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CHDI Launches Five Year State and National Initiative to Improve Trauma Screening Across Child-Serving Systems

Trauma ScreenTIME will Provide Online Trainings in Screening Best Practices for Staff in Schools, Primary Care, Early Childhood, Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare

Farmington, CT – The Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) announced a five year initiative to improve child trauma screening in Connecticut and nationwide. The initiative, **Trauma ScreenTIME** (Screen, Triage, Inform, Mitigate, Engage), will develop online staff training for child-serving professionals to improve early identification and support of children suffering from traumatic stress and connection to evidence-based treatment. Trauma ScreenTIME is part of the [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#) (NCTSN) and is being funded through a five year, \$3 million federal SAMHSA grant, beginning in June 2020. CHDI was one of six organizations nationwide to be awarded a SAMHSA National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative Category II grant in 2020.

“The online aspect of Trauma ScreenTIME leverages the latest technology to provide a virtual, interactive training experience,” said Jeffrey Vanderploeg, President and CEO of CHDI. “This is especially important in the COVID-19 environment, as we prepare child-serving professionals to identify higher rates of trauma exposure when systems and services across the nation re-open. Web-based innovations such as ScreenTIME can be distributed widely to advance and promote more equitable health outcomes for children and families.”

Trauma ScreenTIME is designed to help identify children suffering from trauma as early as possible and connect them with effective services. Despite high rates of trauma exposure and the increasing availability of trauma-focused [evidence-based treatments](#) (EBTs), the vast majority of children suffering from traumatic stress are not identified and do not receive any treatment. Most children suffering from trauma are not engaged in the behavioral health system (where screening and treatment are most available), but are often able to be reached through schools, primary care, early childhood, child welfare, or juvenile justice settings. These child-serving professionals are generally unaware of a child's trauma history, and trauma screening is rarely implemented consistently. While increasing efforts to adopt a [trauma-informed approach](#) are being made across these systems, they consistently struggle with trauma screening, citing barriers around staff training, ability to discuss trauma and manage disclosures, uncertainty about screening tools, organizational challenges such as data sharing and privacy, and how to access EBTs for children screening positive. Trauma ScreenTIME will support child-serving systems by implementing best practices in trauma screening, support, and connection to EBTs.

The primary activities of Trauma ScreenTIME are to:

1. Create and disseminate free interactive online trainings in screening best practices for staff in five child-serving systems (schools, primary care, early childhood, child welfare, and juvenile justice);
2. Ensure all materials represent and support child and family input; and
3. Disseminate these resources nationally through the NCTSN in a train-the-trainer learning collaborative.

Trauma ScreenTIME will utilize a Connecticut-based Advisory Board and a National Expert Faculty with expertise in child trauma and each of five child-serving systems (schools, early childhood, pediatric primary care, child welfare, and juvenile justice) to develop the trainings and make them available in Connecticut and nationally. Connecticut partners include Favor, the Department of Children and Families, the State Department of Education, and the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch. Following training development, a train-the-trainer [learning collaborative](#) with NCTSN sites will disseminate Trauma ScreenTIME across the NCTSN and child-serving settings nationally. By the end of the grant, at least 500 staff will be trained in trauma screening best practices, 10,000+ children will be screened, and 1000+ children will be referred for trauma-focused EBTs.

CHDI has made great strides in helping Connecticut build services and supports for children exposed to [trauma](#) through initiatives to improve workforce development, trauma screening, access to [evidence-based treatments](#), and cross-system collaboration. Trauma ScreenTIME is the second SAMHSA grant awarded to CHDI through the NCTSN. In 2016, CHDI received a five-year \$2 million grant to extend trauma-focused services to young children in Connecticut through the [Early Childhood Trauma Collaborative](#).

For additional information, visit www.chdi.org or contact Julie Tacinelli (CHDI) at tacinell@uchc.edu or 860-679-1534.

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