Editorial

On the Road to Recovery

We are delighted to be Guest Editors for this special issue of Adolescent Psychiatry on Trauma and Adolescents. During the past thirty years, there has been an increased public awareness of the scope and serious impact of traumatic stress on the safety and healthy development of children and youth. The articles assembled represent a range of clinical and research advances from an international group of distinguished authors. The goals of this publication are to provide the readers an update on developmental psychopathology, trauma treatment and interventions, and new developments as related to adolescent trauma.

The journal begins with an article on “Complex Trauma and Developmental Trauma Disorder in Adolescence,” in which Julian Ford describes the phenomena of complex trauma which involves ongoing or multiple exposures to severe adverse childhood experiences, typically of an interpersonal nature, during critical periods in individual development. The roadmap Ford provides is likely to advance clinical evaluation and research with seriously traumatized youth.

We continue to wonder about the impact of early adverse experiences on the lives of our patients with eating disorders. As a result, we explore the relationship between abuse and eating disorders and discuss implications for clinical care in our paper, “Eating Disorders and Abuse.”

The article with a focus on resilience by Betty Pfefferbaum, Richard Van Horn and Rose Pfefferbaum is entitled “Involving Adolescents in Building Community Resilience for Disasters.” They describe working with established systems of care including the health, mental health, education, law enforcement, child welfare, juvenile justice, and military family service systems to ensure that there is a comprehensive trauma informed continuum of accessible care.

The next article is on “The Interplay of Trauma and Bereavement in Adolescence: Pioneering Work and Recent Advancement,” by Christopher Layne and colleagues. There is greater awareness that trauma which occurs together with loss and bereavement is very different than trauma alone. The authors describe therapeutic strategies that address trauma co-occurring with death of loved ones.

In “Academic Achievement in Young Adults with a History of Adolescent Physical Abuse” David Pelcovitz and colleagues present a follow-up study ten to fourteen years after initial assessment. They document the lasting effects that physical abuse during adolescence has on educational attainments and occupational adaptation.

From Quebec, Canada and London, England, Karen Ensink and colleagues report on research with a community-based sample of adolescents and young adults, using a psychodynamic lens to examine impact of childhood trauma. In “Pathological Narcissism in Adolescents: Relationships with Childhood Maltreatment and Internalizing and Externalizing Difficulties” they discuss experiences of childhood maltreatment in relation to psychosocial difficulties and the negative influence it has on narcissism.

In “A three-tiered Model of School-Based Trauma Services to Address Long-term Impact of a Major Natural Disaster,” Peter D’Amico and colleagues describe a multi-faceted program to address impact of community-wide trauma on adolescents. They report on creating trauma-informed, developmentally and culturally sensitive clinical interventions that included a broad range of effective services, resulting in improved standard of care in two-highly impacted communities following Super Storm Sandy.

Finally, we end the volume with Michaël Bégin and colleagues who provide a report on their research on “A Person Centered Approach to understanding the Impact of Childhood Maltreatment.” The authors explain findings regarding the relationship between the type of abuse experienced during childhood and the subsequent forms of serious psychopathology.
Several of the papers in this issue involve work by individuals associated with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN). Established in 2001, NCTSN has ensured that widely shared knowledge and skills have become a sustainable national resource. NCTSN continues to foster a professional interdisciplinary community dedicated to improving the lives of traumatized youth.

Note. Finally, we would like to dedicate this issue to the late Sandra Kaplan, MD who devoted her clinical and academic career to the care of survivors of childhood maltreatment and their families. Dr. Kaplan headed one of the original NCTSN treatment development programs (focused on the needs of traumatized adolescents), was a co-investigator with Dr. Pelcovitz in the work he reports here, and influenced the work of multiple contributors to this volume.