

The NS-LIJ COAST Project: Creating Optimism After Sandy Trauma in Far Rockaway, New York

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Presenter Disclosures

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The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose

Learning Objectives

- Explore the **needs** encountered in Far Rockaway, Queens, NY after SuperStorm Sandy and the trauma-informed, **multi-tiered mental health services** project we developed to meet those needs
- Describe the trauma-informed **youth development activities** and **parent and teacher workshops** that were implemented after the storm
- Identify the **mental health screening, assessment tools,** and **treatment interventions** that were implemented after the storm

Background: School-Based Health Centers

- SBHCs provide a **comprehensive range of services** that meet the specific physical and behavioral health needs of the young people in the community
- SBHCs provide all enrolled students with confidential, culturally-sensitive, youth-oriented **family planning, medical, mental health and health education services** at no out-of-pocket cost to their families
- SBHC staff work collaboratively to become more than a partner and a true integral **part of the school**

Northwell Health (NS-LIJ) SBHCs

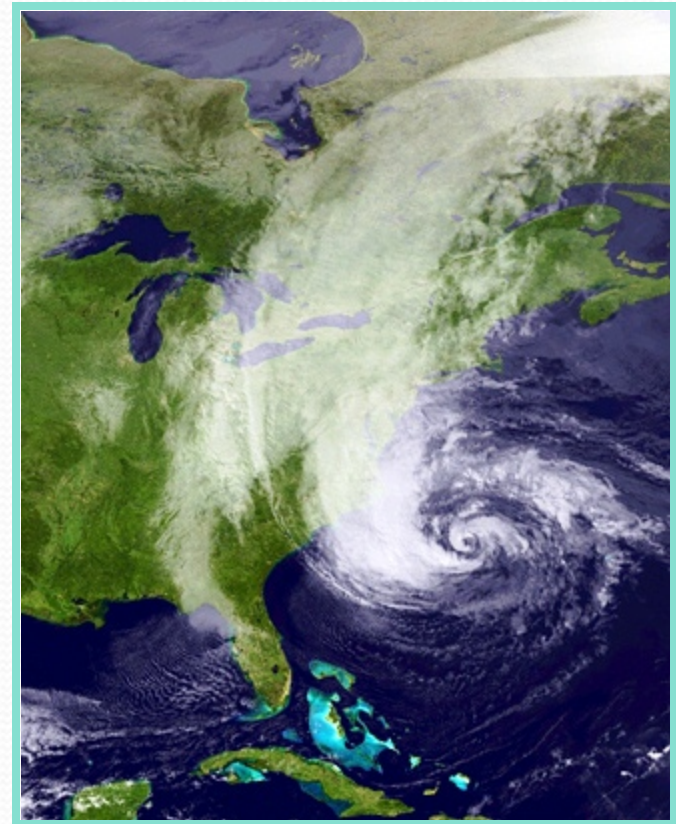
- 1987-89 – NSUH opened 2 SBHCs in Far Rockaway, Queens, New York: now F.R.E.C. and Brian Piccolo M.S. 53
- Our SBHC mission is to provide high quality primary and preventative care to students regardless of their ability to pay, with an emphasis on addressing health needs and education of the individual, family, and community
- Our SBHCs provide a full spectrum of services from prevention to intervention and treatment
- Our services and programs include individual, group, and family therapy and Pregnancy Prevention (CAPP-NYSDOH grant, from 2005-present)

Far Rockaway: A Community in Need

- Far Rockaway is on a peninsula, geographically **isolated** from the greater NYC area, and was one of the coastal communities in New York that was by hardest hit SuperStorm Sandy in 2012
- Prior to the storm, this community has historically faced significant **social and economic disparities**; examples include-
 - At FREC, the student population served by the SBHC is 57% Black and 34% Hispanic, with 84% entitled to Free Lunch (a poverty indicator)
 - At BPMS, students served are 71% Black and 26% Hispanic, with 97% entitled to Free Lunch
- Given these demographics and socioeconomic challenges, the students in Far Rockaway had high needs prior to SuperStorm Sandy, and their capacity for **resilience and recovery were severely tested by the storm's impact**

The Scope of SuperStorm Sandy (10/2012)

