

HANDLE WITH CARE (HWC) NORTH DAKOTA

Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota (a chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America)

Contact Information: Project Manager Jennifer Boub (701) 429-1672 jboub@pcand.org



BACKGROUND:

- ✓ 1 out of 4 children attending school have been exposed to a traumatic event. (NCTSN School Committee, 2008).
- ✓ 60% of American children have been exposed to violence, crime, or abuse in their homes, schools, or communities and 40% have been direct victims of two or more violent acts (Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, 2009).
- ✓ Prolonged exposure to violence and trauma can seriously undermine children's ability to focus, behave appropriately, and learn in school. It often leads to school failure, truancy, suspension or expulsion, dropping out, or involvement in the juvenile justice system.
- ✓ The ultimate goal of HWC is to help students to succeed in school. Regardless of the source of trauma, the common thread for effective intervention is the school.
- ✓ 6,089 Incidents of Domestic Violence were reported to crisis intervention centers in North Dakota in 2016. 3,702 children reported were directly impacted by these incidents.
- ✓ There were over 16,000 child abuse and neglect reports in North Dakota in 2017. 2,000 of them were confirmed and nearly half of those confirmed cases were children under the age of 5.

GOAL: Promote safe and supportive homes, schools and communities that protect children, and help traumatized children heal and thrive. HWC promotes school-community partnerships aimed at ensuring that children who are exposed to trauma in their home, school or community receive appropriate interventions to help them achieve academically at their highest levels despite whatever traumatic circumstances they may have endured.

Objective #1: Prevent children's exposure to trauma and violence, mitigate negative affects experienced by children's exposure to trauma, and increase knowledge and awareness of this issue.

Objective #2: HWC programs support children exposed to trauma and violence through improved communication and collaboration between law enforcement, schools and mental health providers, and connects families, schools and communities to mental health services.

PILOT:

"Handle with Care" is an initiative that is being piloted in Mandan, West Fargo, and rural Cass County schools and involving all law enforcement agencies within the district. The schools, located throughout the county, all have children and families that experience many different types of trauma each day.

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

"Handle with Care" provides the school with a "heads up" when a child has been identified at the scene of a traumatic event. It could be a domestic violence situation, a shooting in the neighborhood, witnessing violence, a drug raid at the home, a motor vehicle accident, etc. Police are trained to identify children at the scene, find out where they go to school and send the school a confidential email or fax that simply says . . . "Handle NAME OF CHILD With Care". That's it. No other details.

In addition to providing notice, many School Resource Officers (SRO's) also build positive relationships with students by interacting on a regular basis. They visit classrooms, stop by for lunch, and simply chat with students to help promote positive relationships and perceptions of officers.

SCHOOLS:

Teachers, many of whom have been trained on the impact of trauma on learning and are incorporating many interventions to mitigate the negative impact of trauma for identified students, including: sending students to the nurse/clinic to rest (when a HWC has been received and the child is having trouble staying awake or focusing); re-teaching lessons; postponing testing; small group counseling by school counselors; and referrals to counseling, social service or advocacy programs. As we move forward, the schools may also implement school or district-wide interventions to help create a trauma sensitive school (Greeters; pairing students with an adult mentor in the school; utilization of a therapy dog; "thumbs up/thumbs down" to indicate if a student is having a good day or a bad day; and "Chill" Passes).

COUNSELING:

When identified students exhibit continued behavioral or emotional problems in the classroom, the counselor or principal refers the parent to a counseling agency which provides treatment and potentially trauma-focused therapy. Once the counseling agency has received a referral and parental consent, students may then receive on-site counseling. The option of sending referrals to other local clinicians or utilizing telehealth services may also be available.

The counseling is provided to children and families at times which are least disruptive for the student. The mental health therapists may also participate in meetings deemed necessary by school personnel, and as authorized by the child's parent or guardian. Counselors and mental health therapists may provide assessments of the child's need, psychological testing, treatment recommendations, accommodation recommendations, and status updates to key school personnel as authorized by the child's parent or guardian.

HANDLE WITH CARE

LAW ENFORCEMENT

When a child is exposed to a traumatic event, a law enforcement officer will contact the designated school personnel who will take the initial information (Handle With Care Notice)



SCHOOL DISTRICT



The designated school personnel will then ensure notification is provided to appropriate Teaching Staff and School Personnel

TEACHING STAFF & SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Classroom Interventions
Awareness
Observation
Support

Additional Support Needed

No Additional Support Needed

SCHOOL COUNSELOR OR SOCIAL WORKER

Interventions
Assessment



Additional Support Needed

No Additional Support Needed

CONTINUE WITH CLASS/REGULAR ACTIVITY



BACK TO CLASS- CONTINUE TO BE AWARE AND SUPPORT AS NEEDED



MENTAL HEALTH THERAPIST

Contact Family Services and Children's Aide for additional supports



Potential Implementation Challenges

- There are very few challenges HWC encounters. Lack of resources, while always a challenge, has never been a barrier to implementation. The HWC program was started and continues without a funding stream. Agency's allowed employees to contribute their time and effort to the program. Resources were leveraged to provide technical assistance and travel.
- Finding time for school to do the strategic planning for HWC in addition to their many other training mandates can be difficult but schools who have implemented HWC have found the trauma training is well worth the benefits.
- Law Enforcement has been on board from the beginning, but this is a systems level change, so while everyone is willing to participate we continue to see ways to keep our police officers engaged so that they remember to do the notices. All of the head personnel at the police departments are extremely supportive.
- One of the biggest barriers is finding mental health providers that are certified in Trauma Focused-CBT. We simply need more mental health providers throughout the state (including rural areas). Utilizing Telehealth is an inexpensive option to reduce access barriers, but can come with insurance barriers.
- Maintaining fidelity to the program is essential. It is worth it to ensure proper planning time and to not rush the implementation.

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE NORTH DAKOTA: AUTHORIZATION TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION

Please place your initials in the boxes to the left of each organization indicating your authorization. A signature is required on Page 2.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------|--------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|--|
| Name of Student (Last, First, Middle): | | | Name of Caregiver: | | | Date of Birth: | | | |
| Street Address: | | | | City: | | State: | | Zip Code: | |
| Initial: | Name of Person/Organization/School: | | | Initial: | Name of Person/Organization: | | | | |
| City: | | State: | Zip Code: | City: | | State: | Zip Code: | | |

I, the named Caregiver of the named Student herein, do hereby authorize Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota (“PCAND”) or its authorized agent to obtain the following information or documentation pertaining to such information:

- Verification of Treatment
- Progress Reports
- Testing Results/Data
- Psychological/Evaluation
- Treatment/Recommendations
- Assessment Results/Data
- Telehealth Communication

from any above-designated organization and/or school, or any clinician or authorized agent(s) of the same, pertaining to the named student herein and her/his participation in the Telehealth in Schools Project. I further authorize the above-designated organization and/or school to provide copies of any documentation to PCAND or its authorized agent.

The information and documentation obtained by PCAND hereunder shall be used for the following purpose(s):

Revocation:

I understand that I have a right to revoke this authorization at any time by sending a written notification to the attention of Jennifer Boub at Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota, 418 E Broadway, Suite 70, Bismarck, North Dakota 58501.

Expiration:

Unless sooner revoked, this authorization expires after the _____ is complete, or as otherwise indicated below:



Release and Signature:

I have read and understand the nature and content of this release.

Signature of Caregiver

Name of Caregiver

Date

Relationship of Caregiver to Student: _____