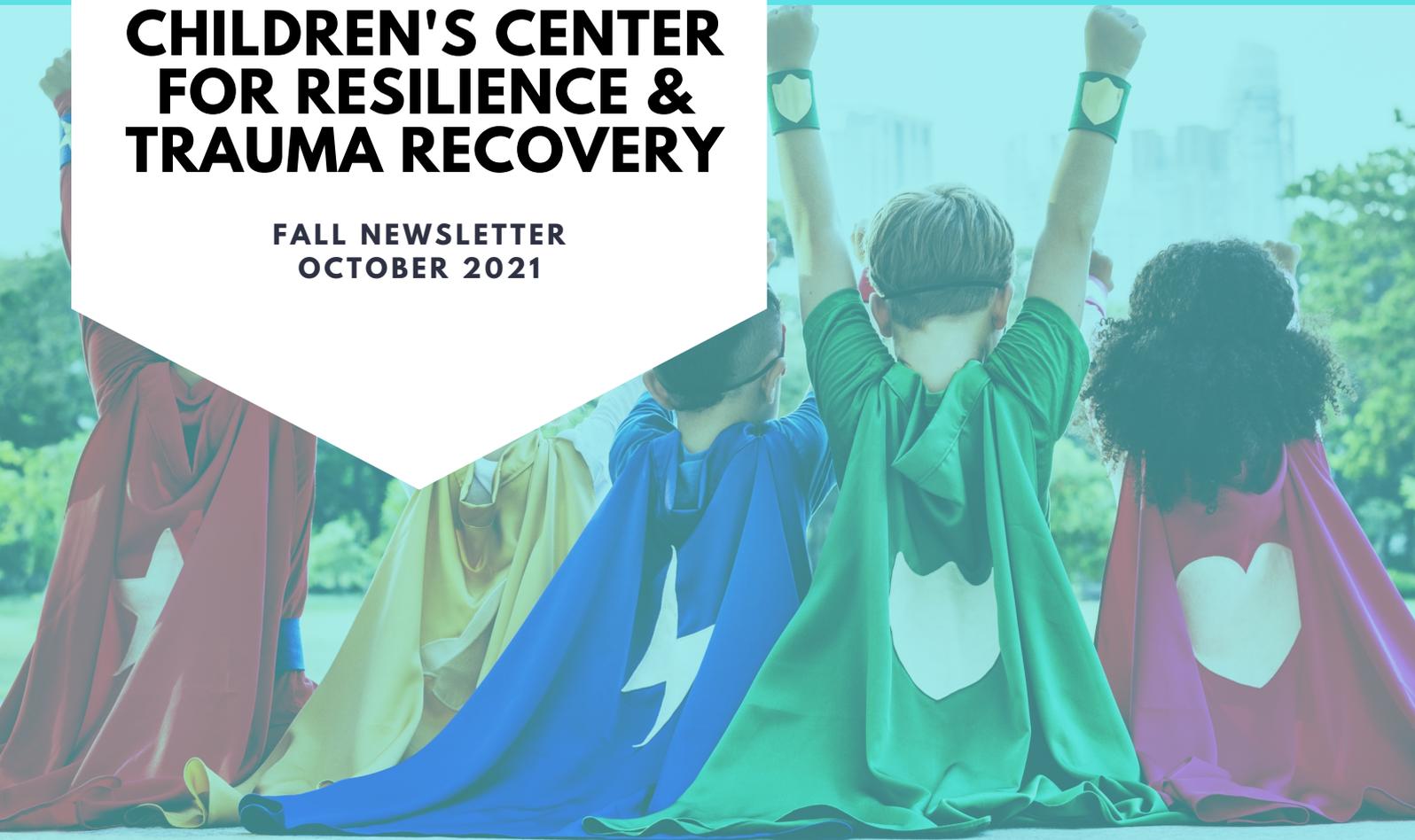


RUTGERS CHILDREN'S CENTER FOR RESILIENCE & TRAUMA RECOVERY

FALL NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2021



Welcome from CCRTR

Over the past 5 years, The Rutgers Children's Center for Resilience & Trauma Recovery has had the honor and privilege of working alongside some of New Jersey's most passionate and skilled providers within child-serving systems across the state. We've held both a Category III NCTSN grant and a SAMHSA Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) grant. Both funding opportunities afforded us the ability to educate and build relationships with those who serve families that have been impacted by complex trauma. We provided opportunities to bridge the gap in services for younger populations by disseminating information about trauma-informed care and evidence-informed practices for treating trauma. We've also committed ourselves to community outreach and partnered with law enforcement, school personnel, and faith communities to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid and Question Persuade Refer suicide prevention training. One of our most noteworthy accomplishments is the cultural shift that has occurred within the state with increasing acceptance of caregiver-focused interventions in support of the child's growth and recovery. As we prepare for the sun-setting of our funding we are reminded that when we meet what we believe is the end of something we are often greeted by new beginnings. It is our hope that the CCRTR will continue to establish new partnerships, thrive, and serve the communities that are near and dear to us. And so we would like to encourage every partner of ours, every attendee of a training, and anyone who has been met with multiple challenges in the past 18 months or seen the end to things that felt close to your heart; to maintain radical hope, honor the past but gently open the door to the future and trust in the magic of new beginnings. May this fall bring you peace, hope, and wonder!

Yours In Service,
Schenike Massie-Lambert, Ph.D.
CCRTR Program Coordinator



HERE'S WHAT'S NEW:

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Category III NCTSN Grant

Highlights

- Two ARC-Grow learning communities 2017 and 2019
- Two ARC learning communities 2017 and 2021
- Successfully advocated for changing the business rules in the state of New Jersey to include reimbursement and additional sessions for caregiver focused interventions
- Expansion of trauma-informed care training opportunities with medical providers