- The largest Atlantic hurricane on record (winds spanned 1,100 mi.)
- In the U.S., Sandy affected 24 states, including the entire eastern seaboard from Florida to Maine, and west to Michigan and Wisconsin
- Second-costliest hurricane in United States history
- Damage assessed to have been about \$75 billion, surpassed only by Hurricane Katrina



Sandy Hit Far Rockaway

- Many stories of loss –
 - A mother and her children watched the water rise into their yard and then the first floor. The family moved to the second floor of their home, where she said her last prayer with her children, thinking about what she had seen on TV when families died in their attics trying to escape the rising waters of Katrina.
- Immediate devastation –loss of heat, hot water, electricity
- Weeks after – the Far Rockaway schools reopened despite ongoing struggles in the building and the community at large
- Efforts were made to restore normalcy, but an enduring impact on survivors remained
- School staff reported a lingering sense that something had changed terribly; students seemed different in a way that they never recalled



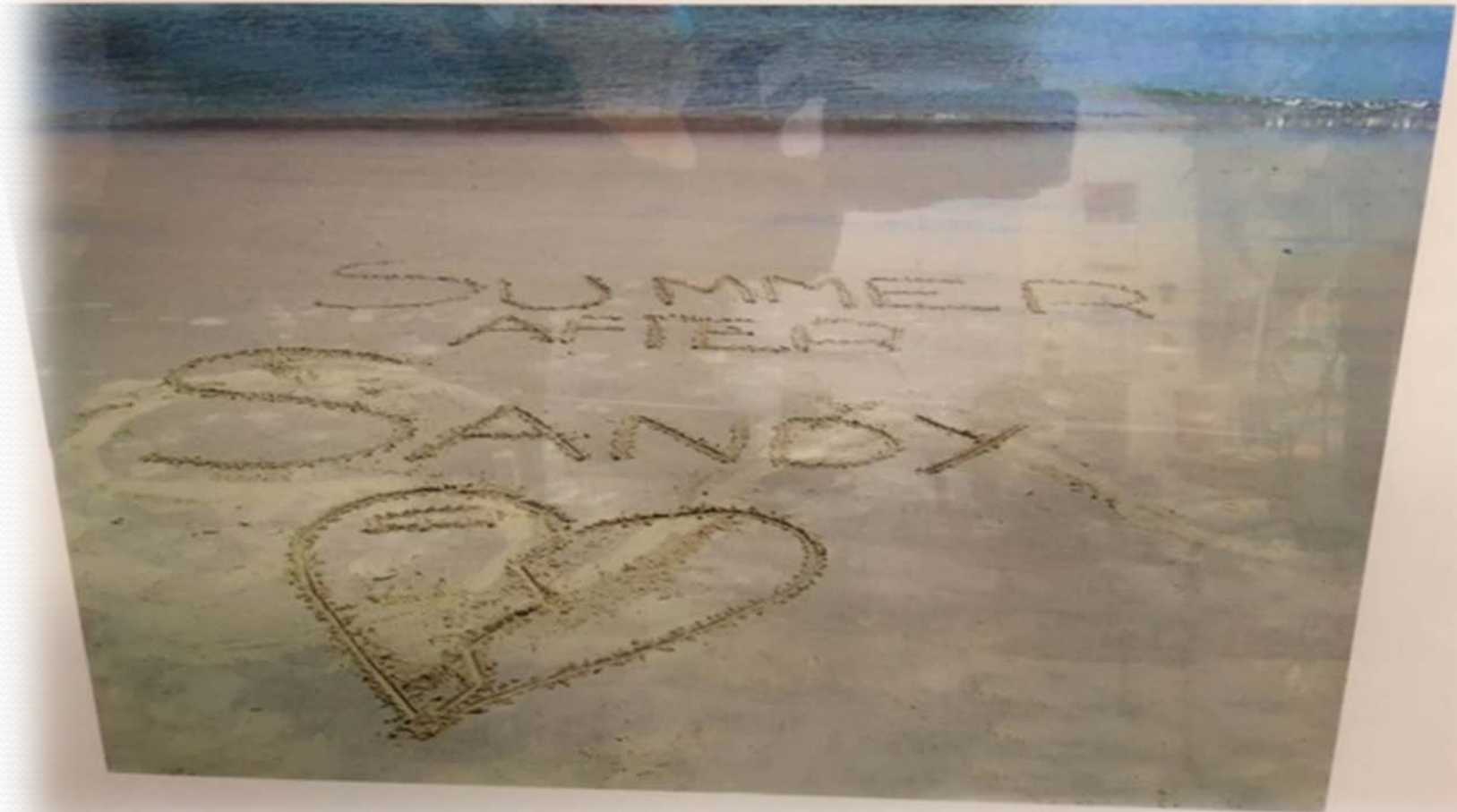


Immediate Disaster Response: *Psychological First Aid*



- Contact and Engagement
- Safety and Comfort
- Stabilization
- Information Gathering:
Current Needs and Concerns
- Practical Assistance
- Connection with Social Supports
- Information on Coping
- Linkage with Collaborative Services

Summer After Sandy



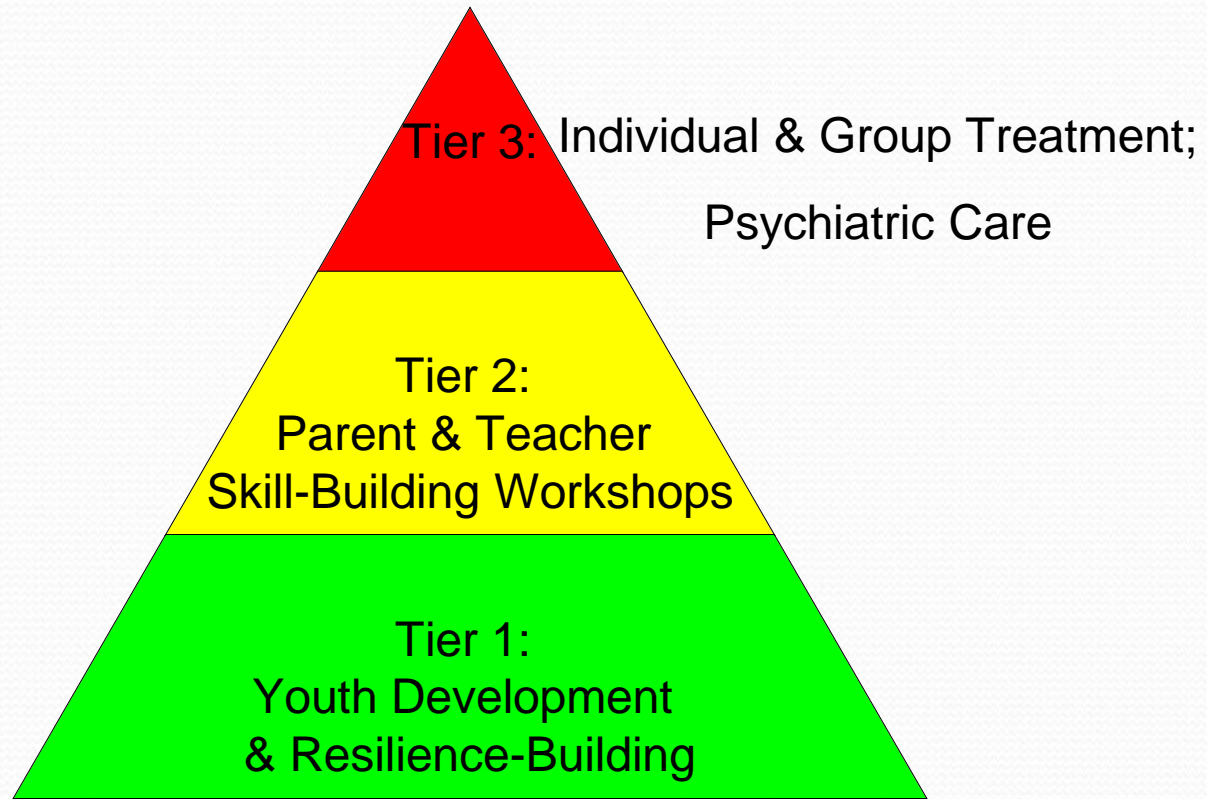
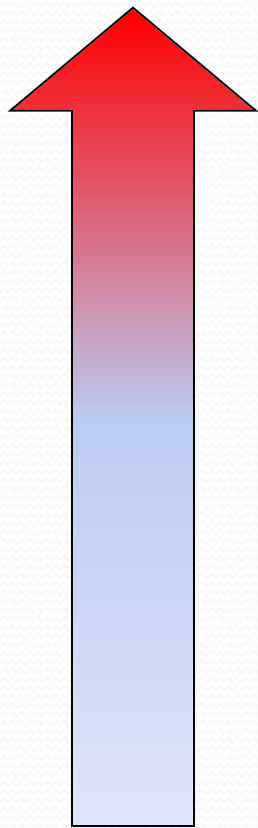


