



Partners

The Newsletter For Wisconsin's Adoptive & Foster Families



A publication of Adoption Resources of Wisconsin

Spring 2012

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Partners is published by Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, dedicated to recruiting families for Wisconsin children in foster care and providing support to foster and adoptive families. The *Partners* Newsletter is written and compiled by members of the Adoption Resources of Wisconsin staff.



An Introduction to Trauma Informed Care

Every day, it seems, we learn more and more about the effects of trauma on a child and his or her healthy development. The recently published *Adverse Childhood Experiences* in Wisconsin report tells us that "early experiences have a broader and more profound impact than most of us would ever guess." As foster and adoptive parents, it's our guess that you understand this more than most – and that you need services, support and information to help you help your children. For those reasons, we are going to tackle the topic of Trauma Informed Care all year long in *Partners*.

For this issue, we want to simply introduce the subject – provide you with the basics, the background and the best resources to learn more and educate yourself, your extended family and your support network about things like brain development, adverse childhood experiences – or ACEs – and trauma informed care. We hope that you'll take part in this journey with us by talking back on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or by [emailing](#) us your questions, concerns and tips that we can share with other families like yours.

What is Trauma Informed Care?

So, let's start at the beginning: what exactly is trauma informed care? Well, to understand what trauma informed care is, we have to understand, first, what an ACE is. As defined in the *Adverse Childhood Experiences* in Wisconsin report, "an adverse childhood experience is a traumatic experience prior to the age of 18." This can include things such as:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Living with an alcohol or drug abuser
- An incarcerated household member
- Living with a person who was chronically depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized or suicidal
- Witnessing violence between adults in the home
- Experiencing parental separation or divorce

Continued on page 3

Dear Friends,

A few weeks ago, I turned on the 10 p.m. news and heard about a teen who had been locked in the basement by her family. She survived, but is severely malnourished and the victim of an incredible amount of neglect and abuse. I grieved for this child. As a parent, and now a grandparent, I cannot imagine the pain this child endured – and the effects of the trauma she has endured. Each year, Wisconsin has hundreds and thousands of children who come into care because of abuse and neglect. Each year, I see social workers and therapists throughout the state grapple with the daunting task of helping individual children heal. ARW hears from many of you foster and adoptive families who are struggling to give these children hope of a better life.

We are excited to announce our 2012 goal of helping all of us understand trauma and how adverse circumstances in a child's life affect them in many, many different ways. When we watch TV or open the newspapers and learn about tragedies, we wonder about the immediate effects of a child's physical condition. It's hard to get our arms and heads around what it means long term. Is this child going to trust anyone? Will this child question forever what was "wrong with them" that made him or her a victim? Will this child suffer from mental health issues for his or her entire lifetime? Will he or she ever have a sense of safety and happiness in his or her life? Could he or she ever successfully parent a child? ***Can someone turn that child's life around?***

Whether you are a parent or a helper of parents, we all collectively grieve when we hear these stories. We all know that no child deserves this treatment. All children deserve to grow up with love, safety and a strong family. We struggle with trying to understand not only why abuse and neglect occurs, but also how we can help after it has happened. As more research is done on the brain, the effects of early and repeated traumas show us that cumulative effect is serious for all the children we serve. Agencies in Wisconsin are already working to take new knowledge and incorporate it into better services. As our understanding grows, I know that those who work in the child welfare field will become increasingly effective at helping children – and the families that help them – heal.



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When you hear a care provider or support provider talking about trauma informed care, they are looking to determine what – if any – traumatic experiences, like those listed above, your child has suffered. They are also looking to find out when he or she experienced the trauma and how long the trauma lasted. All of the support, care and help that you seek out for your child can then be customized to help him or her heal. In short, it's changing the question from "what's wrong," to "what happened."

Why is it Important?

