African American Children and Adolescents of Parents With Substance Use Disorders: Protective Factors and Counseling

Presenter
Mark Sanders, LCSW, CADC
Impact of Parental Substance Use Disorders on Children and Adolescents

- Impacts Academic Functioning
- Emotional, Behavioral, and Social Problems
- Earlier Onset of Substance Use
- Faster Acceleration of Substance Use Patterns
- Higher Rates of Substance Use Disorders
- Abandonment Issues
Iceberg Model

Addiction

↑

Co-dependence

↑

Toxic Shame

↑

Abandonment/Trauma

John Freil
Guilt vs. Shame

• Guilt: Behavior
  • I’ve done wrong
  • I’ve done bad
  • I made a mistake
Your “Being”
- “There is something wrong with me”
- “I am bad”
- “I am a mistake”
Shame: The belief that I am unlovable and unworthy of belonging.

Brené Brown, Ph. D.
Iceberg Model

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John Freil
Co-dependence

An over involvement with things outside of us and an under involvement with things inside of us.

Left untreated co-dependence can lead to addiction.

John Friel
Iceberg Model:

Addiction

Co-dependence

Toxic Shame

Abandonment/Trauma

John Freil
Impact of Parental Substance Use Disorders on African American Children and Adolescents

- Early marijuana use
- Negative labels: “crack babies”
- Increased involvement in the child welfare system
Impact of Parental Substance Use Disorders

• More likely to live with one parent (numbness and “father hunger”)

Sources:
Carl Bell, M.D. 2010; Sharon Johnson, 2012
Increased risk of:

- Gang affiliation
- School expulsion
- Involvement with the criminal justice system

Sources: Carl Bell, M.D. 2010; Sharon Johnson, 2012
Adult Children of Parents With SUDs:

- We guess at what is normal
- We lie when it would be just as easy to tell the truth
- We judge ourselves harshly
- We have difficulty having fun
Adult Children of Parents With Substance Use Disorders

- We have difficulty with intimate relationships
- We over-react to changes over which we have no control
- We are approval seekers
- We either put the needs of others ahead of our own or spend our lives believing the world owes us
- We feel alone and different from other people
Characteristics of Adult Children of Parents With SUDs

• We are either super responsible or super irresponsible

• We are extremely loyal, even when there is evidence that the loyalty is underserved

• We have a tendency towards perfection

• We have a tendency towards procrastination
Characteristics of African American ACOAS

- We continue to be impacted as adults by our disproportionate representation in the child welfare system
- We continue to be impacted as adults by our involvement in the juvenile justice system
- We can continue patterns from our childhood through multiple generations
Protective Factors for African American Children and Adolescents of Parents With Substance Use Disorders

3 Parenting Styles

- Autocratic – children have no voice
- Democratic – children have a voice
- Laissez – faire – anything goes
Protective Factors, Continued:

- Family celebrations
- “A praying grandmother”
- Mentorship
- A membership
- Later onset of substance use
- Early counseling of mental illness and trauma
Protective Factors:

- Cultural knowledge and cultural pride
- The adult protective shield and extended family orientation
- A Matrix
- Constant & predictable routines
- The ability to get adopted by surrogate families
- Lot of activities and sports

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Sports
Why Basketball?

• Movement
• Creativity
• Bonding
• Camaraderie
• Release of dopamine
• Laughter
• Human touch
• Legal aggression
• Stress relief

Flickr.com
Protective Factors:

- ADDRESS THE FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM
- SPIRITUALITY
- A SENSE OF BELONGING
- LATER ONSET OF SUBSTANCE USE
- INSIGHT
My parent has a disease characterized by emotional unavailability, broken promises, and inconsistency. I did not cause this problem. I am not the problem or the situation.
Protective Factors:

• An affirming mirror

• An adult who has high expectations

• Later onset of substance use

• Encourage excellence rather than perfection

• The chance to express their feelings
Appropriate Response to the Feelings

- “I believe you.”
- Normalization of the feelings
- Reflection of feeling
- “I could see how you would feel that way.”
- “You are not alone.”
Halle Berry

Her father had alcohol use disorder and physically abused her mother and sister.
Mario (Singer): His mother is addicted to heroin.
Tupac Shakur’s mother was addicted to crack cocaine.
Eminem
Nicki Minaj: Her father was addicted to alcohol and other drugs.
Rihanna’s father is addicted to crack cocaine and alcohol.
WELCOME The purpose of this website is to serve as a single location where individuals who are interested in information about addictions, treatment, and recovery among African Americans can be found. The site contains historical data, scholarly articles, educational videos, music and DVDs.