

# Community Institute for Psychotherapy

1330 Lincoln Ave #201, San Rafael, CA 94901-2141

Phone (415) 459-5999 Fax (415) 459-5602 www.cipmarin.org

## 2021-2022 News & Notes



### **November 2021 News and Notes** **Lasting Effects of Mental Health in Childhood** **By Robin Joy Berenson, PhD, LMFT**

In recent years we at CIP have witnessed a dramatic rise in mental health problems in the children and adolescents we see: increasing levels of stress and anxiety, depression, self-harm, and more. This trend has escalated exponentially in recent months as COVID 19 has impacted their lives, interrupting peer relations, school routines, family life, and other areas. At the same time, we have seen an increase in the number of families, parents with their children, coming for therapy.

In June 2021, “a study in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* (JAACAP) . . . confirms that depression in childhood or adolescence is associated with higher levels of adult anxiety and substance use disorders, worse health and social functioning, less financial and educational achievement, and increased criminality.”<sup>1</sup>

The lead author in the report, William Copeland, PhD, professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Vermont, VA, noted that “One in twelve children struggle with depression at some point between the ages 9 and 16.” While it is “clear that we have effective treatments to help, . . . in the real world the majority of children with depression never receive any treatment at all.”

The fact that childhood experiences affect individuals across the lifespan was a landmark finding in a study conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente from 1995 to 1997, which identified Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Since that time, the definition and recognition of ACEs’ impact on individuals, families, communities and our society has expanded. Today, the CDC website<sup>2</sup> offers extensive information about ACEs, including how they can be prevented on personal, family, community, and national levels. Under “Fast Facts,” the website explains:

## Community Institute for Psychotherapy

1330 Lincoln Ave #201, San Rafael, CA 94901-2141

Phone (415) 459-5999 Fax (415) 459-5602 www.cipmarin.org

## 2021-2022 News & Notes



*Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). For example:*

*experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect  
witnessing violence in the home or community  
having a family member attempt or die by suicide*

*Also included are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding, such as growing up in a household with:*

*substance use problems  
mental health problems  
instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison*

*ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential. However, ACEs can be prevented.*

Among the prevention strategies listed on the website are: “Strengthen economic supports to families; promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity; ensure a strong start for children; teach skills; connect youth to caring adults and activities; and intervene to lessen immediate and long-term harms.”

Of course, our work at CIP includes several of these important strategies: teaching skills, especially parenting skills for young families, and interpersonal skills and emotional regulation for students. Our counseling in the schools provides early intervention to help students overcome problems and develop the resources needed to thrive.

At CIP we have long known that often the most effective way to solve a child's distress is to help the parents, many of whom come from troubled families themselves. In

# Community Institute for Psychotherapy

1330 Lincoln Ave #201, San Rafael, CA 94901-2141

Phone (415) 459-5999 Fax (415) 459-5602 [www.cipmarin.org](http://www.cipmarin.org)

## 2021-2022 News & Notes



therapy they can address unresolved issues, and learn the parenting skills needed to create safe, nurturing home environments.

Conversely, helping the child can also help the family. As a child's pain is eased, solutions found, other family members benefit.

Our ***Raising Healthy Families Community Education Series*** was initiated in 2018 in response to the increase in the anxiety, stress, and other mental health conditions experienced by parents and children with whom CIP works. The series offers presentations by leading Bay Area experts to provide parents, educators, and other community members with the understanding, practical tools, and actionable strategies to address important issues families face today. Our goal is to provide the information families and community members need to raise children who are compassionate, resilient, and ready to learn. These presentations are free and open to all.

We'll have more details about our upcoming 2022 ***Raising Healthy Families*** series in future issues of *News & Notes*.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/06/210621123709.htm>

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fviolenceprevention%2Facestudy%2Findex.html](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fviolenceprevention%2Facestudy%2Findex.html)