Early life experiences set the stage for development and lifelong welfare. If your early life and childhood is filled with mostly positive experiences and memories, then you are more likely to lead a healthier life and can look forward to a more promising future. However, if you have mostly negative experiences, or perhaps one life altering negative experience, then you are more likely to deal with frequent life stressors and challenges. According to the *Adverse Childhood Experiences in Wisconsin* study, the more ACEs someone has correlates to an increase in poor physical health, mental health concerns and lower school and work success, as well as a lower socioeconomic status.

Almost by definition, entering the child welfare system qualifies as an ACE. One way to give these children a promising future is to help them – as early as possible – to heal from their traumatic experiences. Not only do ACEs impact a child's own future, but there is also the side-effect of turmoil that a child challenged with trauma brings into your home. Many children who struggle with trauma find it very difficult to function within our society and set of expectations. They can be stuck in an earlier developmental stage that does not match their chronological age and their reactions can be overwhelming – for them and for you.

For example, say you have a 12-year-old son who is "stuck" at the emotional level of a three-year-old – the age he was when he was physically abused. As a result, your 12-year-old responds to a stressful situation with a temper tantrum that could rival any toddler. Such an experience can be frightening to both him and your whole family. (After all, a 12-year-old can pick up and throw objects that are much larger than what a three-year-old could handle.) The typical reaction is to be upset or even angry with his behavior. But the regular consequences or punishments will, many times, not garner the results that we hope. So these types of situations and behaviors continue to occur and even escalate. Taking a trauma-informed perspective will help you see your child and his behavior in a whole new way – to see the root cause of the behaviors, opening an avenue to help and heal your child.



Trauma informed care is understanding early experiences and how they relate to current behaviors and learning.

Who are the Experts of Trauma Informed Care

This is a very short list of some of the hundreds of experts in the field of trauma informed care. You can find links to learn more about each of the individuals and organizations below. We'll also be referencing some of these people and their work as we continue to explore trauma informed care in this and future issues of Partners.

[Dr. Bruce Perry](#)

[Dr. Daniel Siegel](#)

[Heather Forbes](#)

[Karen Purvis](#)

[Juli Alvarado](#)

[Dr. Robert F. Anda](#)

[National Center for Trauma-Informed Care](#)

[National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

Where Can I Learn More about Trauma Informed Care?

Books and DVDs from the ARW Lending Library

Born for Love: Why Empathy is Essential and Endangered, by Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz. This book is an unprecedented exploration of how and why the brain learns to bond with others—and a stirring call to protect our children from new threats to their capacity to love.

The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us about Loss, Love and Healing, by Bruce Perry. What happens when a young brain is traumatized? How does terror, abuse or disaster affect a child's mind—and how can that mind recover?

The Brain: Effects of Childhood Trauma, by Bruce Perry. DVD, 29 minutes.

The Legacy of Childhood Trauma: Not Always Who They Seem, by Echo Bridge Productions. DVD, 56 minutes. This video focuses on the connection between so-called “delinquent youth” and the experience of childhood trauma such as emotional, sexual or physical abuse. The video features the unique stories of four young adults who are survivors of childhood trauma.

Child Trauma Handbook : A Guide For Helping Trauma Exposed Children, by Ricky Greenwald. This no-nonsense manual helps the reader understand how and why kid's behaviors can be related to their history of trauma, while also teaching practical hands-on clinical skills and interventions.

Fostering Changes: Myth, Meaning and Magic Bullets in Attachment Theory, by Richard Delaney. In this new edition of the classic *Fostering Changes*, Dr. Delaney continues to enlighten, equip and encourage parents and professionals who work with emotionally disturbed foster and adopted children as he clearly and realistically addresses current attachment research, therapies and diagnoses.

Rebuilding Attachments with Traumatized Children, by Richard Kagan. This book presents critical information on how to understand and surmount the impact of loss, neglect, separation and violence on children's development, how to discover and foster strengths in children and their families, and how to rebuild enduring connections and hope with children who are at risk of harm to themselves and others.

