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Family Informed Trauma Treatment Center in Baltimore, MD Wins Federal Grant from SAMHSA to Support Children and Families with Psychological Trauma

Family Informed Trauma Treatment (FITT) Center has won a federal grant to disseminate and provide interventions to address the impact of trauma on families disadvantaged by chronic stress and trauma, poverty and racial injustice. The University of Maryland Schools of Medicine and Social Work in partnership with the Center for Child and Family Traumatic Stress at the Kennedy Krieger Institute joins a national network of over 200 child trauma centers to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families, and communities throughout the U.S.

With the five-year grant, the FITT Center continues to be a member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), whose mission is to improve the quality, effectiveness, and availability of services for children and families who experience traumatic events. The NCTSN helps children who are exposed to traumatic events and may experience a wide variety of consequences, such as ongoing emotional and psychological distress, grief, challenging behavioral changes, difficulties with attention, academic failure, nightmares, and illness.

With this new funding, the FITT Center will lead national, regional, and local efforts to address systemic barriers confronting families who experience chronic trauma related to poverty and discrimination. In partnership with families and communities we will develop resources and strategies to increase engagement, effectiveness, and acceptability of family intervention for families who are disenfranchised and living in highly under-resourced communities. "Our team is pleased to continue our collaboration with our local partners and with the national network to strengthen resources for families affected by trauma." says Laurel Kiser, PhD, MBA, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Co-Principal Investigator of the FITT Center.

The grants are awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The U.S. Congress authorized the NCTSN in 2000, in response to the growing needs of children exposed to trauma across the nation.

The NCTSN is a collaboration of academic, clinical, and diverse community service centers, and is coordinated by the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress (NCCTS), co-located at UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute and Duke University Medical Center. NCTSN members work to accomplish the mission by providing clinical services, developing and disseminating evidence-based interventions and resources, offering education and training programs, collaborating with established systems of care, engaging in data collection and evaluation, and informing public policy and awareness efforts, while integrating cultural and youth perspectives throughout its activities.

“Working in collaboration with SAMHSA and thousands of national and community partners, the NCTSN’s mission is to improve the quality, effectiveness, and availability of services for children and families who experience traumatic events,” said Robert Pynoos, M.D., NCCTS Co-Director at UCLA. “We know that children who experience trauma need effective treatment and that untreated trauma can have life-long consequences for a child’s development and health.”

“The NCTSN has helped to bring evidence-based treatment and best practices to many local communities across the country,” noted John Fairbank, Ph.D., NCCTS Co-Director at Duke University Medical Center. “We are pleased to be helping to disseminate trauma-informed resources to all child-serving systems.”

Short Description: In Baltimore, Maryland, **University of Maryland Schools of Medicine and Social Work** and the **Center for Child and Family Traumatic Stress at Kennedy Krieger Institute** received a \$3 million Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant through the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative to continue its effort to further advance interventions of families facing chronic trauma related poverty and discrimination. National statistics illustrate the immense challenges families living in poverty and experiencing racial injustice face, including, higher risk of exposure to victimization and stress often resulting in major behavioral health disparities. The FITT Center, established in 2007, will 1) lead national efforts to raise awareness of the impact of complex trauma, poverty and inequity on families; 2) advance and train the workforce on family trauma interventions and resources needed to optimize healing; and 3) enhance the role of peers by recognizing and empowering families and communities as central to promoting resiliency and positive outcomes for children. The FITT Center’s interventions build on family and community strengths to address the impact of poverty, traumatic events and stressors on every member of the family, on family relationships, and on the family as a whole to enhance recovery and resilience. For more information contact Kay Connors, Project Director at kconnors@psych.umaryland.edu or visit our website <http://fittcenter.umaryland.edu>