C.O.A.S.T. Project (2014-2015)

- **C**reating
- **O**ptimism
- **A**fter
- **S**andy
- **T**rauma



COAST Model



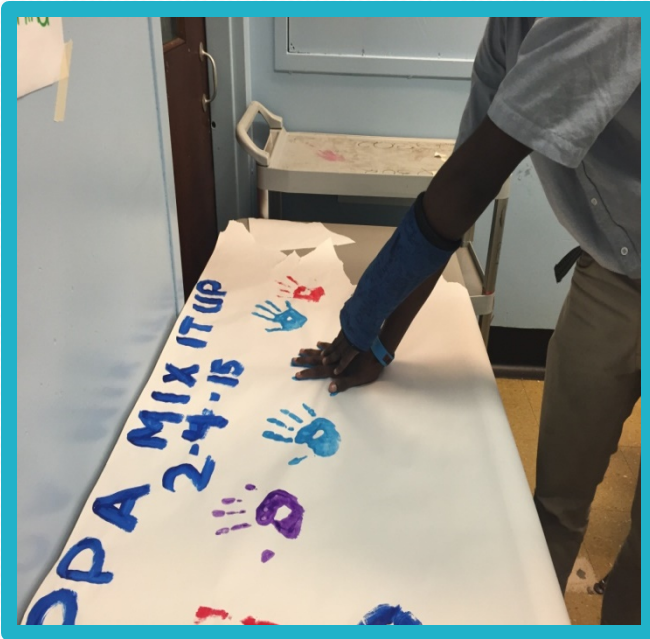
What staffing did COAST require?

- Dr. Linda Carmine- **Medical Director**, CCMC SBHC Program
- **Mental Health Team:**
 - Heidi Hagerstrom- COAST Program Coordinator & Social Worker, FREC
 - **Maryann DeSilva- Social Work Coordinator, FREC**
 - Carly Giglia- Social Worker, BPMS
 - Dr. Lydia Gerges- Psychiatrist
 - **Dr. Helena Roderick- Sr. Psychologist, SBHC Mental Health Supervisor**
- **Health Education:** Tyara Butcher, FREC & BPMS
- **“Behind the Scenes”:**
 - Joanne Jones- Program Administrative Manager
 - Ferra Bonaventure- SBHC Receptionist
 - Beverly Howard- SBHC Receptionist

Tier 1: Universal, Positive Youth Development Programming

- Rationale: All youth residing within the impacted community need to build **protective factors** to enhance their abilities to negotiate and avoid adverse behaviors
- Provided dynamic, innovative, teen-friendly programming for **accessing untapped inner resources** and **building new strengths** outside the boundaries of what was previously thought possible

Be Empowered and Resilient (B.E.A.R.)

