



CENTER FOR CHILD & FAMILY HEALTH

# Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS)

Strengthening the mental health workforce. **Changing children's lives.**

## WHAT IS SPARCS?

Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS) is a **strengths-based group model** for youth **ages 12-21** who have been exposed to **chronic trauma** and/or **stress**. Treatment consists of **16 one-hour sessions**. SPARCS is appropriate for youth who experience functional impairments including difficulties with:

- Regulating **emotions, behaviors, and impulses**
- Maintaining **healthy relationships**
- **Paying attention** and **processing information**
- **Managing physical complaints** and other symptoms of chronic trauma and stress

## TREATMENT GOALS

- Increase effective **copng** skills
- Enhance **self-efficacy** and **self-esteem**
- Cultivate **awareness** and **mindfulness**
- **Create meaning** relative to experiences
- Master **developmental tasks** unique to adolescence
- Optimize **communication** and **problem solving skills**

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

In the United States, 61% of children are affected by violence, abuse, or crime,<sup>1</sup> putting them at **increased risk** for:

- depression,
- academic problems,
- violent behavior,
- substance use,
- delinquency,
- teen pregnancy,
- and other emotional-behavioral challenges.

Lifetime costs of childhood maltreatment are estimated at **\$210,012** per case.<sup>2</sup>

## SERVICE DELIVERY

SPARCS can be delivered in a **variety of clinical and community settings** (e.g., outpatient clinics, schools, residential treatment facilities.)

SPARCS has also been successfully delivered in **juvenile justice and child welfare settings**.

**The North Carolina Child Treatment Program (NC CTP) offers one training cohort per year in SPARCS. Training cohorts are 12 months long and consist of face-to-face learning sessions and faculty consultation. Contact NC CTP for more information.**

With funding from:



<sup>1</sup> Finkelhor, D., Turner, H. A., Ormrod, R., & Hamby, S. L. (2010). *Trends in childhood violence and abuse exposure: Evidence from 2 national surveys.*

<sup>2</sup> Fang, X., Brown, D. S., Florence, C. S., & Mercy, J. A. (2012). *The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention.*

1121 W. Chapel Hill St  
Suite 100, Durham, NC 27701  
(919) 385-0793

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