Intergenerational Transmission of gang involvement and incarceration

Review of clinical Practice

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


Andre McLachlan
PGDip ClinPsych; PGDip Health Sci
Contact: dahub
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


• Menzies, P. Intergenerational Trauma from a Mental Health Perspective. Native Social Work. 7.