Telling Secrets: An Artist's Journey through Childhood Trauma, by Jane Orleman. The paintings included in *Telling Secrets* speak of emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse, specifically within the home.

Traumatic Experience and the Brain, by Dr. Dave Ziegler. This is a book of hope for foster, natural and adoptive parents of such “broken” children and the therapists, teachers and social workers who attempt to help them.

Understanding Childhood Trauma: Identifying & Responding to Childhood Trauma, DVD. Segments in this program include determining the trauma, guidelines for caregivers, non-verbal interaction, significant loss, dissociating, being an example and acceptance. Emphasis is given on how to intervene to build trust and provide guidance, predictability and support.

Where Can I Learn More about Trauma Informed Care?

Websites

Child Trauma Academy

The Child Trauma Academy (CTA) is a not-for-profit organization working to improve the lives of high-risk children through direct service, research and education.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

The NCTSN's mission is to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families and communities throughout the United States.

The National Center for Trauma-Informed Care

SAMHSA's National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC) is a technical assistance center dedicated to building awareness of trauma-informed care and promoting the implementation of trauma-informed practices in programs and services.

The National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children

TLC's mission is to bring out the best in every traumatized child by creating environments where children can flourish.

Articles

ARW Tip Sheet: Working with Children Who Have Been Traumatized

ARW Tip Sheet: What Do These Behaviors Mean?

Advancing Trauma-Informed Practices: Bringing trauma-informed, resilience-focused care to children, adolescents, families, schools and communities, by William Steel and Caelan Kuban

This easy-to-read white paper focuses on actual situations terms and treatments, diagnoses and mis-diagnoses, experiences of trauma, survival behaviors and much more.

Putting It Together: Working with Providers Who Deliver Trauma-Informed Care (pages 35-38 of the NCTSN's Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit)

Trauma-Informed Care Tip Sheets

Facebook

You can also find and join a trauma informed Facebook group.

When Can I Learn More about Trauma Informed Care

Save the date for Saturday, June 30, 2012 for the Jockey Being Family® Adoption Conference. The conference will be held at the Center for Organizational Advancement at Rogers Memorial Hospital, 34700 Valley Road, Oconomowoc, WI 53066.

Stay tuned to our website, Facebook and email newsletter for more details as they become available.



Project 20/12

Earlier this year, we introduced a new program called Project 20/12. We think it's a great way for our friends and donors to support ARW – and recruit their friends and family members to support us, too! Participants in Project 20/12 have two options when joining – both options allow you to earn your very own Turn a Life Around t-shirt, donated by Jockey Being Family®!

In option one, participants donate \$20 to ARW and make a pledge to recruit 12 friends and/or family members to also make \$20 donations to ARW. In option two, participants make a \$20 donation and select that they would like their donation to recur monthly. After 12 donations have been collected, through either option, we'll send out Turn a Life Around t-shirts to Project 20/12 participants.

You can take the pledge on our website.



Herman

**DOB: 9/26/2000
#7400**

Herman is an 11-year-old African American boy who is a pleasure to be around and has a great sense of humor. He is a very expressive child and uses art as an outlet. Herman is very talented at drawing and likes to create things. Like most kids, Herman enjoys playing video games and board games with peers and adults. His favorite TV show is Sponge Bob and his favorite food is pizza. Herman also enjoys cooking, baking, and gardening.

Herman has a serious seizure disorder which requires a lot of attention. However, he has not had a seizure within the last six months. Herman can get easily frustrated and have a hard time when things don't go his way.

Herman currently has an IEP and is one grade level behind the rest of his peers.

Herman needs to remain in Wisconsin to maintain contact with his siblings and his past foster parents. His past foster parents have been stable people in his life and it could be detrimental for him to lose them as a support. His worker is open to a family with older children and either a one-parent or two-parent home. Herman is in need of a family who is able to help with his seizure disorder and work with him to overcome his past hurts and feelings of grief and loss.

