

LASALLE SCHOOL

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Fall 2015 eNewsletter

CDC to keynote 2016 Capital Region ACE Symposium, date announced *Topics to include protective factors, two generational approaches*

Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trauma, and Response
ACEs
A CAPITAL DISTRICT SYMPOSIUM
APRIL 12, 2016

The third Annual Capital District Symposium on Adverse Childhood Experience(s), Trauma, and Response will be held on Tuesday, April 12th, 2016.

This year's symposium will feature a keynote speaker from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The topic will be the CDC's growing public position and statistics on adverse childhood experiences and the impact on health and other factors related to school completion, household poverty, and unemployment.

This year's symposium will also examine the realistic possibilities of introducing protective factors post trauma experience, and illuminate the long term effect of trauma without protective factors. Additionally, a discussion about two generational approaches as an emerging practice that is preventive and cost effective will round out the day. More details can be found at www.lasalle-school.org as they become available.

HEARTS receipt of MARC grant will impact LaSalle, Albany

The abilities that the University at Albany's 15-member collaborative called HEARTS will have to expand its work based in practices directly related to groundbreaking discoveries in the areas of neurology and brain science skyrocketed with UAlbany's announcement of a \$300,000 grant award. LaSalle School, Albany is a key HEARTS member and provider of services to youth and families.



Healthy Environments And Relationships That Support (HEARTS) concentrates efforts on the Capital Region's most underserved, high-ACE scoring populations, including children from minority groups, people experiencing disabilities, and homeless people. LaSalle School, Albany is a HEARTS partner. "Over the years, in LaSalle's work in HEARTS, we have embedded core principles of ACE awareness and trauma informed care in all aspects of our work with children and families and as part of our training of staff," LaSalle School Executive Director Bill Wolff said in remarks congratulating HEARTS on their selection for the MARC initiative. Wolff is also a co-principal investigator on the new grant.

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To learn more about MARC, go to www.lasalle-school.org/news-and-knowledge/brain-science-awareness >>

Alliance's Change in Mind discusses brain science key concepts



After each convening of the Change in Mind brain science cohort sponsored by the national Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, LaSalle School decided to create a digest to summarize key points and topics to share with the LaSalle community.

Key concepts discussed have centered around the importance of relationships in promoting healthy brain development and mitigating the effects of trauma. In early childhood, the interaction between child and caregiver develops and reinforces neural pathways. The more these pathways are used, the stronger they get.

As a result of this discussion, LaSalle is looking for ways to include more motivational interviewing in service provision for all programs at the agency. Motivational interviewing is a goal-oriented, client-centered counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence.

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Topics to include protective factors, two generational approaches

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This year's symposium will feature a keynote speaker from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The topic will be the CDC's growing public position and statistics on adverse childhood experiences and the impact on health and other factors related to school completion, household poverty, and unemployment. For example, the social determinants for long term health are not dramatically different from those for education achievement.

This year's symposium will also examine the realistic possibilities of introducing protective factors post trauma experience, and illuminate the long term effect of trauma without protective factors. Attendees will receive encouraging information that even after an adolescent has been through a trying and traumatic experience that the treatment he / she receives post trauma is very important. That it is not too late!!!

Finally, a discussion about two generational approaches as an emerging practice that is preventive and cost effective will round out the day. The logistics and agenda are currently underway. Further details will be made available at the LaSalle School website as soon as they are finalized.

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Healthy Environments And Relationships That Support (HEARTS) concentrates efforts on the Capital Region's most underserved, high-ACE scoring populations, including children from minority groups, people experiencing disabilities, and homeless people. *LaSalle School, Albany* is a HEARTS partner working closely together with the entire HEARTS coalition to advance brain science research and treatment practices.

This sizable grant award came as a result of HEARTS selection for the national project called ***Mobilizing Action for Resilient Communities (MARC)***. In a December 2014 press release launching the MARC initiative, the *Health Federation of Philadelphia* announced that \$4.8 million from the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation* and *The California Endowment* would fund well-established coalitions and partnerships chosen for the MARC project. Those chosen would have a demonstrated history of working together to reduce childhood adversity and promote resiliency among diverse populations of all age groups. UAlbany's HEARTS is one of 14 communities across the country selected for MARC.

"The HEARTS initiative was selected for MARC because it represents an outstanding model for how communities can use research on ACEs to engage and mobilize action. We look forward to sharing their best practices and learnings as we work together to create just, healthy, and resilient communities through the MARC project," said Leslie Lieberman, MARC director of Philadelphia.

In addition to LaSalle, Albany participants in the Capital Region HEARTS network are: *St. Anne Institute, Capital District Physicians' Health Plan, Center for Disability Services, Community Hospice, Homeless and Travelers' Aid Society, Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless, NYS Council on Children and Families, NYS Department of Health representatives, Parsons Child and Family Center / Northeast Parent and Child Society (Northern Rivers), Prevent Child Abuse NY, St. Catherine's Center for Children, Senior Hope, Soldiers Hope / Orenda Healing Arts, Trinity Alliance, Troy Housing Authority, and WAIT House.*

"Over the years, in LaSalle's work in HEARTS, we have embedded core principles of ACE awareness and trauma informed care in all aspects of our work with children and families and as part of our training of staff," LaSalle School Executive Director Bill Wolff said in remarks congratulating HEARTS on their selection for the MARC initiative. Wolff is also a co-principal investigator on the new grant. "Our selection earlier this year as one of 10 organizations from across the U.S. to be part of the 'Change in Mind' brain science project positions us to contribute significantly to the MARC collaborative and the efforts to disseminate ACE-resilience knowledge and impact practices so that children and adults are better able to overcome the effects of trauma and live healthier lives."

