



Central California Pediatrics

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Specialty information for physicians who treat children and expectant mothers.



Trauma-Informed Care Improves Patient Outcomes, Interpersonal Relationships and Well-being

Dr. Carmela Sosa

Complex Primary Care Pediatrician and Director, Valley Children's Guilds Center for Community Health

Since the announcement of California's ACEs Aware initiative in 2019, more healthcare providers have been introduced to and are aware of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), toxic stress, childhood trauma and how they potentially impact the long-term health and well-being of children. We have come to recognize how common ACEs are, with 61% of individuals having experienced at least one ACE. We have also learned that taking a trauma-informed approach to clinical care can help improve patient outcomes, adherence to treatment regimens, patient-provider relations, and provider and staff well-being.

Trauma-informed care is a strength-based approach grounded in understanding how a patient's life experiences affect not only their psychological and emotional well-being, but also their physical health. How we respond to others can either promote or hinder the healing environment, not just for our patients and families, but for our colleagues and staff too. It is a practice that promotes a culture of safety, healing and personal empowerment.

When we experience a potentially life-threatening event or emotionally harmful circumstance, we appropriately move into a fight-or-flight mode which is a normal response to a dangerous situation. But when individuals are exposed to repeated trauma or if they lack protective support, they may begin to live in survival mode, chronically activated and demonstrate abnormal responses to mildly stressful or even typical situations. Their previously appropriate, but now maladaptive defense mechanisms to the perceived threat, such as becoming argumentative or withdrawing, kick in. These are often the patients and families that are labeled as "difficult."

Trauma-informed care requires a paradigm shift, re-framing how we view the actions and behaviors of

those around us. When patients, families, staff and colleagues seem hypervigilant, angry, withdrawn or defensive, we should not ask, "What's wrong with you?" but rather wonder, "What happened to you?" For example, hearing a particular sound such a screaming child or siren, or being in a certain situation such as speaking with an authority figure, may trigger someone's fight-or-flight response.

A trauma-informed approach is based on six core principles:

- **Safety** – ensure individuals feel physically and psychologically safe
- **Trustworthiness and transparency** – build and maintain trust
- **Peer support and mutual self-help** – key to empowerment
- **Collaboration and mutuality** – shared decision-making and healing through trusting relationships
- **Empowerment, voice and choice** – recognize everyone's unique situation, strengthen personal choice and build resilience
- **Cultural, historical and gender issues** – recognize historical trauma, biases and stereotypes, and leverage cultural traditions and connections

We bring our emotions, experiences and coping mechanisms to our encounters, and those experiences are often unknown to others. Trauma is widespread, so it is important that we approach our patients, families and one another through a trauma-informed lens. Equally important is knowing how to screen, identify and appropriately respond, otherwise we run the risk of re-traumatizing others.

To learn more about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed care, join us for our upcoming webinars on February 1 and February 8.

Register for these events at cmetracker.net/VCH

A Top Children's Hospital in the Country

Valley Children's has again been named a Top Children's Hospital by The Leapfrog Group for exceptional achievements in patient safety and quality of care. The Leapfrog Top Children's Hospital recognition, awarded to only 5% of the nation's hospitals, is one of the most competitive awards American hospitals can receive. The quality of patient care across many areas of hospital performance are considered in establishing the qualifications for the award, including infection rates, practices for safer surgery, maternity care and the hospital's capacity to prevent medication errors. Valley Children's is proud to be one out of just 12 hospitals in the country to receive this award for putting patients first.



Valley Children's Receives One of the Highest Honors for Excellence in the State

The California Council for Excellence (CCE) announced the 2022 California Awards for Performance Excellence (CAPE) and named Valley Children's as a Eureka silver level recipient. CCE recognizes all U.S. businesses, healthcare, education and nonprofit sectors for performance excellence. Valley Children's is one of six honorees in California to be recognized for outstanding commitment to sustainable excellence through innovation, continuous improvement and visionary leadership.

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Sources:

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/aces/index.html#:~:text=ACEs%20are%20common%20and%20the,experiencing%204%20or%20more%20ACEs.>

²https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf

Upcoming CME Opportunities

**Grand Rounds
Adverse Childhood
Experiences and Toxic
Stress – Part 1**

Presented by Dave Lockridge

Wednesday, February 1

12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Activity code: 35499



**Grand Rounds
Trauma Informed
Communication for
Med Staff – Part 2**

Presented by Dave Lockridge

Wednesday, February 8

12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Activity code: 35500

**Grand Rounds:
Physician Wellness Series**

Presented by Tracy Juliao, PhD

Tuesday, February 14

12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Activity code: 35721

Register for Valley Children's CME events through our CME Tracker, cmetracker.net/VCH



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