Home to Stay: The Making of a Family

Written for this issue of Partners by adoptive mom, Lisa Roberts



With three beautiful kids, my husband, Mark, and I had decided to stop having our own children and consider ourselves blessed. I loved being a mother, but health concerns with my previous pregnancies had me concerned to try again. It was hard to make the decision not to conceive again and we had talked about how we might think about adopting. Whenever my thoughts wandered about adoption, I wondered if adopting one child would make that child feel disconnected or different from all the other kids in the family. Would adopting two be better? All the common concerns would pass through my thoughts. Could I bring strangers into our home and run the risk that it would be detrimental to our first three children? Would there be hidden “problems” that people like to stereotype foster children with? Will my birth children resent our adoption? We said “maybe someday,” and life moved on. But still, deep in my heart, I knew our family wasn’t finished yet. I sensed someone was out there.

Much to my surprise, my parents announced they were working on getting their foster care license. They thought they might just volunteer to do respite care now and then. My parents were empty nesters and lived on a farm. Their first couple of placements opened my eyes to the realities of what kids in this lifestyle endure. They have a certain unassuming presence. They know they are completely at the mercy of the strangers around them.

On one occasion, two children, Chase, 7, and Chloe, 4, were dropped off on the lawn of my parents’ farm along with a ragged old bag stuffed with mismatched, dirty clothes that smelled of filth and cigarettes. The two silent children took in the surroundings of the farm. My parents came outside just in time to hear the social worker ask, “Are you going to be all right?” as if she was going to just leave. Their wide eyes were shadowed with dark circles. Their clothes were dirty

Continued on page 8

and inappropriately fit. All their belongings were filthy and smelled of smoke. Abrupt introductions followed by the social worker driving away in the delivery car were all that ushered these children into the hands of strangers.

Over time, as the two siblings settled in and began to have their basic needs met, they slowly began to let themselves unravel. Their language and ability to communicate was very limited. Often, when my parents spoke to them, they would ask, "What does that mean?" They had very little vocabulary or sense of humor. It became obvious that these children were spoken at instead of spoken to. There were moments of sheer breakdown. Crying and even wailing came spilling out from the bottom of their starving, fractured souls, until their entire persona was reduced to a puddle; sobbing and sniffing in the embrace of my mother. On a few occasions, Chase released rage. Rage he inflicted first on himself as he repeatedly struck himself in the head in an effort to release all that was erupting in his heart, and another time in his room. In a fit, he was able to release his emotions on his bed and personal items rather than himself. We learned of the neglect and the abuse over time and began to put the pieces together. It reminded me of doing a jigsaw puzzle. It helps to first fit the pieces of the foundation and frame together in order to connect what's inside the puzzle. We needed to know what their beginnings looked like in order to figure out what was going on inside them. Nine months after their arrival at the farm, their mother gave birth to another little boy, Kale, who went right into the arms of his own foster mom. Chase and Chloe had a relationship with Kale through supervised visits.

Unfortunately, their birth mother was not able to improve her lifestyle in order to have her kids returned to her. We offered the best we could to the children. They became friends with our children. They experienced the first birthday celebrations they had ever had in their lives. They embraced the wonder of Christmas and other holidays with a family around them.

One hot Fourth of July, we took them to their very first visit to the zoo. I had a tradition of making shirts for the kids every year on the fourth, so that year we also made shirts to share with them, packed a picnic and headed off to meet my parents and Chase and Chloe at the zoo. We took lots of pictures and something about that day felt so special. It was on that day I felt God speak to my heart. He said very distinctly, "You will love these children for the rest of your life." I didn't know if this meant I would continue to know them, to pray for them or something else, but it was then that I first considered actually parenting them. I had decided I would talk to my husband later that night, but as we got in the van at the end of the day, he looked at me and said, "It

feels like they should be coming home with us." Now I knew something was up.