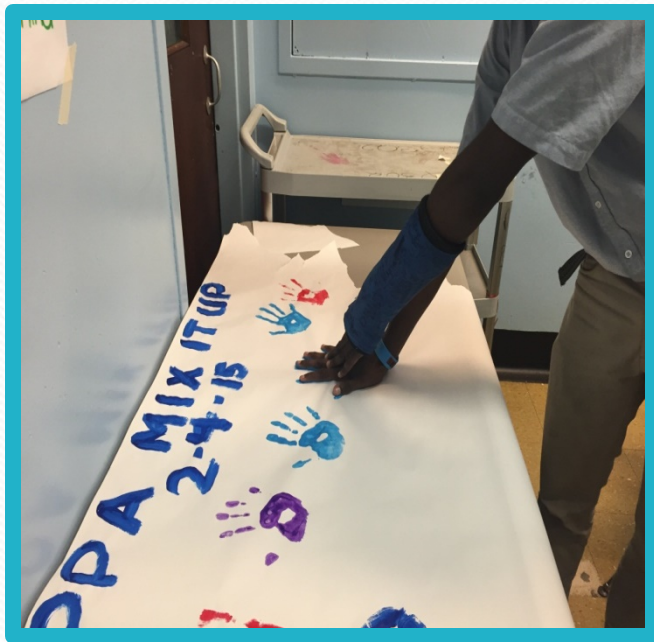


Anti-Bullying Campaign

Peer Leadership Program

- This weekly program involved service learning projects and hands-on activities (e.g., arts)
- Objectives achieved:
Middle school students explored identity, developed self-esteem, and enhanced empowerment and safety

B.E.A.R. Program



Anti-Bullying Campaign

Monthly Awareness Campaign Topics

- October- Depression Screening Month
- November- National Smoke Out Month
- December- World Peace, Cultural Awareness
- January- Stress
- February- Healthy Relationships with Friends
- March- Gender Equality Month
- April- Anxiety Awareness Month
- May- Mental Health Awareness Month

DONT LET A BAD RELATIONSHIP

WEIGH

YOU

D
O
W
N



Yoga Workshops

- **Collaboration** between COAST Health Educator, Physical Education teachers, and Hip Dhamma therapeutic yoga studio
- Integrated yoga activities into **weekly gym classes** with great success
- Focused on **community healing**, via self-acceptance and mind-body connection



Downward-Facing Dog Pose

My Media Life

(Connected Health Solutions)



- An intensive, adolescent-specific, and evidence-based **behavior change workshop series**
- Utilized social media education and **digital film** activities
- Objectives included:
 - increasing group cohesion
 - building cognitive skills
 - changing behavior
- Operated from a “**Youth as Partners**” perspective
- Culminated in participant-produced social marketing campaigns via digital-film **public service announcements**



Tier 2: Parent & Teacher Workshops

- **NCTSN resources** were provided on identifying signs of trauma, and support was given for modeling positive coping skills
- **Creative modalities** included a Mother's Day recognition event, distribution of emergency "Go Kits," and Motivational Interviewing lectures on both school campuses

Taking Care of Your Students

(Excerpt from: "Teacher Guidelines for Helping Students after a Hurricane" on NCTSN.org)

