision of support was not attuned directly to children’s reluctance. Thus the RP was elaborated for the present study and communicated to interviewers in a series of training sessions.

Fifty-three investigators interviewed 321 3- to 14-year-old alleged victims. Acquired skills were assessed according to the cumulative results of training over multiple sessions. During the training period child investigators were provided with group and individual supervisory sessions focused on employing specific supportive strategies for each interview part when child’s reluctance is encountered. All sessions included review of recently conducted interviews which were quantitatively evaluated by supervisors, interviewers, and researchers. Interviewer insensitivity to children’s reluctance and inadequate support both decreased whereas levels of appropriate support increased over time. Younger children received more appropriate and inadequate support than older children. Importantly, the interviewers continued to use recall-based utterance types (i.e., invitations) at high levels. These findings show that interviewers can be trained to conduct interviews that are more sensitive and emotionally supportive as well as cognitively supportive using the elaborated-Revised Protocol.

uriblasbalg@gmail.com
About service “maltreatment”

Cinzia Canali

The presentation will discuss the issue of professional activity that fails to support children in distress and that actually creates suffering for these children. The result for this failure could be the result of inappropriate practices that are based on a combination of actions without a finalised and comprehensive plan. It could also be an effect of an "omission" of timely support. This support can be provided too late for different reasons, for example due to bureaucratic issues, lack of coordination, or vacuum of coordination between the various responsible providers. In our recent research with children in situations of severe risk or at-risk of out-of-home placement we identified that any one of these two problems could cause unnecessary suffering for the children.

The “maltreatment of services” could be prevented and avoided by using interventions that are based on protocols and that for as much as possible are provided before emergency is created. This strategy delivers more stable outcomes (after a short term support) that could be achieved with subsequent forms of cure and care for effective focused care of the problems in different settings: at home, at community level, or in out-of-home placements.

The presentation will 1) report on one case study of a child in care of fragmented services (social and health) and a possible solution to avoid an ongoing fragmentation and 2) present rates of various service involvement in the treatment of a group of children in care of social and health services. This group of children is the target of an implementation project coordinated by Fondazione Zancan.

Key words: professionals, social and health services, outcomes, maltreatment

Cinzia Canali and Tiziano Vecchiato, Fondazione Emanuela Zancan, Italy

Corresponding author: cinziacanali@fondazionezancan.it