

Child & Adult Advocacy Studies: Webinar Series

Supporting South Dakota Children's
Return to School

Report to Department of Education

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**CAAST Webinar Series
Final Report
August 1, 2020 to September 28, 2020**

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INTRODUCTION

The University of South Dakota's Child & Adult Advocacy Studies (CAAST) certificate program and the Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment (CPCM) were pleased to offer a 5-hour CAASt ECHO series to support the work of school staff seeking to create or work within trauma-informed school settings during COVID-19. This webinar used CAASt competencies to provide school personnel with applicable knowledge for working in multidisciplinary teams within the school. The CAASt Echo training provided a Tier 1 approach that supports an already active Tier 2-3 school response such as Project Aware. As a result, CAASt Echo Series assisted in increasing the universal knowledge, training, and competencies of school personnel and discuss perceived barriers to implementing COVID-19 responsive and trauma-informed care among school staff.

CAAST TRAINING

IMPLEMENTATION

The five-part COVID-19 prevention webinar to help school personnel in supporting children's return to school was offered online via Zoom from August 10-14, 2020. Participants registered through Zoom and were provided log-in credentials. The trainings were recorded, and participants were able to access the videos for 7 days post training. Continuing Education Credit were available each day for participants who logged-in via Zoom. The following professionals facilitated the training:

Dr. Kelly Bass, *DSW, LCSW-PIP, ACS*

University of South Dakota, MSW Program Director

Dr. Shana Cerny, *OTD, OTR/L, BCP*

University of South Dakota, Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy

Dr. Kari Oyen, *PhD, LP, NCSP*

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Carrie Sanderson, *JD, MPA*

University of South Dakota, Director for the Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment

CAAST TRAINING CURRICULUM

1. Child Abuse & Neglect in South Dakota (August 10, 2020)

Objectives

- a. Know the risk and protective factors for child maltreatment in the general population and identify high-risk populations.
- b. Understand the barriers to help-seeking for victimized children.

2. Child Development and Stress (August 11, 2020)

Objectives

- a. Understand the effect of stress on a child's brain development.
- b. Recognize and understand the physical and behavioral health effects of violence, neglect and abuse, including mental health impacts.

3. A Framework for Safe and Successful School (August 12, 2020)

Objectives

- a. Identify and propose school-based programs that can promote mental health in children.
- b. Engage diverse school professionals who complement one's own professional expertise to develop strategies to meet specific needs of students.

4. Trauma Informed Classrooms (August 13, 2020)

Objectives

- a. Enhance understanding of trauma for interpreting behavior of students and responding appropriately.
- b. Create a practical framework for intervention and application.

5. School Leaders' Response in Trauma Informed Environments (August 14, 2020)

Objectives

- a. Educate community leaders on how they can help provide resiliency for students and school personnel.
- b. Recognize the importance of community engagement in responding to maltreatment, as well as prevention efforts.

OUTCOME

The initial goal was to provide as many educators as possible with information regarding trauma in the classroom. The training was modeled after an Echo presentation where participants receive both a didactic and interactive training experience. Case studies were utilized throughout the training. A traditional Echo presentation functions best with 40 or less participants. CPCM recorded over 231 individuals registered to take the course. Each day had the following number of participants:

Monday, August 10 - 96 participants

Tuesday, August 11 - 96 participants

Wednesday, August 12 - 92 participants

Thursday, August 13 - 73 participants

Friday, August 14 - 55 participants

Due to the large interest in the training, the trainings were adjusted to encourage interactive participation through the chat function in Zoom. CPCM staff recorded attendance each day. CEUs were provided to each participant for the total number of days attended. CPCM created 120 individual certificates for CEUs.

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purposes of the study is to understand whether an educational session can change knowledge, beliefs, self-efficacy, and commitment among educational professionals as it relates to trauma-informed care (TIC) following the abrupt physical distancing and environmental stressors caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

IMPLEMENTATION

CPCM & CAASt will investigate the effects of CAASt ECHO series on the participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities in identifying and working with victims of maltreatment and determining how the knowledge translates to actionable change in practices and client/student outcomes.

1. All participants will take the ARTIC (see below) prior to participating in the CAASt ECHO series and following completion of the series
2. Each module will have 8-question survey to determine participants' knowledge gained on each topic
3. A follow-up survey will be distributed in October to the email addresses of participants to determine whether any knowledge gained led to changes in teaching approach

Instrument: The Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Scale. The Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Scale is a reliable and valid evidence based questionnaire created by the Traumatic Stress Institute to assess the beliefs regarding the implementation of TIC (Baker, Brown, Wilcox, Overstreet, & Arora, 2015). The questionnaire prompts participants to choose between two beliefs that most closely resemble their own based on a 7-point bipolar Likert type scale. The ARTIC-35 has 5 core subscales.

