

STRONG CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER

Summer Research Scholar

Name: Danielle Thompson

School: Florida State University

Mentor: Melissa Heatly, Ph.D. and Michael Scharf, M.D.

ABSTRACT

Title: Growing Resilience to Prevent Substance Use Disorder in Rural Youth: Phase I.

Background: It is known that adverse childhood experiences are strongly linked with substance abuse and risk for future substance use disorder¹ (SUD). This is especially amplified in rural areas where there is inadequate access to SUD-related prevention, support, and healthcare². Furthermore, research shows that mitigation of trauma can decrease future substance use in young people, but few SUD intervention programs currently incorporate elements of trauma-informed care into their practices³. For these reasons, there is an urgent need for effective, trauma-informed prevention and early intervention for youth at risk of developing SUD, tailored to the unique needs of rural communities and systems of care.

Objective: This literature review was conducted as Phase I of the five-year Growing Resilience project that aims to use community-based participatory research to design and disseminate trauma-informed, evidence-based adolescent SUD interventions in rural areas. The goal of this literature review is to inventory the evidence base surrounding adolescent SUD prevention and support the selection, development, and implementation of program(s) that are trauma-informed and adaptable for youth in rural communities.

Methods: A thorough literature review was conducted across several databases to identify evidence-based practices in adolescent SUD prevention over the past twenty years. A generic Boolean search string was developed and altered by database and prevention type. Input from ongoing key-informant interviews was also included in search string modification. Identified literature was grouped according to SUD prevention type: parent-focused, rural-focused, youth-focused, and/or community-based; and trauma-informed elements: explicit, implicit, or none. Common themes in the literature were noted throughout the review process. Upon completion of the review, a comprehensive table detailing the elements of each intervention was created.

Results: Findings revealed a large evidence base of diverse intervention methodology aimed at preventing youth SUD. Effective interventions included strengths-based, culturally responsive, and easily accessible material spanning across multiple youth-serving sectors. Surprisingly, nurse-family partnerships and exclusively peer-led programs were found to be generally ineffective at preventing long term SUD. Notably, few interventions were directly trauma-informed. An increased focus and awareness surrounding cultural adaptations of existing evidence-based interventions was found in more recent literature, but there were a lack of studies investigating the modification, implementation, and outcomes of such programs for rural youth. There was no evidence to suggest that there are existing evidence-based SUD interventions explicitly designed to be trauma-informed for rural youth. This literature review highlights the need for including rural adolescents in studies on interventions for SUD prevention and adding elements of trauma-informed care to existing programs. This literature review will inform our next steps as we design a trauma-informed, evidence-based SUD intervention to best meet the unique needs of the rural communities we aim to serve.

¹Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P., & Marks, J. S. (1998). [Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: the Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACE\) study.](#) *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *14*, 245-258.

²Office of National Drug Control Policy. (2020). [Rural community action guide: Building stronger, healthy, drug-free rural communities.](#)

³Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2020). [Focus on prevention.](#)