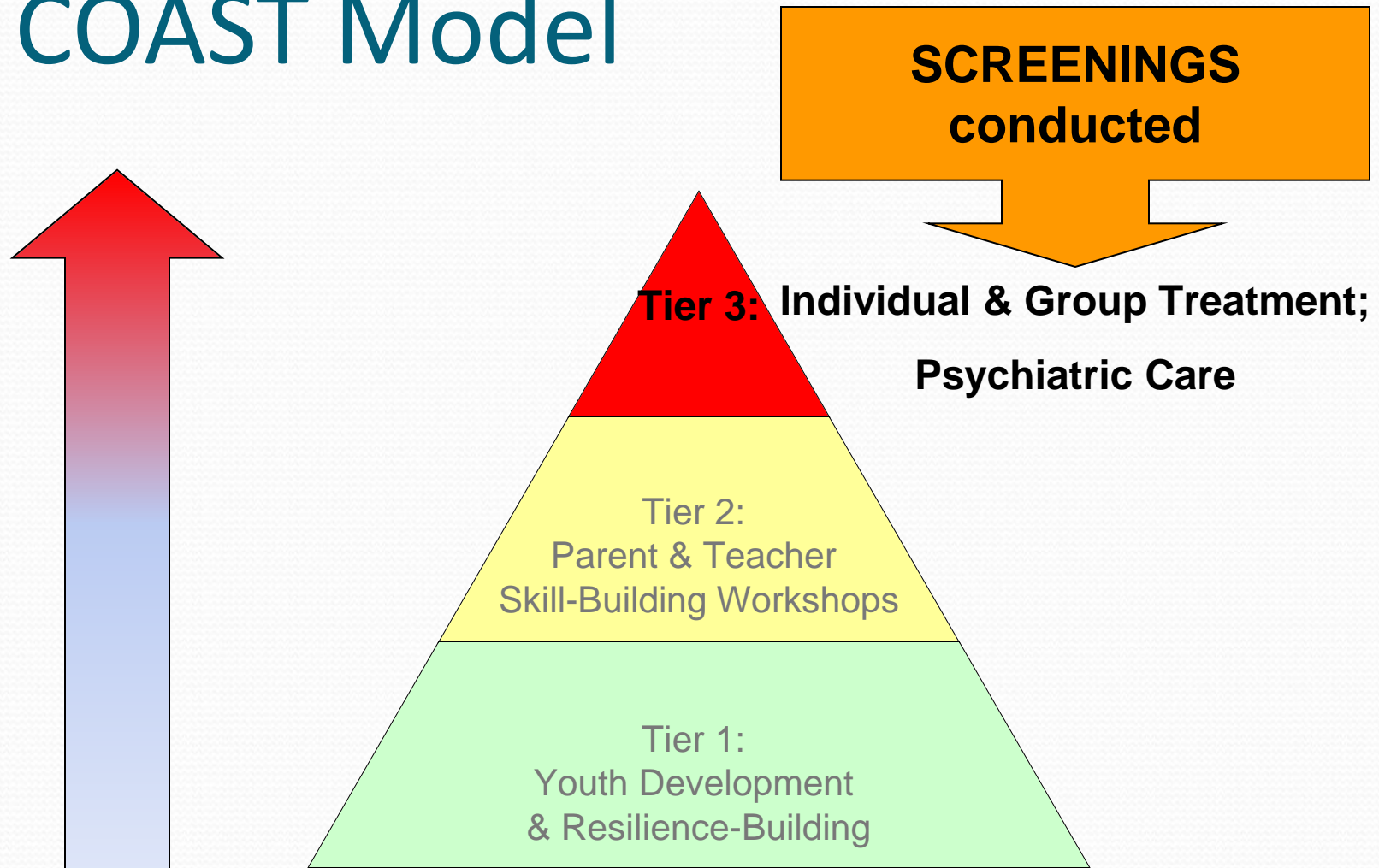
- Modify lesson plans to reduce the class's workload, move at a slower pace, and be more enjoyable
- Communicate –
 - Be open to talking with students about their feelings
 - Provide accurate information to help clarify misunderstandings and reduce fear
 - End discussions with focus on current safety procedures and helpful plans for coping
- Know your students' experiences so that you can better understand their behavior
- Reduce students' exposure to unnecessary reminders of the hurricane
- Maintain a predictable, structured class schedule
- Encourage students to get appropriate rest and exercise and to eat healthy
- Set limits on anger
- Promote prosocial activities
- Refer distressed students for help
- Be patient; recovery comes in stages over weeks and months

Online Resources: “Go Kit”

- Locally: NYC Office of Emergency Management
 - “Ready New York” public education campaign
 - “Go bag” - <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/ready/gather-supplies.page>
- National Homeland Security content:
 - <https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>
 - <http://hsema.dc.gov/page/make-go-kit>



COAST Model



Child Screening after Disasters: NY to New Orleans and Back

- **Post-9/11** in NYC, Project Liberty staff developed an enhanced screening tool to identify individual youth in need of “enhanced” counseling
- The tool was further adapted after **Hurricane Katrina** in New Orleans: “NCTSN Hurricane Assessment and Referral Tool” (Hansel, Osofsky, & Osofsky)
- **NYC COAST post-Sandy** screening, in turn, was based on the post-Katrina New Orleans model

Tier 3: Screening Model

- **The tool** assessed basic domains including experiences, desire for assistance, and mental and behavioral health indicators (related to anxiety, depression, PTSD)
- **Results** were not intended to generate mental health diagnoses
- Results were used to identify those likely to benefit from additional services and those in high need of services
- **Further assessment** was done for “positive screening” results (when scores exceeded cut-off criteria)
- **Treatment services** were offered when indicated per the results of the additional assessments

