



Parenting During Ongoing Trauma Exposure

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Transforming Children's Lives



The Child Mind Institute is an independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders.

Our teams work every day to **deliver the highest standards of care, advance the science of the developing brain and empower parents, professionals and policymakers** to support children when and where they need it most.

We do not accept funding from the pharmaceutical, tobacco, alcohol, or firearms industries.

A Bold Vision: Open Science, Accessible Care, a Future Free of Stigma

Research



We are at the forefront of neuroscience efforts to find objective biological measures of mental illness.

Clinical Care



We provide **world-class clinical care** to children struggling with mental health and learning disorders.

Public Education



We equip **millions of parents, educators and policymakers** with the information they need.

Overview of today's presentation: Trauma and parenting

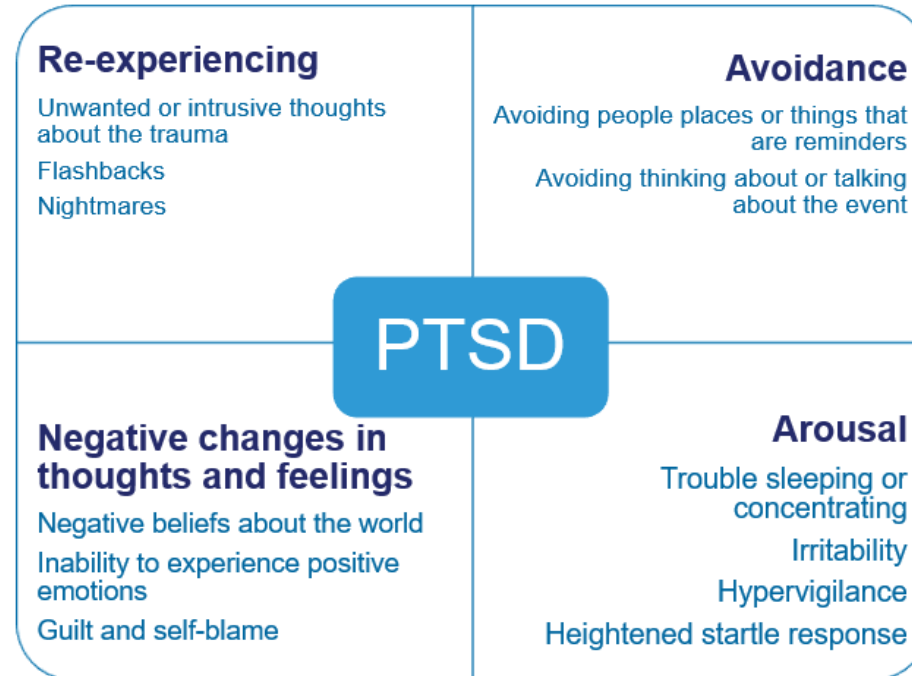
- Traumatic stress
 - Signs and symptoms
- Parenting in the context of traumatic stress
 - Numbing, avoidance and hyperarousal
 - Attachments
- Parenting strategies
 - Mindfulness
 - Relaxation
 - Effective discipline

What is Traumatic Stress?

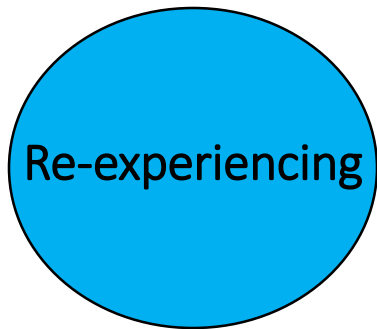
- Traumatic stress occurs when we are exposed to traumatic and scary events that **overwhelm our ability to cope**
- Our **subjective experience** is most important
- Functional impairment occurs

When Does it Become PTSD?

- PTSD is considered a “disorder of recovery”
- Some symptoms are expected in the wake of a scary or upsetting event
- No diagnosis until 4 weeks post trauma; before that acute stress response
- PTSD is defined by “reliving” the event; cues in the environment become paired with physiological stress response and they repeat the event