Although we knew the goal of the case workers was to exhaust every resource to promote reunification with their birth mother, we also knew there was always a chance they wouldn't go back to her, so we decided to take the approach of just being available. I never once prayed they would be taken from their mother in order that we could "have" them. They weren't a prize to be won, but precious souls that needed protection. I did pray they would be safe and well loved, wherever they would land. We decided to prepare ourselves by taking the training required by our state in order to adopt out of foster care.

Since then, the parental rights of all the children's biological parents have been relinquished, our home study went through with no problem, our new children have been placed in our home, and our adoption finalized in July 2011. My parenting has had to be completely intentional and not by chance. It has been hard. But I am humbled to say, it has also been so very worth it. I have watched three children who may not have had a family, come live together as siblings for the first time, I have seen them blossom and learn to receive love. I have seen my biological children reach out to these new family members and think beyond themselves and learn to empathize and have gratitude for the things they have and for their family. They have learned it's safe to share their most precious things; namely their parents.

One look in the big eyes of my adoptive children and I am broken. It is in that brokenness that God was able to work, and He has shown me so much about His heart through bringing children home. In parenting, in adopting, I gave up my goals, my pursuits, my stuff, my plan and most of all my heart, but I have found a deeper place in my soul that is breathlessly close to God, and that is where I want to be.

The Roberts family is just one example of a Jockey "Home to Stay™" family. Before their Home to Stay visit, personalized backpacks were created for their children containing books, games, blankets and other goodies to help the family further celebrate adoption finalizations. If you have recently completed a special needs adoption and would like to take part in the Home to Stay program, please contact us at 414-475-1246 or 800-762-8063.

Caregiver Health: Finding the Balance in Life



Tuesday, May 8, 2012
6:00-8:00 p.m.
Cost: \$15 per person

ARW
6682 W. Greenfield Ave., Suite 310
Milwaukee, WI 53214

In person or via webinar

Register online at: <http://caregiverhealth2012.eventbrite.com>

Being a caregiver can be a very rewarding and joyful experience, but it also comes with many stressors. This workshop will highlight key elements to finding the balance in life.

Self-care is an essential component of leading a trauma-informed family. Finding a balance between caring for the children in your home and meeting your own needs as a caregiver will ultimately make a big difference in your effectiveness as a caregiver.

About the Presenter: Patricia Parker, C.S.W. is a trainer for the Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership at UWM. Ms. Parker has over 28 years of experience working in human services in Milwaukee, Madison and North Carolina. She has provided professional training and social services consultation in 25 states.

Ms. Parker is also an ordained minister and currently serves as a volunteer Chaplin at the Southern Oaks School for Girls and the Robert E. Ellsworth Women's Correctional Facility in Racine County.

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The Dark Side of Digital Technology: The Internet, Cell Phones and Social Media



Tuesday, May 1, 2012

6:00-9:00 p.m.

Cost: \$20 per person

In person or via webinar

<http://socialmedia-youth.eventbrite.com>

Waukesha county foster families: Please contact your foster care coordinator to register.

Waukesha County Human
Services Building
500 Riverview Dr.
Waukesha, WI 53189

While digital technology offers a world of educational and entertainment options for young people, it also has a dark and dangerous side that we can't ignore.

This presentation on the digital exploitation of children includes real-life examples and unabashed practical advice for anyone interested in the safety and well-being of our children online or using their cell phones. Our presenter, Eric Szatkowski, pulls no punches as he also incorporates his experience as a husband and father of two children who grew up online.

Topics include the latest on the potential dangers of social networking sites like Facebook or MyYearbook, as well as the disturbing trends of sexting and cyber bullying. Eric also discusses the risks of file sharing programs like Lime Wire, smart phones and online gaming.

