Cyberbullying Among Elementary School Children

Cyberbullying is a growing problem among today’s youth. Defined as a negative and aggressive act through electronic media, such as text messaging, Facebook, or online games, those targeted typically find it difficult to defend themselves. Recent studies have found that youth exposed to cyberbullying can experience a range of negative outcomes, including increased mental health, physical health, and academic problems. In response, cyberbullying has garnered increased attention from parents, policymakers, and researchers alike. Despite this growing concern, few studies have examined this issue among elementary school children. As a result, little is known about cyberbullying involvement among younger children, particularly those under 10 years old.

To that end, CCF researchers recently published results of a study that investigated the prevalence and nature of cyber victimization among elementary school students. As part of the study, 660 3rd – 5th grade students from six schools in Kansas completed an online survey measuring traditional (e.g., physical, relational, verbal) and cyberbullying and victimization. Study findings reveal that almost 20% of participants reported being cyber victimized in some way, with the majority (67%) stating it occurred through the medium of online games. To date, online games have received little attention in the cyberbullying literature; however, these results suggest that online games may be an important mechanism for understanding cyber victimization, especially for younger children. Furthermore, the majority (83%) of children reported that the cyber victimization had taken place outside of school, suggesting the home may be a critical location where cyber incidents take place. Thus, the role of parents/guardians in prevention and intervention is important. Accordingly, these results suggest that schools and families must work together to prevent cyberbullying involvement among youth.

Of concern, almost half of the participants who had been cyberbullied reported they had not told anyone about the incident. Consequently, it is important to create ongoing communication with youth about their experiences with technology to encourage them to report any potential incidents of cyberbullying involvement. If schools and parents/guardians are unaware of youths’ involvement, prevention and intervention efforts will not reach every youth affected.

Participants who were cyber victimized also reported significantly higher rates of traditional bullying involvement as well as higher rates of pro-bullying attitudes and lower levels of attitudes supportive of defending others. These results suggest that children who are cyber victimized might be at risk for engaging in behaviors that increase their risk for being targeted by classmates. Consequently, children who are cyber victimized may need additional support in building positive peer relationships.

The results of the study highlight the need for all social service professionals who work with children to have an understanding of cyberbullying and the potential negative outcomes and risk factors associated with this issue. Accordingly, professionals working with children and their families can incorporate this knowledge into their work and implement measures to prevent bullying involvement and offset negative consequences.


For additional information, email Kathy DePaolis (kdku91@hotmail.com) or Anne Williford (awilliford@ku.edu).
CCF CEUs & Coffee Series: Bridging Research and Practice for At-Risk Children and Families

In an effort to promote connections in the social work community and disseminate research and evaluation findings which can be applied to work with at-risk children and families, the Center for Children & Families is hosting a series of CEU-eligible presentations for practitioners across all types of social welfare settings, agencies, and systems. Each presentation is short and will be early enough in the day that participants can still make it to work after earning one hour of continuing education credit for free!

The first event, *Prenatal Substance Exposure and Its Impact on Children*, will be hosted at the University of Kansas’ Edwards Campus in Overland Park on September 18. It is an interactive presentation focusing on increasing participant knowledge of the impact of prenatal substance exposure and recent practice innovations. The presenter, Dr. Jody Book, is an Assistant Professor at the University of Kansas. She has served as a National Research/Doctoral Fellow for the Administration for Children and Families in the area of substance abuse in child welfare. She also serves as Principal or Co-Principal Investigator for three externally funded programs, all in the area of community responsiveness to substance abuse and child welfare.

_Bullying and Its Implications for Social Work Practice_ will be delivered by Dr. Anne Williford at the Kansas Union on the University of Kansas’ Lawrence campus on January 29, 2016. This workshop will define bullying, including its forms and functions, and propose assessment and intervention strategies that practitioners can use to offset the negative developmental outcomes that often result for the youth involved. Dr. Williford received her doctorate in Social Work from the University of Denver. Her research interests include understanding characteristics associated with bullying and peer victimization among children and adolescents, and identifying strategies to prevent such behaviors in school settings.

On May 20, 2016, Sharah Davis will present *Parent Support and Training (PST)* at the University of Kansas’ Edwards Campus. PST services are offered to caregivers who have children with special needs. The goal of PST services is to help families successfully navigate the various health care systems and services required to help their children. Participants will hear about techniques and strategies PST providers use to effectively engage families and to mobilize resources to address the families’ stated needs and priorities. Sharah is a Project Manager for the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare. She has worked in many capacities throughout her social work career as program evaluator, consultant/trainer, and home visitor. For the past seven years, her development efforts in the CCF have focused on evaluating and expanding effective Parent Support and Training Services.

To register and obtain additional information about the courses and presenters, visit [http://bit.ly/CCFCnC](http://bit.ly/CCFCnC). Registration questions can be directed to Erica Parkinson-Arnold, 913-897-8497 or eparkinson@ku.edu.

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**CEUs & Coffee Series Dates**

**Prenatal Substance Exposure and Its Impact on Children**
- Presented by Jody Brook, PhD
- September 18, 2015, 8:30-9:30 am
- University of Kansas—Edwards Campus, Regnier 265

**Bullying and Its Implications for Social Work Practice**
- Presented by Anne Williford, PhD
- January 29, 2016, 8:30-9:30 am
- University of Kansas—Lawrence Campus, Student Union, Alderson Room

**Parent Support and Training (PST)**
- Presented by Sharah Davis, LMSW
- May 20, 2016, 8:30-9:30 am
- University of Kansas—Edwards Campus
Identifying data needs and developing systems are only the first steps to achieving a data-informed approach. With the support of the Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities’ (PRTF) ROM System Project funded by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, Kansas-contracted PRTFs are taking their data informed approach to the next level.

