

# Trauma Sensitivity Training to Improve Mental Health Outcomes of Children in Foster Care in Los Angeles County, California



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## Background

- 40-80% of children in foster care suffer from psychiatric disorders.<sup>1</sup>
- Disorders include depressive episodes, anxiety disorder, and drug & alcohol dependence, experienced disproportionately.<sup>1</sup>
- Due to systemic racism and homophobia, children of color and those within the LGBT+ community are overly represented in foster care.

## Problem Statement

Poor mental health outcomes among children in the California foster care system, indicated by 40% prevalence of mental health issues,<sup>2</sup> and are exacerbated by mental health care that is provided after a crisis has already happened.

## Goals and Objectives

**Goal 1:** Improve identification of traumatic events by Social Workers

- Objective: Increase the number of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and other traumatic events recorded by social workers by 20%

**Goal 2:** Improve sensitivity of caregiving adults to childhood trauma

- Objective: Increase referrals by social workers to mental health professionals by 5%



## Logic Model

Inputs	Outputs		Impacts & Outcomes		
	Activities	Output of activities	Short-term	Intermediate term	Long-term
Funding Trauma sensitivity training curricula Computers for Implicit Association Tests Access to PEARLS screener & resources	Trauma Sensitivity training for prospective foster parents Participant Implicit association evaluation Anti-racism & LGBTQ discrimination Training PEARLS Training PEARLS Resource Pack	PEARLS implementation. Increased Trauma Sensitivity Decreased implicit bias	More ACEs recorded by Social Workers Decrease in housing instability Increased parental support	More referrals to mental healthcare Short term spike in mental health disorder diagnoses Increase in mental healthcare utilization	Less mental health crises Improved mental health outcomes Increase trauma sensitivity & understanding Decrease disparity in mental health outcomes associated with bias Decrease in race, gender and/or sexuality bias

## References

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## Program Description

### Phase 1: Preparation

- Design trainings to include all participants input. Include Pediatric ACEs and Related Life Events Screener (PEARLS) for teaching and integrating into workflow.

### Phase 2: Implementation

Conduct trainings & collect data

- Module 1: General trauma sensitivity training
- Module 2: Racial & gender bias training focuses
- Module 3: Training for PEARLS screeners \*

### Phase 3: Data collection and Analysis

- Data integrated to broaden understanding of lessons learned

\*(Social Workers only)

## Expected Outcomes

- Improve mental health of children in foster care
- Increase sensitivity of caretakers to racial & gender issues
- Implement PEARLS screener by social worker
- Caregiving adults will have a better understanding of the child's life through their trauma.



## Dissemination

- Manuscripts will be published describing the training curricula as well as study outcomes
- Trainings can be implemented by Department of Child Welfare Services across California counties
- Toolkit will be developed for Foster Parents