- Plan completed for improved integration of the ARC model and trauma - informed care approaches within the UBHC Piscataway child clinical programs, the NJ Children's System of Care, Rutgers Schools of Nursing and Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology.
- Presentation at a national conference to share the results of our work with interdisciplinary partners.
- Presentation at the American Psychological Association 2019 conference
- Presentation at the Charleston Child Trauma Conference 2018
- Presentation at ISTSS November 2020

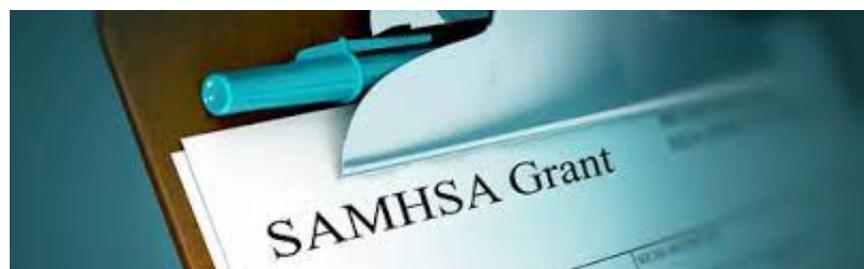


GRANTS

SAMHSA Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) Grant

Highlights

- Partnerships with two school districts and two police departments along with a faith-based consortium
- Expansion to two additional schools
- Engagement in two virtual wellness fairs
- Pivoted and introduced web-based courses online to build up capacity
- 15 new trainers within the community to assist in youth suicide prevention



Coping With Back-to-School Anxiety

By: Melissa Donadio, Psy.D.

Going back to school can be an anxiety inducing time for children, especially in the middle of the covid19 pandemic. Since children may not have the vocabulary to identify their feelings, it is important to observe any changes in their behaviors such as avoidance of certain activities (i.e., reluctance or refusal to attend school), difficulty relaxing, clinginess, irritability, trouble concentrating, or ongoing worries about the future (Iannelli, 2021). These behaviors likely indicate that anxiety is stemming from a decreased sense of safety (Bartlett, Griffin, & Thomson, 2020). Responsive caregivers can increase a child's sense of safety by creating consistency and structure which can be done through predictable events or schedules, such as a consistent bedtime, family mealtime, or family game night (Honen & Gilmour, 2020). It may also be helpful for caregivers to learn children's school schedules to encourage specific times for certain activities. Additionally, caregivers can support children's regulation by validating their feelings and encouraging self-regulating activities including mindfulness or exercise to calm both their mind and body (Bartlett et al., 2020). Caregivers can also teach deep breathing exercises that can be utilized when a child feels anxious at school. Lastly, when anxiety begins to interfere with children's daily lives, it may be beneficial to obtain professional help with a mental health worker.

