

Alliance for Hope and Empowerment




The importance of Hope for Children affected by ACE and Polyvictimization

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European FJC movement

- EFJCA = Recognized European Network of Family Justice Centers and related multidisciplinary centers, aimed at tackling domestic violence and child abuse
- Regulatory framework in Europe = Mandatory directive for all European countries **Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence 'The Istanbul Convention'**

Article 7 – Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies



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Eliminating genderbased violence, domestic violence and child abuse & Empower survivors and restoring hope in the life of survivors and their families

OUR EUROPEAN MISSION



By Working on a high quality interdisciplinary approach

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What is a Family Justice Center?

Co-location of a multidisciplinary team of professionals who are cooperating under one roof to offer help and support to victims of family violence and their children.



A place where professionals come together and survivors come first – A SAFE PLACE



All services survivors and their children need are under one roof.

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FJC's in Europe:



- Pilot projects 2013-2015:
The Netherlands: Tilburg and Mutsaers
Belgium: Antwerp
Germany: Berlin
Italy: Milan
Poland: Warsaw
- Further development since 2015:
Sweden: Malmö
Belgium: Limburg and Mechelen
Northern Ireland: Derry
Iceland: Reykjavik
France: Paris and Bordeaux
- Under construction: various regions in the different parts of Europe

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Conditions for breaking the violence in the approach of FJCs:

- Working together on safety
- Starting from the needs of the survivor + empowering
- Specialized multidisciplinary approach
- Result focused work
- Developing an integral plan of action
- Intensive case-management in high risk situations
- Sharing information



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Focus on Children in the approach

“Children’s exposure to violence, whether as victims or witnesses, is often associated with long-term physical, psychological, and emotional harm. Children exposed to violence are also at a higher risk of engaging in criminal behavior later in life and becoming part of a cycle of violence.”

Finkelhor, D., Turner, H., Ormrod, R., Hamby, S., and Kracke, K. 2009. Children’s Exposure to Violence: A Comprehensive National Survey. Bulletin. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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Impact of family violence on children

- Escalating violence in families victimizes children in every case
- Children are more often witness to violence than indicated
- Violence affects the safety of the children severely
- Children often see themselves as the cause (guilt) of the violence and conflicts, ...
- The (threat of) violence does affect children exposed to this violence in many ways

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The impact of family violence on children can cause long-term trauma with severe consequences:



- Losing the ability to trust others
- Serious impact on experiences of personal safety
- Loss of capability of emotion-regulation
- Reduced capability to cope with stress in daily life situations

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Adverse Childhood Experiences

Experiences that grow deeply on a young child and then have a major impact on emotional and psychological health in later life



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| ABUSE | NEGLECT | HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION | |
|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Physical | Physical | Mental Illness | Incarcerated Relative |
| Emotional | Emotional | Mother treated violently | Substance Abuse |
| Sexual | | Divorce | |

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| BEHAVIOR | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|------------------|--------------|
| Lack of physical activity | Smoking | Alcoholism | Drug use | Missed work |
| PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH | | | | |
| Severe obesity | Diabetes | Depression | Suicide attempts | STDs |
| Heart disease | Cancer | Stroke | COPD | Broken bones |

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Work with children in European FJCs

- Giving children exposed to violence a voice
- Detecting and documenting the impact of violence on the children
- Offering therapeutic services
- Working on underlying problems in the family, triggering (escalation)of violence
- Psycho-education about normal responses to trauma
- Support and/or training of parent(s)/caretakers, conjoint therapy
- Emotional expression and regulation skills
- Hope-oriented approaches



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Good Practice:

Multifocus, the Power of Connecting

Lienja van Eijkern, Mutsaers Foundation
The Netherlands

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Multifocus: Working Together on Safety

How?

- Different perspectives
- Guiding Principles



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Multifocus: Guiding Principles

- One goal: violence stops
- Safety comes first
- 1 Intensive Case Manager, direct action
- Type of violence is recognized
- Patterns that lead to violence are recognized



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Multifocus: System Diagnostics

- Of family and services & organisations involved
 - Symptoms or patterns leading?
 - Person or perspective leading?
 - Registration or relation leading?
- Results are decisive, not effort

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Multifocus: Key is the Intensive Case Manager

- Attitude
- Not taking sides
- Connecting



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Multifocus: Plan of Action

- Family perspective is leading
- Focus on children: Courageous Children

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Courageous Children

- Creative therapeutic treatment aimed at children and teens who have witnessed or are victims of domestic violence.
- Involves the parent(s) as part of the treatment.

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Courageous Children

Group treatment

Child/teen:

- 11 x 1.5 hour sessions
- A follow up meeting after a month

The parent(s):

- 5 x 1.5 hour sessions
- Joint meeting with child
- Follow up meeting

Individual treatment

Customized program

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Courageous Children: Why Treatment?

- Inter- / trans-generational problem (from transfer)
- Behavioral and psychological problems (symptoms or conflicts?)
- Position of the child within the system:
 - Loyalties
 - Safety
 - Guilt feelings
- Problems involving parent(s)
- Parent-child interaction
- Psychological problems

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Courageous Children: Conditions for Treatment

- Domestic violence situation has ceased
- Parent(s) give permission for the treatment of their child
- Parent(s) have sufficient capacity or receive sufficient help/support from third parties to be able to cope with the impact of the treatment of their child
- Parent(s) are prepared to participate in the parent group

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Courageous Children: Form of Treatment

- Music / creative therapy:
 - Where words fail, music and image speak volumes
 - Safe situation and low risk threshold
 - Externalizing
 - Sensory experience
 - Bonding
 - Reduces arousal and regulates emotion

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Courageous Children: Proces of Treatment

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Courageous Children...

I love singing, I love my friends
Sometimes I wanna be alone with my friends
I love my dogs

It's not fun when anybody has a fight
Why don't you listen to me
It's stupid to talk about it
Don't wanna think about it
I wish it was different
I wish they could act normal

I wish I had a funny life
Why don't they just for me
Why are they doing this to me

Sometimes they should let me go
I wanna be happy, but I can't all the time
I wish my life was happy and great

They could stop, but they could go on
My friends are there all the time for me
And they can make me laugh and have fun with me
And of course we make a lot of pictures

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Courageous Children...

HOPE for these children:

- Support to repair family relations
- Then the possibilities of attachment grow
- And this decreases the chance of trans-generational transmission of violence

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Mutsaersstichting

Thank you for listening!

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European literature about Family Justice Centers

<http://www.politeia.be/nl-be/book/one-safe-place/15893.htm>

Politeia: One Safe Place

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Thank you for your attention

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