1. Underlying Causes of Problem Behavior and Symptoms. Emphasizes behavior and symptoms as adaptations and malleable versus behavior and symptoms as intentional and fixed.
2. Responses to Problem Behavior and Symptoms. Emphasizes relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety as the agent of change versus rules, consequences, and accountability as the agent of behavior and symptom changes.
3. On-The-Job Behavior. Endorses empathy-focused staff behavior versus control-focused staff behavior.
4. Self-Efficacy at Work. Endorses feeling able to meet the demands of working with a traumatized population versus feeling unable to meet the demands.
5. Reactions to the Work. Endorses appreciating the effects of secondary trauma/vicarious traumatization and coping by seeking support versus minimizing the effects of secondary trauma/vicarious traumatization and coping by ignoring or hiding the impact.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Characteristics of Sample

There was a total of 221 participants representing approximately 29 school districts across the state of South Dakota. The majority were females at approximately 84% while Caucasians represented approximately 93% of the sample. The majority (53%) had at least fifteen years' experience practicing in the educational setting. Based on the respondent's education status, 48% of the sample was classified as having a master's degree. Within each session, attendees were asked to participate in poll questions that focused on the session objectives. The following key findings are provided to provide context:

Key Findings – Poll Questions

- 85% of participants self-reported that they are mandated reported trained.
- 70% of participants self-reported feeling mentally healthy.
- 67% of participants self-reported feeling at least moderately safe going into the classroom.

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- 83% of participant self-reported a moderate level of confidence in empowering students and teaching self-regulation skills.
- 74% of participants self-reported feeling comfortable or moderately comfortable approaching leadership in their school.
- 94% of participants self-reported a sense of feeling prepared for the school year after completing the training.

Key Findings – Session Outcomes

The second set of descriptive statistics are a result of attendees participating in polling end of session questionnaires. Approximately 67% of participants who attended a session completed the questionnaire at the end of each session. There were four questions commonly asked across sessions to understand self-reported knowledge, self-efficacy, and commitment among educational professionals as it relates to trauma-informed care (TIC) following the abrupt physical distancing and environmental stressors caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are key findings to provide context for self-reported 91.2% feel comfortable using the training materials with students/colleagues within the school setting

- 97.1% report that each training session met its goal of providing participants with the tools to better understand how to support students and staff returning.
- 93.6% reported that their participation in CAASSt Seminar Series has increased my professional preparedness when returning to the school environment.
- 93.8% report having a better understanding of how to support students within my role when it comes to navigating COVID-19 in the school environment.
- 94.9% report having a better understanding of how to promote trauma sensitive classrooms.

In addition, each session had a unique question to contextually understand participants self-reported knowledge, self-efficacy, and commitment in specific session objectives. The following are key findings to provide context:

- 92% of participants self-reported to have a better recognition and understanding of the physical, behavioral, and mental health effects of violence, neglect and abuse within the school setting.
- 90.7% of participants self-report to have a better understanding of the effect of stress on a child's brain development within the school setting
- 96.7% of participants self-report to have a better understanding of how to identify and propose school-based programs that can promote mental health in children within the school setting
- 96% of participants self-report to have a better understanding of trauma for interpreting and responding to student behavior within the school setting
- 97.1% of participants self-report to have a better understanding of the importance of community engagement and prevention when responding to maltreatment within the school setting

Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC-35)

At this time, we received last minute approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of South Dakota. This resulted in inviting registrants to complete this scale the night prior or the day the CAASSt Webinar began. We were able to have approximately 22% of the 221 registrants to complete the pre and post ARTIC-35 Scale. Because of this, we are unable to provide reliable outcomes that would add to the impact this training had on participants nor would it provide additional understanding to stakeholders. However, we are committed to improving our response rate by ensuring the completion of this scale earlier in the registration process so that in May 2021, we can report key findings from the ARTIC-35.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATION'S

ADDITIONAL TRAININGS

Additional trainings for schools – both in a large-scale setting and for individual schools – are recommended. The following indicates continuing proposed trainings: *The schools and school districts included within the Project AWARE Grant will have priority for training opportunities. All South Dakota schools and school districts are invited to attend the trainings as well. Schools and school districts may request additional consultation and training, tailored to their school district by contacting CPCM to coordinate the date, time, location, and desired training option. Staff from USD and CPCM will then be responsible for coordinating the training time and location. As a result, this proposal is also to provide at least 4 school districts with advanced CAASt training or consultation. Schools and school districts will be made aware of the training opportunities through a coordinated effort of information dissemination between CPCM and USD.*

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Additional consultation and development events specifically tailored to a school district are available with CAASt faculty. These services are offered to meet the unique needs of individual schools. The development event will help personnel at the school identify members of a multidisciplinary team, learn how to facilitate healthy responses to the emotional needs of children, and identify unique solutions to a lack of resources in their school or community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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