

RUPTURE, REPAIR AND PEDIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH NARRATIVES – WORKING WITH DISRUPTED FAMILY SYSTEMS AT THE CROSSROADS OF CRISIS

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Background: Pediatric development occurs in the across multiple interacting factors. Inherent developmental propensities (physical maturation, social skill development, increasingly complex psychological capacities) intersect with external factors (family systems, peers, economic and environmental factors) to influence child and adolescent development. Recently there has been a dramatic shift in the context in which childhood development unfolds. Social restrictions related to COVID-19 combined with unpredictable environments on account of natural disasters (hurricane Ida, wild fires, and flooding) have led to destabilizing and deconstructing family systems. Aims: As child and adolescent psychiatrists working in an urban environment we have seen this destabilization manifesting across the pediatric timeline exposing vulnerable youth at critical developmental periods. School-aged children are increasingly presenting with acute stress responses, adolescents with significant interpersonal conflict with caregivers and reduced access to peer relationships, and emerging adults struggling with existential concerns. Some pediatric populations have been impacted by the increasingly precarious environment around them, namely children with autism spectrum disorder and anxiety disorders. Methods: In this interactive workshop doctors Coleman and Roi will review the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic and hurricane Ida in New Orleans Louisiana interacted to disrupt family systems and pediatric mental health. We will then discuss strategies to address and treat children that are mindful of the precarious environmental influences on mental health. Concepts of rupture, repair, and narrative will be introduced and activities to cultivate these concepts as applied skills will be presented alongside case vignettes. Outcomes: Participants will have an opportunity to gain conceptual knowledge as well as applied skills that apply to direct clinical and patient care. Implications: Participants will be able to translate and apply these skills to social, environmental and economic stressors in their own communities in a manner that is contemporary, progressive and mindful of family systems.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Participants will be able to identify the ways in which multiple external environmental stressors (The COVID-19 pandemic and hurricane Ida) reciprocally interact to destabilize family systems.

2. Participants will examine the ways in which pediatric mental health narratives are constructed in the context of environmental stressors and how a rupture and repair model can be applied as a clinical skill.