

# PAUQUETTE NEWS

The Pauquette Center for Psychological Services Newsletter

Winter 2018-2019

## Understanding the Effects of Childhood Trauma By Eric Johnson, LCSW

*(Please be aware that this article contains information about the effects of childhood trauma. Some readers may find that this information raises difficult, uncomfortable feelings. If you find yourself feeling upset by this article, please consider seeking the support of a therapist. Please know that you are not alone.)*

Most people realize that childhood trauma can lead to significant distress in later life, but few people realize how pervasive and impactful childhood trauma is. Researchers in the 1980's discovered this almost by accident.



These health care professionals in southern California developed a weight loss program. They were surprised by the large number of people who dropped out of the program, especially because so many people were doing well in achieving their weight loss goals prior to dropping out. The researchers had collected a lot of data about participants prior to the beginning of the program, so they reviewed that data for clues about what might account for the high drop-out rate. They were shocked to find that about half of all participants reported having been sexually abused in childhood. This raised an important question: could the experience of childhood trauma have a negative impact on one's physical health later in life?

With this question in mind, Kaiser-Permanente (a health maintenance organization) and the Center for Disease Control embarked on the largest study ever conducted on the results of childhood trauma. They called these events Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Between 1995 and 1997, over 17,000 volunteers participated in the study. Data was gathered for years afterward to track participants' physical and mental health.

### CHILDHOOD TRAUMA



The ACEs study identified ten kinds of childhood trauma, and asked respondents to identify how any applied to them personally. These included:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- physical neglect
- emotional neglect
- exposure to domestic violence
- household substance abuse
- household mental illness
- parental separation or divorce
- incarcerated household member

There were three key findings from this large and influential research project. The first finding was that ACEs were much more common than expected: about two-thirds of participants reported at least one of these experiences. The second finding was that ACEs "cluster;" 87% of participants who reported one ACE reported at least one other ACE. Sadly, 12.5% of respondents reported four or more ACEs. Finally, researchers noted that there was a "dose-response relationship" between childhood trauma and health issues - the more trauma an individual experienced in childhood, the worse their health was in adulthood.

One reason this study was so influential was because it did not look at just one kind of trauma in childhood, as previous work in the 1980's and 90's had done. The second reason for its impact was that it tied trauma and stress to physical health, not just emotional or mental health.

A lot of research has been done since this initial ACEs study. Scientists have shown how childhood trauma can damage someone's emotional and social life, as well as their learning and their physical health. For example, when a child learns through the experience of trauma that the world is unsafe and no one is trustworthy, that child will likely have difficulty forming and maintaining healthy and lasting relationships. Trauma has significant effects on an individual's ability to manage intense feelings, because trauma causes the brain to be in a chronic state of "high alert," constantly scanning the environment for potential threats. The brain also has difficulty learning new information when it is always watching for danger. Finally, people who have suffered ongoing trauma in childhood may be left with internal feelings of emptiness,

*continued* →



*continued from page 1*

disconnection, and deep unease. These internal struggles can lead to “*acting out*” through high-risk behaviors, like smoking, substance abuse or overeating. The experience of complex trauma early in life can thus lead to disease, disability, and even early death from heart disease, diabetes, or cancer.

Although these research findings may seem bleak, remember that “*knowledge is power.*” Because of the ACEs study, helping professionals and educators have developed new tools to assess and address trauma as soon as possible in a person’s life. The good news is that people are resilient and can recover from early trauma. Psychotherapy can be carefully tailored to meet the needs of individuals of all ages who have had these damaging experiences. From providing education about the potential effects of traumatic experiences to addressing trauma symptoms directly, the process of psychotherapy can help people work on increasing their effectiveness and comfort in relationships, develop better ways to cope with their emotions and symptoms, and increase their overall life satisfaction. All of our therapists at The Pauquette Center are trained in trauma-informed care, and are ready to assist you or your child in the process of recovery.

Do you want to learn more about The Pauquette Center?



Scan the QR code



<http://l.ead.me/bb1Urs>



**New from The Pauquette Center**



2018 has been a year of growth for The Pauquette Center, and there are more new things happening in 2019. We have hired new clinicians, including Jenny Klawitter, LPC-IT, in our Columbus office, Cynthia Jurishica, LCSW, in our Portage office and Curtis Tindall, LPC-IT, in our Portage and Baraboo offices. In 2019, Joel Petty, LPC, will be joining us in our Baraboo and Prairie du Sac offices. Amanda Goglio, APNP, will be providing medication management services part-time in our Columbus and Portage offices.

Pauquette has started to conduct clinic-wide trainings in special topics, including psychopharmacology (the role of medication in treating psychiatric disorders), and LGBTQ issues. We completed repairs and remodeling of several of our buildings this year, to provide a comfortable and safe environment for your journey toward recovery and wellness.

Our support staff is the face of Pauquette - they are the people you speak to first when you call to arrange an appointment, and they are the first people to greet you when you come to our clinic. Lois Ganga, our long-time support staff in the Columbus office, retired in 2018. Trina Hensler went from being part-time to full-time in that role. Jennifer Thompson and Brittany Byers have joined our team as full-time receptionists in the Portage office.

We have also started a process of change in our leadership. Jocelyn Miller, Ph.D., our Vice President for Clinical Services since 2014, will be stepping down from that role. She will continue to work part-time, providing psychological testing and assessment of children, teens, and adults in the Baraboo office.

We welcome Lesley Chapin, Psy.D., our new, full-time Vice President. Dr. Chapin worked with us part-time as an outpatient psychologist from 2011-2016. She has held several leadership positions within the State of Wisconsin, at the Department of Corrections and Mendota Mental Health Center. Dr. Chapin will be working up to a full-time schedule with Pauquette in the first part of 2019, traveling to all six of our locations, and working with our owner, Thomas Hayes, Ph.D., to take us forward to better serve our community. Welcome, Dr. Chapin!

Visit [www.pauquette.com](http://www.pauquette.com) to see all of our therapists and their locations.



**PAUQUETTE CENTER FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES LOCATIONS**

1002 Lincoln Avenue  
1343 Park Avenue  
2901 Hunters Trail, PO Box 301  
50 Prairie Avenue  
710 N. Webb Avenue, Suite 400  
23295 US Hwy 14

Baraboo, WI 53913  
Columbus, WI 53925  
Portage, WI 53901  
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578  
Reedsburg, WI 53959  
Richland Center, WI 53581

Phone 608-356-9055 Fax 608-356-5447  
Phone 920-623-5578 Fax 920-623-9830  
Phone 608-742-5518 Fax 608-742-4087  
Phone 608-643-3147 Fax 608-643-3178  
Phone 608-524-5151 Fax 608-524-5353  
Phone 608-647-4705 Fax 608-647-8979