



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**NYU CHILD STUDY CENTER TO PROVIDE TRAUMA AND BEREAVEMENT
CLINICAL SERVICE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES****- New Program Specializes in Improving Coping Skills and Resilience -**

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 13, 2007 --- A new trauma and bereavement clinical service will be offered by the New York University Child Study Center to aid children, adolescents, and adults in coping with extreme stress related to trauma and the loss of a loved one. The program – a part of the NYU Child Study Center’s Institute for Trauma and Resilience - will specialize in improving coping skills and resilience through comprehensive evaluation, consultation, and treatment. The Child Study Center will provide the service for children, adolescents, and their families, as well as adults with a history of trauma or bereavement.

“Coping with extreme trauma or stress can be a daunting task for adults and much more so for children,” said Dr. Marylene Cloitre, Founder and Director of the Institute for Trauma and Resilience at the NYU Child Study Center. “The new Trauma and Bereavement Service is a crucial component in ensuring the mental health of every child – no matter what difficult life event has occurred.”

When a child experiences a traumatic event - such as the loss of a parent or sibling, watching a child, sibling, or parent suffer from a chronic illness, being in a serious car accident, getting mugged or attacked or seeing someone be attacked - it is imperative for their families to help them understand the painful experience and to learn to make sense of it themselves. The clinical service offered by the Child Study Center will help parents and children communicate their feelings to each other and learn to move beyond the experience, so that they can together go on to live healthy, happy lives.

“We have seen intense fear and helplessness take over a child’s life because of traumatic events caused by serious physical injury or the loss of a loved one,” noted Dr. Michelle Pearlman, Director of the Trauma and Bereavement Service at the NYU Child Study Center.

“An early study conducted by the New York City Board of Education in the aftermath of the September 11 tragedy showed that 8-15 percent of more than 8,000 children in grades 4 to 12 had elevated rates of posttraumatic stress disorder, major depression, separation anxiety, panic, and conduct disorders – all diagnosable symptoms that point to the need for treatment,” Dr. Pearlman added.

“In response to this, we mobilized our resources at the Child Study Center to address and resolve situations that exact an enormous toll on the physical and mental well-being of many children and their families.”

Coping with Life's Difficult Moments

The death of a loved one is considered one of the more difficult experiences in anyone's life, particularly for children who find it hard to comprehend the loss and their feelings of loneliness and being abandoned. It is estimated that one in seven children will be subjected to the death of a loved one by the age of 10 and one in every 20 children will face the death of a parent before they turn 18.

A traumatic event is a situation which leads to intense fear and helplessness. It can be something short-lived, such as a serious accident, physical or sexual assault, or terrorist attacks. Other times, the situation may be more chronic, such as watching a family member suffer from a long, serious illness or ongoing physical or sexual abuse. Studies show that one in four children and adolescents experience a potentially traumatic event.

A variety of factors influence the response of a child or adolescent to the loss of a loved one or a traumatic experience, such as a serious accident or victimization. While there are some who will quickly return to their daily lives, others may experience behavioral or emotional difficulties such as depressed mood, irritability, excessive worry, or distressing thoughts or images. In some instances, their school performance may also be affected and conflicts in close relationships may arise.

Evaluation

It is important to get help when these symptoms occur. In order to determine the best course of treatment and to provide appropriate recommendations, the Trauma and Bereavement Service at the NYU Child Study Center will conduct an evaluation/review of the individual's history and current functioning. Relevant information may be gathered from family members, health professionals, and school personnel. Once the evaluation is complete, a feedback session is held to discuss a plan to help the individual or family.

Treatment

The trauma and bereavement clinical service will provide practical solutions to help children cope with issues following stressful events, such as death, trauma, and disaster. Most of the counseling by NYU Child Study Center professionals will focus on ways to treat symptoms manifested by children and adolescents. In specific situations, they can also offer consultations to schools, families, and other organizations on grieving, coping, and ultimately moving forward in the face of adversity.

In addition, outreach services such as workshops and presentations on trauma, bereavement, and resilience will be targeted toward schools, parents, community organizations, or health professionals.

For more information about the Trauma and Bereavement Service at the NYU Child Study Center, call (212) 263-2776.

The NYU Child Study Center is dedicated to the understanding, prevention and treatment of child and adolescent mental health problems. The Center offers expert psychiatric services for children and families with emphasis on early diagnosis and intervention. The Center's mission is to bridge the gap between science and practice, integrating the finest research with patient care and state-of-the-art training utilizing the resources of the New York University School of Medicine. The NYU Child Study Center offers a variety of mental health services for children, adolescents, young adults and their families. Child and Family Associates is the clinical arm of the NYU Child Study Center and the point of entry for all clinical programs. The goal of the Child Study Center is to bring together the most research-supported evaluations and treatments with an individualized and family centered approach. The Child Study Center was founded in 1998 and established as the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry with the NYU School of Medicine in 2006.

For more information, please visit www.aboutourkids.org.