DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN
A COMMUNITY AWARENESS TRAINING

Presented by
Steve Miller, CRPS
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Training Outline

• History and Evolution of the DEC Movement
• Children at Risk
• Understanding and Responding to the Long-term Needs of DEC
• Collaborative Mindset as the Ideal Solution
History and Evolution of the DEC Movement
A Look Back

- Sue Webber-Brown, Butte County (CA) DA Investigator
  - Connection between child abuse cases and illicit drugs
  - Developed a DEC program
  - Collaborative Approach
A Look Back

- Kathey Lynn James:
  - 3 children died in meth lab explosion
  - Sentenced in January 1997 to 45 years to life in prison – 15 years for each murder count
Greene County DEC was formed in 2006 to help provide leadership and coordination during crisis interventions.

DEC’s approach for addressing the needs of children in dangerous drug environments is unique. It promotes social change through proactive collaboration between systems.
Children at Risk
Children at Risk

- It is estimated that nearly 150,000 children in Missouri live with a parent who abuses alcohol.
- Nearly 43,000 Missouri children live with a parent who abuses illicit drugs.
- An estimated 8,600 newborns are exposed to alcohol and another 4,000 exposed to illicit drugs during fetal development.
Children at Risk

- 10.5% of children in Missouri live with a parent who abuses alcohol
- 13% of parents abuse alcohol or illicit drugs
- In Greene County it is estimated that at birth 12% of babies are drug exposed
Definition:

“The Greene County Alliance for Drug Endangered Children works to identify, protect and support children exposed to environments where abuse, manufacturing, or sales of drugs occur.”
Children of parents with substance use disorders have a higher likelihood of developing substance use problems themselves.

SOURCE: CSAT, 2005; Price & Simmel, 2002; Young, Gardner, & Dennis, 1998; CSAT, 2004
Children at Risk

Child abuse and neglect increase a person’s risk of later substance use, and individuals with substance use disorders are more likely to abuse or neglect their children.

SOURCE: CSAT, 2005; Price & Simmel, 2002; Young, Gardner, & Dennis, 1998; CSAT, 2004
Children at Risk
Children at Risk

- Children whose parents abuse alcohol or drugs are:
  - 3 times more likely to be verbally, physically or sexually abused
  - 4 times more likely than other children to be neglected

SOURCE: A Guide for Caring Adults Working with Young People Experiencing Addiction in the Family, CSAT, SAMHSA
Children at Risk

Children + Drugs = RISK
RISK (n.): The chance of something going wrong; the danger that injury, damage or loss will occur.

-Encarta Dictionary of North America
Understanding Risk

- All drug endangered children are at risk
- How much risk and risk for what varies
Understanding Risk

- Prenatal Risks
- Postnatal Risks
Prenatal Risks

The effects of prenatal drug exposure:

- Are difficult to isolate, owing to other variables such as poor prenatal care, poor nutrition, prematurity, and adverse postnatal environment
- Depend on the substance being used, frequency of use, duration of use and quantity
Prenatal Risks

• Long-term cognitive and behavioral risk factors for children prenatally exposed to drugs:
  – Low scores in mental development
  – Low scores in psychomotor index
Prenatal Risks

- Infants exposed to drugs in utero are more likely to be reported as abused or neglected (30.2%)

  - Kienberger Jaudes P, Ekwo E. Association of Drug Abuse and Child Abuse
Postnatal Risks

• Risk of Physical Abuse
  • Erratic discipline
  • Increased irritability
  • Irrational rage
Postnatal Risks

• Risk of Neglect
  • Lack of supervision
  • Lack of necessities
  • Lack of safe and nurturing environment
Postnatal Risks

• Exposure to Illegal Activities
  • Drug dealing
  • Kidnapping
  • Home invasions
Postnatal Risks

- Other Risks
  - Exposure to violence
    - Domestic violence
    - Crime-related violence
  - Overlay deaths
  - Exposure and ingestion
  - Sexual abuse
  - Emotional Abuse
Postnatal Risks

- Other Risks
  - Loss
    - Parents
    - Death
    - School
    - Sibling Separation
    - Pets (loss or death)
    - Home
  - Multiple foster placements
Evidence of Harm
- Illicit Drug Activities

Use

Manufacturing & Cultivation

Distribution
Drug Use

(2) Central Nervous System (CNS) Stimulants

• Example:
  – ‘Rocking up’ crack
  – Two neglected children
Questions to Ponder

• When do we take action to protect children?
• Do we consider illicit drug activity alone justification to intervene?
• Do we wait until additional maltreatment circumstances arise?
• What if we wait too long?
Understanding and Responding to the Long-term Needs of Drug Endangered Children
Our Goal:
Healthy, Happy & Safe Children
100%
How do we get to 100%?

