

The Sprawl of Childhood Adversity into Adult Mental Health, Addiction, and Criminality: Understanding and Interventions

Melissa Piasecki, MD

Track: Juvenile

CE: CPA/BBS/BRN (1.5)

POST TBD

Narrative

Our understanding of the long-ranging impact of childhood adversity is rapidly growing. Since the landmark study by Anda and Felitti published in 1998, medical and mental health professionals and researchers have explored the deep roots of developmental adversity. Other landmark research has identified childhood trauma's effects on the brain at a cellular level. The research has been fruitful. We now have a better understanding of how early adversity impacts the development of brain's stress mechanisms and how this impact translates into lifelong health behaviors and addictions.

This presentation will summarize the neurobiological underpinnings of adversity and the rich research that traces the effects of adversity into adulthood, with special emphasis on addictions and adult criminality. This presentation will also review published interventions related to adversity and trauma. These interventions include variations on journaling, skills-building, resilience and problem solving.

BIO

Melissa Piasecki, MD

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Melissa is a forensic psychiatrist and Professor of Psychiatry at University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine where she teaches medical students and psychiatry residents on topics of neuroscience, psychiatric diagnosis, forensic psychiatry and addictions. As a faculty member of the National Judicial College, she teaches judges on topics of mental health, adolescent brain development and the neuroscience of addiction. Melissa trained at University of Vermont and University of Hawaii. She had authored articles, chapters and books on topics related to addiction, correctional psychiatry and capital cases. She is a practicing forensic psychiatrist and a consultant to the US Department of Justice.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the human stress response and how early life stress impacts brain development.
2. Use the ACE questionnaire in their professional role.
3. Apply research that connects childhood adversity to adult mental health, addictions and criminality.

4. Identify three methods used to support self-regulation in at-risk populations.