Called ***Change in Mind: Applying Neurosciences to Revitalize Communities***, the 15 site, two-country effort is also comprised of five Canadian sites. Change in Mind is sponsored by the national *Alliance for Strong Families and Communities*, and concluded its second convening from November 3-5, 2015 in Calgary, Alberta, a few days after the MARC sites were announced.

UAlbany School of Social Welfare Associate Professor Heather Larkin will serve as the MARC project leader for the HEARTS initiative. She said "MARC funds will allow [HEARTS] to move from a service-sector focus to a five-county community development, mobilization and action plan, along with a statewide scale-up benefits through state agencies. Larkin also heads the *National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services*.

"MARC funds and the national learning community which we will join allow our region to accelerate interventions to promote ACE resilience and to help mitigate the negative effects of ACEs," said UAlbany School of Social Welfare Dean Emerita Katharine Briar-Lawson, a collaborator on the new grant. The first gathering of MARC participants took place in Philadelphia on November 8th and 9th.

Alliance's Change in Mind discusses brain science key concepts

The Centrality of Relationships

One of the key concepts discussed by many of the presenters at the August 2015 convening in Chicago was centered around the importance of relationships in promoting healthy brain development and mitigating the effects of trauma. In early childhood, the interaction between child and caregiver develops and reinforces neural pathways. The more these pathways are used, the stronger they get. This is why early childhood education is key, as it leads to healthy development.

Even if these pathways aren't developed in childhood, they can be built later in life, but this may take longer than if we tried to learn them as a child. Relationships are important for learning later in life as well. True transformation requires relationships and coaching, instruction and information are not enough. Developing a relationship that can help rebuild and recreate helpful pathways in the brain takes time and understanding and an intent to seek out the youth and family's input. As a result of the 'Change in Mind' meeting, LaSalle is looking for ways to include more motivational interviewing in service provision for all programs at the agency. Motivational interviewing is a goal-oriented, client-centered counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence, similar to the Life Space Interview that can foster relationships between staff, youth and family.

Another key aspect of relationships for youth in LaSalle's care is that they are a protective factor against future trauma. Not all stressful events cause trauma, and not all trauma is toxic. It is the repeated and prolonged stress / trauma in the absence of protective relationships that are damaging to healthy development and well being. Best practices of what constitutes a protective relationship include safety, trustworthiness, collaboration and mutuality, and respect for individual differences. Protective relationships in relation to toxic stress is a great perspective from which staff can see their role when interacting with the youth in our care. These protective relationships must also extend beyond the children served and must be afforded to the staff at the agency, who are faced with vicarious and secondary trauma.

The CDC's Role in Understanding the Effects of Toxic Stress

The original Kaiser Permanente study that brought the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences to the forefront of discussion was originally through the auspices of the Centers for Disease Control. Since the publication of the results from that study, the CDC has continued to explore avenues for further research and dissemination of findings. During her presentation at the Chicago meeting, the representative from the CDC indicated that the CDC is taking the position that toxic trauma in young people, in addition to its impact on long term health, has strong correlations with high school non-completion rates, unemployment, and household poverty.

These results represent samplings from all socioeconomic groups and racial / ethnic categories and means that class and race may play less of a role in these outcomes than the experience of toxic stress. It is important to remember that the principal role of the CDC involves the identification of serious threats to general public health and the development of timely responses to these threats.

So Many Goals . . . Where Do We Start?

One of the things we heard repeated during the meetings and discussions about 'Change in Mind' was how daunting and overwhelming the idea of trying to change policy seems when just getting started. Do we start with our staff, Boards, coalition building, participation in governmental and regulatory environments, networking, forming alliances and partnerships, or all of them at once?

We also learned that it need not be so daunting – that with respect to policy and practice, the best and most lasting change often originates at a very small level. At that level, you can try things without securing funding, like making treatment decisions which need to be made daily, or integrating trauma informed language throughout an agency, or applying for grants. These are actions we have taken, but not without risk of failure or commitment of resources.

We were reminded not to punish failure. Instead when failure occurs, we should study it, learn where we can improve, and try again. This is not to say that we should excuse failures as opportunities to dive deeper to make corrections.

Brain Science Brief – The Amygdala

Dominant organ of child

- Only region fully developed at birth
- Ensures survival to adulthood

Scans environment, watches for threats

- First stop for ALL sensory input
- Mediate environmental triggers

Perceived threat triggers immediate action

- Impulsive behavior (i.e., fight, flight, freeze)
- Peer pressure and Amygdala

Role in memory

- Determines what Hippocampus remembers – survival
- Stores visceral memory vs. 'video' memory