Caregivers can utilize the following recommendations to promote resilience as children return to school:

- Provide age-appropriate information
- Make yourself available to answer children's questions
- Remind children of what they can predict, and encourage acceptance of what cannot be predicted
- Promote feelings of calmness by utilizing mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing, relaxing sounds, or peaceful activities
- Join in with your child's emotions and then problem solve
- Stick to routines when possible, including times and days for specific activities
- Learn your child's school schedule to reinforce predictability
- Create a secure and structured environment

References

Bartlett, J., Griffin, J. & Thomson, D. (2020, March 19). Resources for supporting children's emotional well-being during the covid19 pandemic. Child Trends. Retrieved from: <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/resources-for-supporting-childrens-emotional-well-being-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>

Hohnen, B., & Gilmour, J. (2020, August 28). School Psychologists' tips: Preparing children for return to school. The Guardian. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/aug/28/how-parents-can-prepare-their-children-for-going-back-to-school>

Iannelli, V. (2021, April 11). Anxiety symptoms in children. Very Well Mind. Retrieved from: <https://www.verywellmind.com/anxiety-symptoms-2633863>





Seasonal Affective Disorder: Helping Parents & Youth Cope

By: Michelle H. Pigott, Psy.D.

As the season changes from summer to fall many of us think about the leaves turning from green to yellow, orange, and red as well as the return of pumpkin spice lattes. The thought of the crisp fall air and sweater weather may feel inviting. While fall may be welcomed by many, some individuals experience an extreme shift in their mood and energy as the long summer days dissipate. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) impacts individuals who experience mood changes that follow a seasonal pattern (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020). In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (2013) it is identified as a type of depression- Major Depressive Disorder with Seasonal Pattern. Symptoms are usually present during the fall and winter seasons and can cause individuals to feel distressed and overwhelmed while interfering with their daily functioning. While the exact cause of Seasonal Affective Disorder is still being examined, researchers have discussed SAD being triggered by the brain's response to decreased sunlight (Kamleiter, 2020). Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) usually develops in a person's early twenties but can occur in older children and teens. If symptoms are present in older children, it may affect their self-esteem as well as leave them feeling isolated (Kamleiter, 2020). Once diagnosed with SAD medical professionals may recommend several treatment options including increased light exposure, light therapy, talk therapy, as well as medication depending on the severity.

Common Symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder include:

- Loss of interest in activities
- Feeling sad or having a depressed mood
- Changes in sleep; usually sleeping too much
- Loss of energy, fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating, thinking
- Feel anxious, irritable

(Kamleiter, 2020)

Effective Strategies to Aid Parents & Youth include:

- Spending time outdoors
- Opening the window shades to increase sunlight
- Exercising regularly
- Eating a healthy diet
- Planning a mid- winter family vacation to a sunny climate

(American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020)

References

American Academy of Pediatrics (2020). Winter blues and seasonal affective disorder. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/Winter-Blues-Seasonal-Affective-Disorder-and-Depression.aspx>

American Psychiatric Association (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.).

Kamleiter, K. (2020). Seasonal affective disorder: What parents need to know about SAD. Mighty Blog. <https://www.childrensmn.org/2020/01/16/seasonal-affective-disorder-what-parents-need-to-know-about-sad/>



TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

RESEARCH

ARC GROW

CONSULTATION

WHATS NEW AT THE CCRTR

FOR TRAINING AND CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES AROUND THESE TOPICS
AND MORE CONTACT US! WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO ASSIST YOU.

QPR

TRAINING

ARC
YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Interested in learning more about Rutgers ARC/ARC-Grow initiative, trauma-informed care, mental health awareness training including QPR, and Youth Mental Health First Aid
We offer web-based learning opportunities!

Send us an email at:
ccrtr@ubhc.rutgers.edu