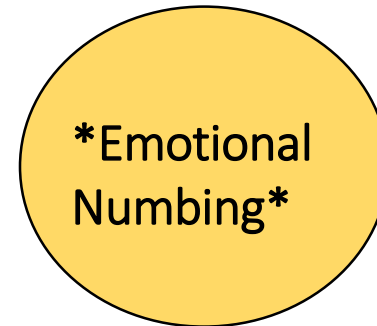
PTSD Clusters



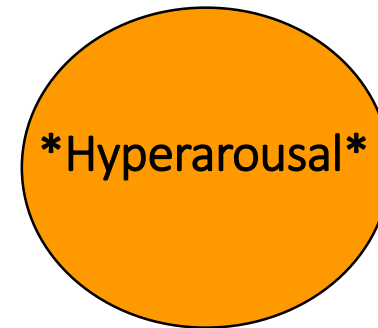
Re-experiencing



Avoidance



*Emotional
Numbing*



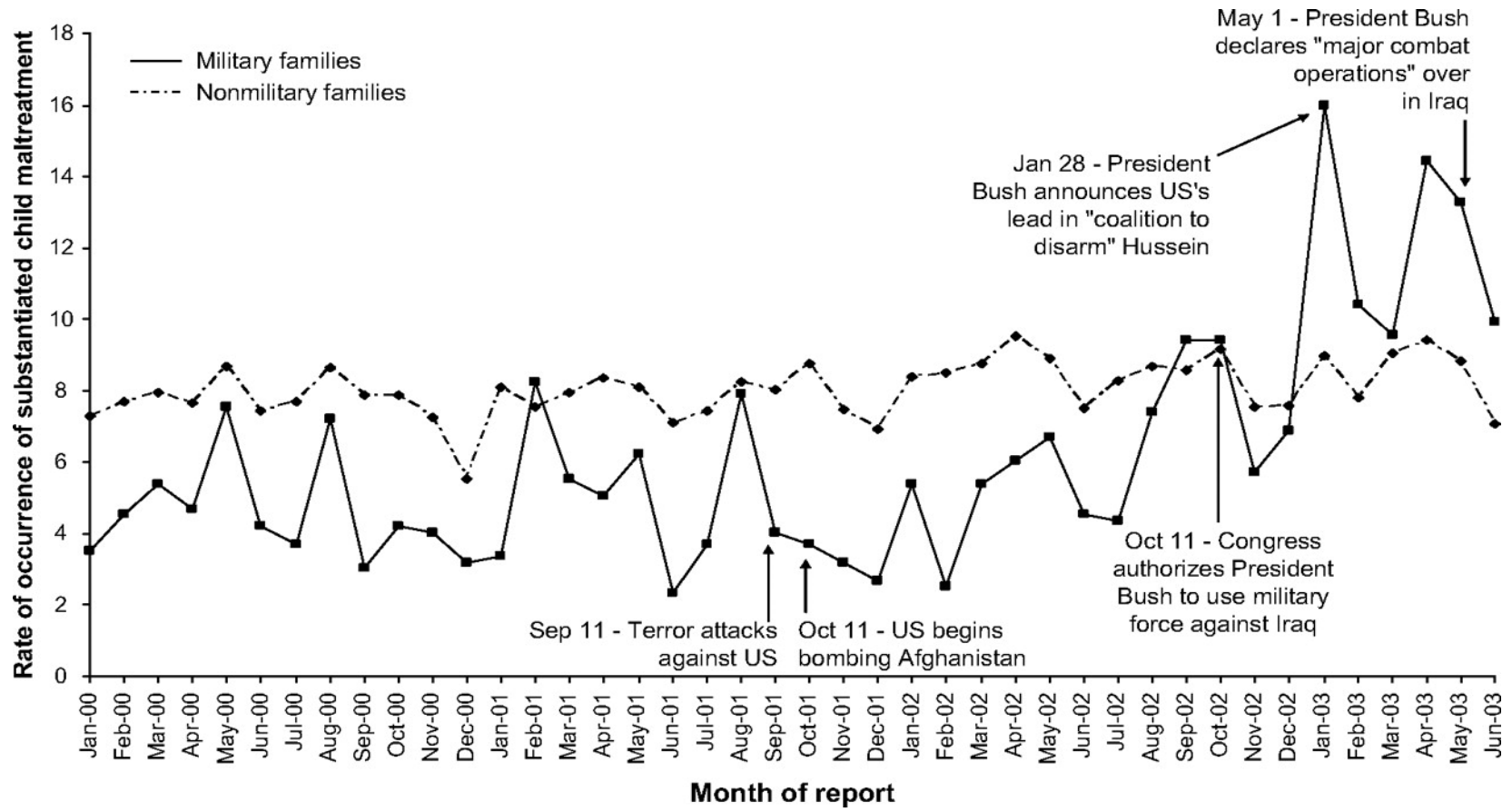
Hyperarousal

Attachment

- Secure attachment
 - parent is consistently responsive to the baby
- Two types of insecure attachments:
 - inconsistently responsive
 - consistently unresponsive



Rates of substantiated child maltreatment for children of military and nonmilitary families (Texas, 2000–2003)



Research on PTSD and Parenting

- Veterans with PTSD endorse significantly higher parenting problems than those without PTSD
- Also endorse significantly lower parenting satisfaction
- Mothers with PTSD more likely to use over-reactive discipline
- Parents with PTSD more likely to endorse moderate and severe parenting aggression
- Dads with PTSD more likely to exhibit less effective parenting
 - Numbing and avoidance associated with permissive parenting
 - Hyperarousal associated with overreactive parenting

Practicing Mindfulness



- Observe what you're doing
- Describe it with words
- Participate in it fully
- Do one thing at a time, in this one moment
- Notice judgments, aim for descriptions instead
 - Shame shuts down our ability to notice
 - Mindfulness helps us to be effective, i.e., do what works

Mindfulness in Parenting

- Special play time for young ones, special parallel time for teen
 - Let the child take the lead
 - Minimal questions, lots of reflections
- Beware of inaccurate conclusions and catastrophic thinking
 - Don't believe everything you think!
- Accumulate positive experiences together
- Set clear rules and expectations; do your best to follow through on usual consequences



And remember...

Resilience means putting one foot in front of the other.

Enlist support.

Do what works.

www.childmind.org