

# **Violence, Trauma and Child Development:**

## **The Potentially Transformative Role of ECEC Services for Young Refugee Children**

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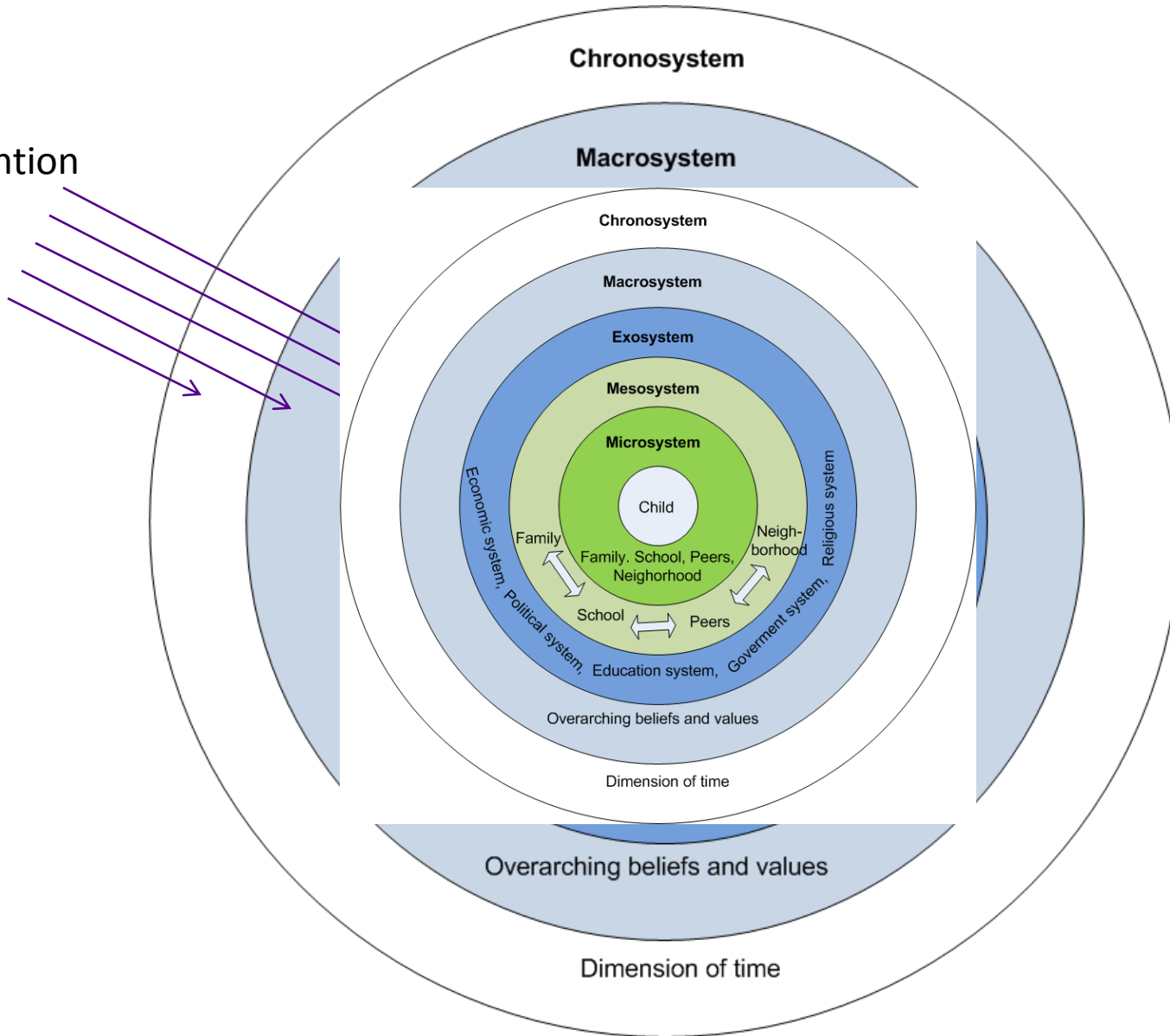
# Stages of Development




- Infant/Toddler (0-3)
- Early Childhood (3-8)
- Middle Childhood (8-12)
- Early Adolescence (12-16)
- Mid-Late Adolescence (16-21)

# Theoretical framework

Policy intervention





“...the exposure to multiple and repeated forms of maltreatment and trauma in childhood can lead to outcomes that are not simply more severe than sequelae of single incident trauma, but are qualitatively different in their tendency to affect multiple affective and interpersonal domains.”

M. Cloitre et al. (2009)

# Domains of Impairment in Children Exposed to Complex Trauma

(Cook et al., 2005, *Psychiatric Annals*, 390-398)



- A new theoretical framework to understand complex trauma in children, youth and families.
- Theoretical model has implications for assessment and intervention.

# Domains

- 1. Attachment:** **Distrust and Suspiciousness, Interpersonal Difficulties, Difficulty Attuning to Other Peoples' States.**
- 2. Biology:** **Somatization, Increased Medical Problems.**
- 3. Affect Regulation:** **Difficulties labeling, expressing and regulating emotions, problems knowing and describing internal states.**
- 4. Dissociation:** **Alterations in States of Consciousness, impaired memory for state-based events.**
- 5. Behavioral Control:** **Aggressive/oppositional behavior, poor modulation of impulses.**
- 6. Cognition:** **Difficulties in attention regulation and executive function; lack of sustained curiosity; problems in planning, focusing on and completing tasks.**
- 7. Self Concept:** **Low self-esteem; shame and guilt**



# Six Core Components of Complex Trauma Interventions.



1. Safety
2. Self-Regulation
3. Self-Reflective Information Processing
4. Traumatic Experience Integration
5. Relational Engagement
6. Positive Affect Enhancement


(Child Trauma Work Group, National Child Traumatic Stress Network.)