The PRTF ROM System Project led by Dr. Steve Kapp with the support of Jeri Damman, Graduate Research Assistant, was launched in 2007 to develop a statewide performance information system and to implement outcome measurement across PRTFs. A web-based data entry and reporting system (PRTF ROM) was developed, which is a version of KU’s ROM system used by community mental health centers in Kansas and child welfare services nationally. The PRTF ROM system captures statewide information on youth receiving PRTF services, including standardized clinical outcome measures.

Since implementation, the project has focused on achieving high-quality system data and strengthening data use to inform service delivery as part of its technical and research support. PRTFs have embraced this work and, as a direct result of their efforts, have achieved high standards of data quality and a marked increase in system use.

In addition to working together to develop statewide knowledge, PRTFs are now launching individualized plans for the use of ROM System data. Implemented in March 2015, these plans evidence the important contributions that a data-informed approach can make to improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable children and their families.

- **Florence Crittenton** is examining differences in youth, parent, and worker clinical scores to better understand why differences exist and how they can be best used in treatment.
- **Kids TLC** is using the parent hopefulness measure in its program evaluation of C.A.R.E.S. and anticipates that parent hopefulness will increase from admission to discharge.
- **KVC Prairie Ridge** is developing a system of formal review of PRTF ROM system data by integrating it into performance improvement initiatives that focus on service improvements.
- **KVC Wheatland** is analyzing differences in clinical scores across youth, parents, and workers to better understand how differences influence treatment outcomes and family involvement.
- **Lakemary Center** is analyzing change in clinical measures from admission to discharge to develop knowledge in factors that might influence levels of change, including length of stay.
- **Marillac** is using system data to evaluate success in goal completion and reduction in trauma by examining change from admission to discharge on a range of clinical measures.
- **Pathway Family Services** is examining specific clinical measures to promote a more holistic approach to family-driven care and will use statewide averages to benchmark improvements.
- **Saint Francis** is evaluating the relationship between clinical outcomes and length of stay and is particularly interested in the differences among youth with longer stays.
- **Turning Point, Prairie View** is strengthening its use of individual behavior items at admission to develop targeted plans and will use change levels at discharge to evaluate treatment effect.

For additional information, email Steve Kapp and Jeri Damman at prtf@ku.edu.

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**PRTF ROM System Project: Using Data to Drive Service Improvements**


**Promoting Positive Child Development in Young Latino Children of Immigrants Involved with Child Protective Services**

On February 27, 2015, the Center hosted a national webinar focused on promoting positive development in young Latino children of immigrants, the fastest growing ethnic group involved in the child welfare system. Maltreated infants and toddlers are at the greatest risk of developmental delay and the single largest age group entering foster care. Early intervention services can mitigate the negative effects of abuse and neglect and support children in healthy development. The webinar discussed these topics and highlighted promising practices that seek to effectively serve vulnerable young children by working collaboratively across child welfare and early intervention systems. The webinar was sponsored by the Lois and Samuel Silberman Fund in the New York Community Trust. It was recorded and is freely available along with additional resources at [https://childrenandfamilies.ku.edu/prof-dev/webinars/positive-child-dev](https://childrenandfamilies.ku.edu/prof-dev/webinars/positive-child-dev).

Webinar Agenda — 1.5 CEUs available!*

I. Child Maltreatment and the Developing Brain
II. Young Latino Children of Immigrants: Health, Well-being, and Development
III. Exploring the Benefits of Early Intervention
IV. Policies Linking Child Welfare and Early Intervention Services
V. Promising Practices from the Field

For more information please contact Michelle Johnson-Motoyama, Principal Investigator ([michellejm@ku.edu](mailto:michellejm@ku.edu)).

*Please Note: The KU School of Social Welfare is an approved CEU provider for the Kansas Behavioral Sciences and Regulatory Board. However, the final authority for approving any continuing education activity rests with each professional state licensing board. Therefore, if you have questions regarding CEUs, please check with the appropriate state licensing board.

**First Time Fathers Study: Experiences of Men with Histories of Violence**

First-time fatherhood research ranges from examining how new and expectant fathers experience formal supports that serve parents to evaluating how the adaptation of existent or development of new parenting programs to meet fathers’ specific needs could impact the outcomes of children, mothers, and fathers. Many studies have shown domestic violence remains a barrier to the success of early childhood parent-focused interventions’ effectiveness, such as home visiting. One strategy to address this barrier is to understand the experiences and uptake of formal and informal support of first-time fathers with a history of domestic violence. Dr. Juliana Carlson’s new study, funded by KU’s New Faculty General Research Program, aims to do just that.

To explore men’s experience of formal and informal support and their help-seeking behaviors during their transition to fatherhood, Dr. Carlson will conduct in-depth interviews with men who have engaged in violence against their female partners. “Although it can never be an excuse for acts of violence, we know that many men who become fathers have experienced trauma, such as maltreatment and exposure to violence, and lack of father involvement as children. And overwhelmingly men are socialized to not seek help and to adopt other narrow masculinity norms that are linked to an increased use of violence,” noted Dr. Carlson. “Becoming a father can be a time of reflection and motivation for men to make changes in their own lives that may benefit their families’ outcomes. These processes may be facilitated by formal support such as parent programs that consider fathers’ complex experiences and socialization.”

For more information, email Juliana Carlson ([jmcarlson@ku.edu](mailto:jmcarlson@ku.edu)).