

Intergenerational Transmission of gang involvement and incarceration

Review of clinical Practice

Session Two, Stream Five: Encouraging healing by validating historical trauma

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Content overview

Proliferation and reinforced trajectory



Impact of Parental Incarceration



Incarcerated Youth and gang affiliation








Healing intergenerational Trauma



Challenges and recommendations for comprehensive healing



Impact of Parental Incarceration

-  Trauma experienced by children at multiple stages of arrest and incarceration
-  Financial pressure to support incarcerated person, and / or relocation – **stress and isolation for both parent and children.**
-  Increased rates of **internalising and externalising problems** across the child-youth development continuum.
-  Collectively contributing to **poor attachment; poverty; high violence/substance use communities; poor engagement in education; and substance abuse** – **precursors for early offending – trauma trajectory.**
-  At any-one time, more than **20,000 children** in Aotearoa have a parent in prison


(NG et al., 2014; MacGibbon et al., 2011. Pillars Trust)

Incarcerated Youth and gang affiliation

 High rates of CYF placements (foster care and residences)

 Living in Poverty and Negative engagement with School

 Complicated grief (loss and separation)

 Presenting as institutionalised – disconnected from self and others, lack of attachment, relational skills, living for now, lack of hope

 Hyper-sensitive (physiological) to threat and criticism.
High rates of violence and conflict


 Lack of engagement with social workers, lawyers and external community members and services

Incarcerated Youth and gang affiliation


 Mistrust of others, especially “the system”

 Early substance use (coping) and witnessing parental **substance abuse**

 A desire to fulfil the role of a Toa / Warrior

 Gang affiliation providing collective pathways to leadership, opportunities for material needs, clear expectations (in residence and the community)

 Gang affiliation provides narratives of power, success and purpose

 Gang affiliation provide an opportunity to individually and collectively fight “the system”

Healing intergenerational Trauma

Pūrākau method



Retelling, reflecting and re-authoring their story



Tuakiri – identity formation: Who I am as Māori and what that means as a member of society (Houkamau & Sibley, 2013)



A sense of belonging (acceptance) – Turangawaewae



A sense of self-efficacy (Competence/Mastery) - Ngā Pukenga – Beyond the Toa



Exploring the whakapapa of challenges, problems and strengths (removing “there is something wrong with me”)



Identifying responsibility to self and others



Healing intergenerational Trauma



Reassessing education goals and purpose



Developing real skills to express self, be assertive, communicate needs, develop and maintain relationships, strengthen resilience, engage in opportunities



Addressing issues related to Te Ao Wairua and Whakapapa - Kaumatua support



Whānau therapies – reconnecting, re-organizing and clarifying aspirations



Reconnecting with and developing roles in Marae, Hapū and Iwi



Focused on Whānau ora and Mauri Ora



Challenges and Recommendations

Clinical and community systems present as Silo's: Lack of integration and collaboration → Staff across organisations developing relationships, shared goals, shared resources

Lack of understanding and skills in identifying, acknowledging and understanding the presence of intergenerational trauma → Trauma informed training required for corrections staff, CYF, police and schools

Lack of Whānau therapy practitioners → Training providers (BSFT) and registration body needs establishing

Incarceration not healing focused (Criminogenic needs) → Development of trauma informed models / programmes delivered within community and residential programmes

Reintegration to Marae, Hapū and Iwi often challenging (who) and with lack of opportunities for roles or age related activities → Hapū development initiatives targeting engaging Rangatahi

References / Readings

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- MacGibbon, L., McFelin, V., Gordon, L. (2011). Working with the families and children of prisoners in Aotearoa / New Zealand. A Guide to effective practice to ensure good outcomes for the children. Christchurch: Pillars.