

Utilizing Children's Film to Propel Identification, Conversation, and Action Steps to Address Stress in Families

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| Why use children's film? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters in children's movies are often animated, hyperbolic, "larger than life", silly, exaggerated • Films can present viewers with new ideas and experiences, including coping mechanisms and problem solving skills. • Identification with characters - "I want to be brave like..." |
| Why use children's film? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate the complexities of the world by subconsciously disconnect from personal, difficult situations while fostering empathy and compassion for the on-screen characters and situations • Processing can lead to healthy coping, introspection and/or self-discovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Viewers may mirror coping strategies observed in film • Increase potential for eventual healing |
| Why us children's film? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-threatening conversation starter - "The movie made me think about when you shared..." • Films can provide comfort |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewers may feel less isolation - "I am not alone in this experience." |
| Why use children's film? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice perspective taking using movie characters • Mock treatment plans and interventions • Appropriate to use with all members of the family • Use films as parenting education tool |
| Considerations | <p>Many film genres can be used to facilitate discussion about stressors, trauma, grief, etc. Always consider the audience, their needs and interests when choosing films to view during a session or home visit. Have the family/participant take part in the selection process.</p> <p>Choose appropriate content and length when selecting a movie/movie clips</p> <p>Assess past experiences, vulnerabilities, timing of life events when considering use of film to facilitate discussion</p> |
| Using film with staff for professional development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of movies for staff to observe from a clinical perspective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Who cared for [character name]? ◦ What difficult situations are presented in the film? |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ How did childhood shape the main character's development? ◦ How would you engage this family to address the trauma? |
| Using film with program participants and families to talk about stressors and trauma | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Tell me what was important about the movie to you" • "What character did you like the most?" • "What character did you dislike?" • "What would you change about the movie/situation?" <p>Connect the responses back to stressors/challenges the family is facing. Allow the family to connect movie themes and characters to their own situations.</p> |
| References | <p>Neurolaunch</p> <p>Northwestern University Center for Child Trauma Assessment, Services, and Interventions</p> <p>The Movie Model of Film Therapy</p> <p>American Mental Health Foundation - Cinematherapy</p> |