Attendees will learn techniques used by predators, which types of kids are most vulnerable and the link between the growing victimization of children and the sexualized, porn-obsessed culture. Eric also provides an eye-opening glimpse of popular websites and the disturbing content available to children.

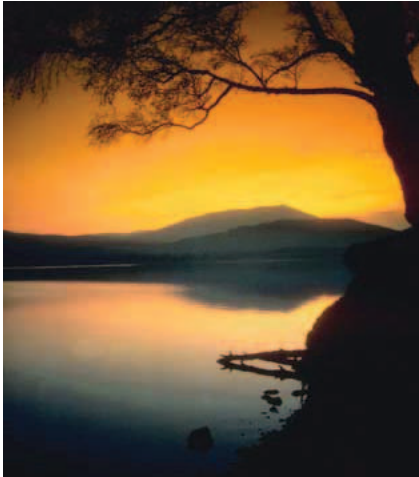
About the Presenter: Eric Szatkowski has been a Special Agent with the Wisconsin Department of Justice/ Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) for approximately 20 years. He's currently assigned to the state's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force in Milwaukee. He has been a guest on the Tyra Banks Show and CNN Tonight with Connie Chung.

Eric has also been interviewed by countless newspapers, radio and television stations across Wisconsin and the Midwest. Television news stations have won and/or been nominated for journalism awards for stories

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Calming the Explosive Volcano: A Three-Part Series



**Wednesdays, March 14th,
21st & 28th, 2012
6-8 p.m.
Cost: \$15 per person per
session or \$40 for all three
sessions**

Webinar or in person at:
ARW
6682 W. Greenfield Ave., Suite 310
Milwaukee, WI 53214

Register online at: <http://calmingvolcano.eventbrite.com>

Do you sometimes feel like you live with an active volcano in your home? Are you living with temper tantrums, conflicts and angry outbursts? This three-part series will help you learn the key ingredients of good communication and how to deal with frustrating behaviors, while also significantly reducing stress for everybody.

Session 1, March 14 Unacceptable behaviors, behavior motivation, typical parent responses, power struggles, the basic difference between “old school” and “new school” parenting and we will also discuss the parent’s “magic wand.”

Session 2, March 21: Learn how to use your “magic wand” to reduce and even eliminate explosive ructions.

Session 3, March 28: Knowing what you now know, how do you apply these new techniques in a specific way to replace ineffective punishments? And how can you head off tantrums?

About the Presenter: Chuck Adam was a therapist for 33 years with adults, couples, children and families. He has been a parent educator and coach for an additional seven years. Chuck has developed this training to bring therapeutic techniques into the home and out of the therapist’s office to help families become stronger.

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Attachment in Infant Adoption

Thursday, May 31, 2012
6-8 p.m.
Cost: \$15 per person

Webinar or in person at:
Catholic Charities-Madison
30 S. Franklin Street
Madison, WI 53703

Register online at: <http://infantattachment.eventbrite.com>

Parents adopting an older child often have different expectations and concerns than parents adopting an infant. This two-hour class will teach you about the impacts of pre-verbal and intra-uterine trauma on a child's development and attachment needs.

Our presenter, Jennifer Winkelmann, will answer questions such as "Can an infant have suffered trauma while in the womb?" Ms. Winkelmann will also walk you through ways to minimize the stress a child will experience while making the transition from birth environment to adoptive home. Get a jump-start on understanding your child and ways of parenting that will best facilitate his or her adjustment into your family!



About the Presenter: Jennifer Winkelmann, MA, LPC, NCC is the Founder and Clinical Director of Inward Bound, LLC. As a psychotherapist for individuals, couples and families, Jen's primary clinical focus is adoption and foster care issues, including a specialty in work with children who have suffered attachment trauma.

She comes to you with more than 13 years of experience working with children from high-risk populations and their families. She completed her graduate studies in Counseling Psychology with an emphasis in Couple and Family Therapy at the University of Colorado at Denver.

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