Pre-/Post-Treatment Assessment Measures

- Allowed a more refined understanding of symptom presentation to inform the decision to initiate treatment and to measure outcomes at its conclusion
 - Child PTSD Symptom Scale (CPSS)
 - Child Depression Inventory-2 (CDI-2) and Beck Depression Inventory-2 (BDI-2)
 - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
 - CRAFFT Adolescent Substance Use Screening Tool:
baseline only

Assessment tools: Trauma & Mood

- CPSS (Foa et al.)
 - Part 1 has 17 items of PTSD Sx, summed for a total score
 - 3 subscales: re-experiencing, avoidance, & hyperarousal
 - Part 2: 7 functional impairment items
 - Available online at-
https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/docs/resource_centers/resources/misc/child_ptsd_symptom_scale.pdf
- CDI-2 & BDI-II
 - Assess depressive symptoms
 - 28 & 21 items, respectively
 - Both yield a total and several subscale scores
 - The tools and their scoring are available from the publishers



Assessment tools: Problem Behavior

- SDQ

- Consists of a total score and 5 subscales of 5 items each-
 - Emotional symptoms
 - Conduct problems
 - Hyperactivity/inattention
 - Peer relationship problems
 - Prosocial behavior
- The tool and its scoring are available online at-
www.sdqinfo.com/
www.sdqscore.org

- CRAFFT

- Part A contains 3 Y/N items re: alcohol/drug use
- Part B contains 6 Y/N items re: impairment related to use
- 2 or more Yes responses on Part B indicates high risk for substance abuse and need for further assessment
- Available online at-
www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/clinical-guides-and-manuals/alcohol-screening-and-brief-intervention-youth/resources

Cognitive-Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) Groups

- 10 session CBT group intervention developed for schools
- 5-8 students per group
- Addresses symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, & depression
- A mixture of didactic presentation and age-appropriate examples/activities (e.g., the “hot seat”) are used to introduce techniques and to solidify concepts
- Homework assignments/practices are developed collaboratively between the student and clinician to fit the student’s own trauma and recovery experience
- At FREC, a “Girl Code” support group morphed into CBITS



Evidence-Based Individual Treatment:

1. *TF-CBT*

2. *Real Life Heroes*

What is Real Life Heroes?

- Anchored in Attachment Theory
- “Hero” metaphor
- Creative arts
- Life story integration
- Replaces shaming with confidence
- Highlights mastery
- Transformative

Lessons from COAST



- Outcomes of Tier 3 clinical trauma interventions were enhanced by the presence of the de-stigmatizing, engaging, youth- and community-strengthening programming of **Tiers 1 and 2**
- As in Jaycox et al.'s post-Katrina recovery research:
 - High rates of **previous trauma exposure** were noted
 - **Access** and convenient time and location of services are key
 - “Although schools’ mission is to educate, **schools** may offer many children their only window of opportunity to recover from the negative effects of trauma”

Wrap-Up: Youth-Created Videos

- What is My Media Life (MML)? (6½ mins.):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dBRBPOjlQY>
- MML allowed our students to express their unique perspective on resiliency and recovery post-trauma
- BPMS “process” video (10 mins.):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2g4or_vodg
- BPMS PSA on discrimination and empathy (1 min.):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voZpvqFUIjY>
- FREC PSA on post-Sandy bullying (2 mins.):
<https://vimeo.com/150500135>
- To find these and related videos, look up “Connected Health Solutions” on YouTube and Vimeo

National Trauma Resources

- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, www.NCTSN.net.org
- The National Center for Children Exposed to Violence at the Yale Child Study Center, www.nccev.org
- The National Center for PTSD, www.ncptsd.org
- The Office for Victims of Crime — US Dept. of Justice, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc
- The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, www.istss.org
- National Center for Victims of Crime, www.ncvc.org

• Next Steps:

- Our COAST team welcomes any written and/or verbal **messages of optimism** that today's attendees would like to share with our project participants
- Please visit the video websites and post comments
- Contact us-
 - Helena Roderick, Ph.D.
hroderick@northwell.edu
 - MaryAnn DeSilva, LCSW
mdesilva@northwell.edu

• Q & A

• *Thank you!* 😊

