

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Provide evidence-based and trauma-focused clinical services, Develop and disseminate new interventions and assessment approaches, Produce resources and publications for a wide range of audiences, Offer education and training programs, Collaborate across systems to promote child-centered and trauma-informed care, Inform public policy and awareness efforts.

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Founded	Located	Sector	Funding Source	Membership
2001	Nationwide	Children's mental health / child traumatic stress	Federal Grants	193 funded grantees, over 275 affiliates, tens of thousands of local and state partnerships

Overview

- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network was created by Congress in 2000 as part of the Children’s Health Act to close the gap between research and practice and to help build the evidence-base for effective child trauma treatments. The NCTSN is administered by SAMHSA and coordinated by the UCLA-Duke University National Center for Child Traumatic Stress.
- Aims to raise the standard of care and increase access to services for children and families who experience or witness traumatic events.
- Created a community for people who are passionate about preventing and addressing childhood trauma. Also brought members together across geography and discipline and worked to break down barriers between academic and community partners, accelerated the translation of research to practice, created a model of family and youth partnership unique to the trauma field, and built a national client-level data collection system.
- Governed by the NCTSN Steering Committee (SC), which is composed of the NCCTS Co-Directors, representatives from Category II and III Centers, Affiliate members, a SAMHSA Government Project Officer, and Family and Youth Partners, and members generally serve two-year terms.

Impact of the Network

- National geographic scope.
- Consists of Treatment and Service Adaptation Centers that promote wide-scale dissemination and implementation of effective treatments and service approaches, and serve as resources in their areas of expertise (Category II). Also composed of Community Treatment and Services Centers that provide direct services and training on trauma-informed practices to child-serving systems, as well as community education and prevention services (Category III).
- Supplies quarterly impact reports, new resources released, including tools and educational materials, and trainings at all levels
- Members engage with the network through more than 30 different committees, work groups, and communities of practice. The Network typically gathers at an annual conference, virtually or in-person, and connects throughout the year via listservs and other platforms.
- Currently challenged by the combination of the youth mental health crisis and the mental health workforce crisis, staff turnover, and growing financial pressures. Awareness and the need for services are increasing, while the number of providers and resources are decreasing.
- The NCTSN’s primary sustainability strategy is to educate federal policymakers regarding the value and impact of the network, using data and evaluation, as well as stories of change, to demonstrate the continued need for this initiative.

