

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Youth-Can Overview**
- **Keynote Speaker: What We Face as Providers and Survivors of Violence and Trauma**
- **Best Practices and Individual Action Plan Workshop**
- **Connections & Care Workshop**



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Joining Hands, Healing Hearts Conference Summary

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Youth-Can Overview

The Urban Youth Trauma Center (UYTC) sponsors the initiative: Youth Overcoming Urban Trauma & Healing: a Community Action Network (YOUTH-CAN). YOUTH-CAN is a network of community representatives striving to share information and mobilize responses to community violence as they impact youth and their families.

The Joining Hands, Healing Hearts Conference raised awareness about the needs of youth and families affected by violence, promoting the use of best practices for violence prevention and intervention, strengthening resilience, activation, and responsiveness among participants, and fostering collaboration and connectedness among community residents, professionals, and advocates.

Keynote Speaker: What We Face as Providers and Survivors of Violence & Trauma

Mariame Kaba, Executive Director of Project Nia gave the keynote address. Her talk consisted of three major points: the relationships between violence and oppression in her life, what it takes to take care of ourselves and do this work, and the impact of internalized oppression and violence. Ms. Kaba has been an

anti-violence organizer and worked in violence prevention for 20 years. She described being a sexual assault victim and how the lives of those she has come in contact with matter. To work in this field, Ms. Kaba spoke to being committed to each other and creating safe spaces. We need to face

face internalized oppression squarely and learn to recognize burnout so we can be our best selves. Ms. Kaba ended her inspiring speech by indicating that we need to unpack the internalized oppression so we can heal and rebuild our communities.

Best Practices and Individual Action Plans Workshop / Breakout

Workshop: The Best Practices workshop was led by Dr. Liza Suarez, Co-Director of the Urban youth Trauma Center, and co-facilitated by UYTC Staff. The workshop explored the best practices for addressing community violence and described relevant trauma information based on the NCTSN 12 core trauma concepts.

The workshop focused on these five best practices for violence prevention and trauma intervention:

1. Developing safe, stable, nurturing relationships between children and their parents and caregivers
2. Developing life skills in children and adolescents
3. Promoting a safe environment in the community.
4. Changing rules and expectations in society that support violence.
5. Identifying, helping, and supporting victims of community violence.

Participants completed a form called and Individual Action Plan (IAP). The purpose of this plan is to

Following the workshop, individuals participated in breakout groups discussing the implementation and integration of these best practices in their current work . Participants completed a form called and Individual Action Plan (IAP). The purpose of this plan is to identify how you would like to participate in efforts to address community violence.

Successful Techniques Mentioned:

Based on the work of individuals in community constituents common themes of best practices used were : providing youth with a safe space and a positive outlet for expressing emotions; address and assist with immediate needs of health, safety, finances and

education; peace circles and restorative justice; strengths-based approach and acknowledgement of survivors of community violence; and connecting youth to resources and providing referrals.

Obstacles in Reaching Goals:

Lack of effective community connections and resources were mentioned, as well as engaging caregivers; lack of transportation and financial resources for agencies due to budget cuts; addressing myths about youth resistance to intervention. Safety (in school and community) was also a main obstacle.

Needs Mentioned:

More services for caregivers who are exposed to trauma and violence and are dealing with mental health issues of their own; better fine tuning of collaboration to ensure efficient resource use in the community; more awareness of resources for youth in the

community (in particular the South Side); better connections with other providers in the community, perhaps through a central agency that acted as the middle man for collaboration between agencies.

Resources Mentioned: Social Media project that facili-

tates neighborhood recovery, helps develop life skills, and urges community involvement (Cook County Attorney General Office); Trauma informed practices for foster care, in home meetings and teenager assessment to gauge life skills (Lawrence Hall); 25 minute advisory periods for students to proactively address issues like coping with loss and managing conflict (Maria High School).

Connections and Care Workshops/ Breakouts



Workshop (Connections): Connections and Care workshop was led by Dr. Jaleel Abdul-Adil, Director of the Urban Youth Trauma Center UYTC) and Dr. Sonya Dinizulu, UYTC Manager. This workshop introduced and discussed the importance of connecting/collaborating with other agencies/organizations. The workshop also explored how agencies/ organizations can assist one another in

order to overcome obstacles and achieve Individual Community Action Plan goals.

Current YOUTH-CAN partner, from HSI , shared an example how they implemented connecting with other agencies since the previous conference in 2011 and gave suggestions on how to collaborate effectively and share resources.



Sample Outcomes from the IAPs that participants would like to accomplish in the next 6-12 months:

- ⇒ Community Workers expand on life skills;
- ⇒ Juvenile Justice expand on peace circle, offer programs as alternatives to sentencing;
- ⇒ Youth Caregivers raise violence awareness amongst staff;
- ⇒ DCFS & United Stand want to facilitate meetings with family members and youth, connect youth to resources & referrals, identify the different levels of community violence.

Resources inside and outside of agencies to help achieve these outcomes: Community Workers provide safe havens, street intervention programs, family circles, home visits (Lawrence Hall); Juvenile Justice provides house visits, mentorship, culinary classes, & community panels; Youth caregivers provide youth support groups/Chicago support groups, strengthen families and resource groups; Clinicians provide resilience

training programs to children, and provides psychoeducation (ICOY).

Plan to overcome obstacles: Juvenile Justice finding providers to provide basic parenting skills; Youth Caregiver creating new programs for youth, (Metropolitan Family services) invites parents and encourage their children to participate in programs, exchange numbers and work with ICOY, and partner with libraries and hospitals; DCFS & United Stand will connect to other

agencies that can provide and create safe passages, build awareness in schools, empower youth to come back into the community and make a difference.

Workshop (Self-care): Dr. Suarez and Julie Jackson, UYTC staff, co-led the workshop on self care. Self-care is an important part of providing quality care and of sustaining personal and professional resources and capacities over time. The three essential tools in coping with secondary traumatic stress are awareness, balance, and connections. **Awareness:** being attuned to your needs, limits, emotions, and resources. **Balance:** maintaining balance among work, play, and rest. **Connections:** connections to

oneself, to loved ones, to colleagues, and to the larger community.

Self-Care in practice at Agency: Agencies should provide peer support as a way of self-care. Providing “Innovation Days” once a month is one way one agency provides self-care. The staff spends several hours eating together and brainstorming new ideas. Clinicians provide self-care by talking to one another about the difficult cases that they have come across, and “debriefing on their own”. Participants mentioned that they would like to learn more about

what is available out there for them.

How to maintain and/or strengthen self-care: Providing consistent support/validation and a space to talk to one another about what is on their mind would be very beneficial. They discussed Affinity group which allows professional development, support, cultural awareness, education about special issues.