• Understand the long-term needs of drug endangered children

• Implement appropriate and effective intervention strategies
Understanding Long-Term Needs

• Children growing up in drug environments:
  – Are denied the fundamental developmental experiences required to self-regulate, relate, communicate and think
  – Experience neglect, daily chaos, a lack of safety, poor communication, violence, and disorganization
Understanding Long-Term Needs

• Consequently, some children growing up in drug environments may experience:
  – Emotional problems
  – Behavioral problems
  – Cognitive problems
Understanding Long-Term Needs

• Some Examples of Emotional Problems
  – Attachment Disorders
  – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
  – Anxiety
  – Depression
  – Complex Emotions
Understanding Long-Term Needs

• Some Examples of Behavioral Problems
  – Interpersonal Problems
  – Inappropriate Sexual Behaviors
  – Low Threshold for Stimulation
  – Eating Disorders
Understanding Long-Term Needs

• Some Examples of Cognitive Problems
  – Difficulty talking and listening
  – Difficulty paying attention
  – Difficulty remembering
  – Trouble reading, especially learning to move from left to right
  – Often do not learn from mistakes or experiences
  – Trouble picking up on social cues
The Importance of Intervention

- A report of child abuse is made every 10 seconds.
- Children who experience child abuse & neglect are 59% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile, 28% more likely to be arrested as an adult, and 30% more likely to commit violent crime.
- As many as two-thirds of the people in treatment for drug abuse reported being abused or neglected as children.
Effects of Trauma

What can we learn from a 2-liter bottle about trauma?
The Importance of Intervention

Case Example

- On daughter’s 10th birthday, daughter told teacher and school resource officer about drugs in her house
- SRO advised taskforce of the information
- Task force executed search warrant and discovered meth lab
Dad: Are you there?  Daughter: Yeah

Dad: How does it feel to know you just sent your dad to prison for a long time?  Daughter: Sorry

Dad: No you’re not f@*#ing sorry! You had no business saying this shit to anybody! All you had to do is say something to me or grandma! What f@*#ing business did you have going running your f@*#ing mouth at school?  Daughter: Sorry

Dad: No! No sorry my ass! This is no sorry to it! Answer my question! Why did you go run your f@*#ing mouth at school?  Daughter: I had no business

Dad: No! You didn’t have no business! But, thanks to you, I will be spending a lot of time in prison! I’m done talking to you! Bye!
The Importance of Intervention

Case Example (cont.)

- Daughter arrested years later
- Repeat offender
The Importance of Intervention
The Importance of Intervention

Moving children from RISK to RESILIENCY
The Importance of Intervention

The earlier the intervention, the more efficient and effective the outcome

BUT ... research and clinical trends also support the potential for change throughout life
The Importance of Intervention

In other words...

It is **never too early** to intervene...

**AND**

It is **never too late** to intervene!
The Importance of Intervention

We ALL have an intervention and prevention role to play
The Importance of Intervention

- DEC efforts are collaborative
Collaborative Mindset

COLLABORATION:
The exchange of information, altering of activities, sharing of resources, and enhancement of the capacity of another for the mutual benefit of all and to achieve a common purpose.

Chris Huxham, Creating Collaborative Advantage
Collaborative Mindset
Changing the Status Quo

Changing our attitudes and beliefs
Changing the Status Quo
Changing the Status Quo
Do we let children accept this reality?
Or do we change the status quo?
We ALL have an intervention and prevention role to play.
Our Goal: Healthy, Happy & Safe Children 100%
Thank You!

Greene County Alliance for Drug Endangered Children
Meeting: July 26th @ 10:00AM
Community Partnership of the Ozarks
330 N. Jefferson
Springfield, MO
888-2020
jlockhart@cpozarks.org