# General and Stage-Specific Interventions for Complex Trauma



- Framework: The Attachment/Self-Regulation/Competency (ARC) Intervention Model
- for infants-toddlers-preschoolers (Lieberman, Van Horn et al., 1997)
- for older children and adolescents (STAIR, Cloitre et al., 2002; SPARCS, De Rosa et al., 2003; TARGET, Ford et al., 2006).





“...the traumas of sustained nature such as living in a war zone create a life condition that increases risk of exposure to a multiplicity of types of traumatic events (e.g., actual or threat of injury, witnessing injury or death to others) and the accumulation of such experiences would be expected to increase risk for symptom complexity.”


M. Cloitre et al. (2009)

# “Mass Trauma”




“... extreme adversities and conditions that affect large groups of children or adolescents and their families at the same time.”

(Masten, A.S. & Narayan, A.J., 2012 p.228)



“... adaptation to mass trauma experiences is conceptualized as a dynamic process involving multiple interacting systems within the organism and many interactions of the individual with complex and changing contexts including relationships with other people and many interrelated systems of the natural and built environment.”

(Masten, A.S. & Narayan, A.J., 2012, p. 231)



“There is considerable interest in knowing whether and how specific kinds of exposure (to mass trauma) cause more and specific kinds of problems in traumatized children and youth, particularly because this could be helpful to intervention design and planning.”

(Masten, A.S. & Narayan, A.J., 2013, p. 237)

# Types of War Trauma

(Macksoud & Aber, 1996)

## Active Involvement

- Separation
- Victim of Violent Acts
- Involvement in Hostilities

## Loss

- Displacement
- Bereavement

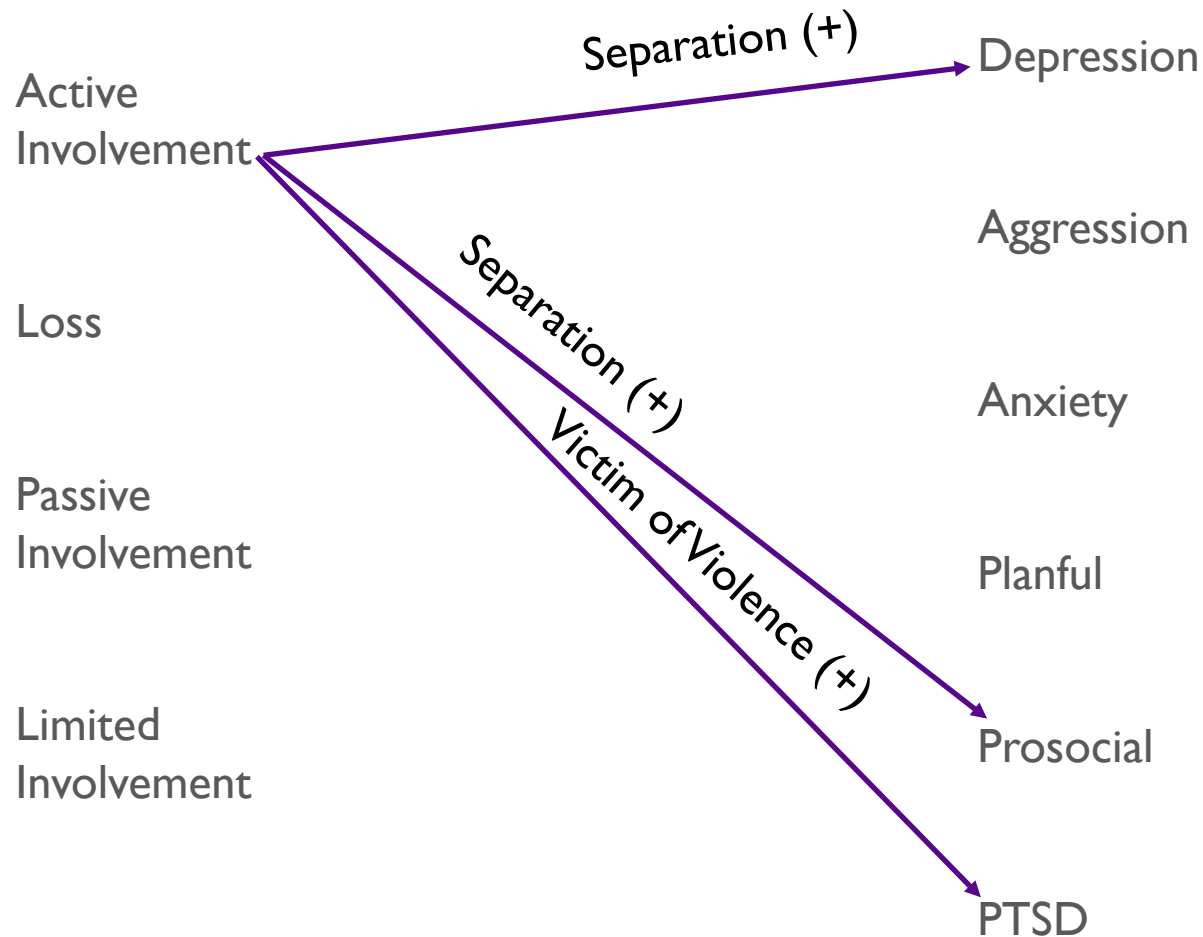
## Passive Involvement

- Exposure to Shelling or Bombing
- Witness Violent Acts
- Physical Injuries

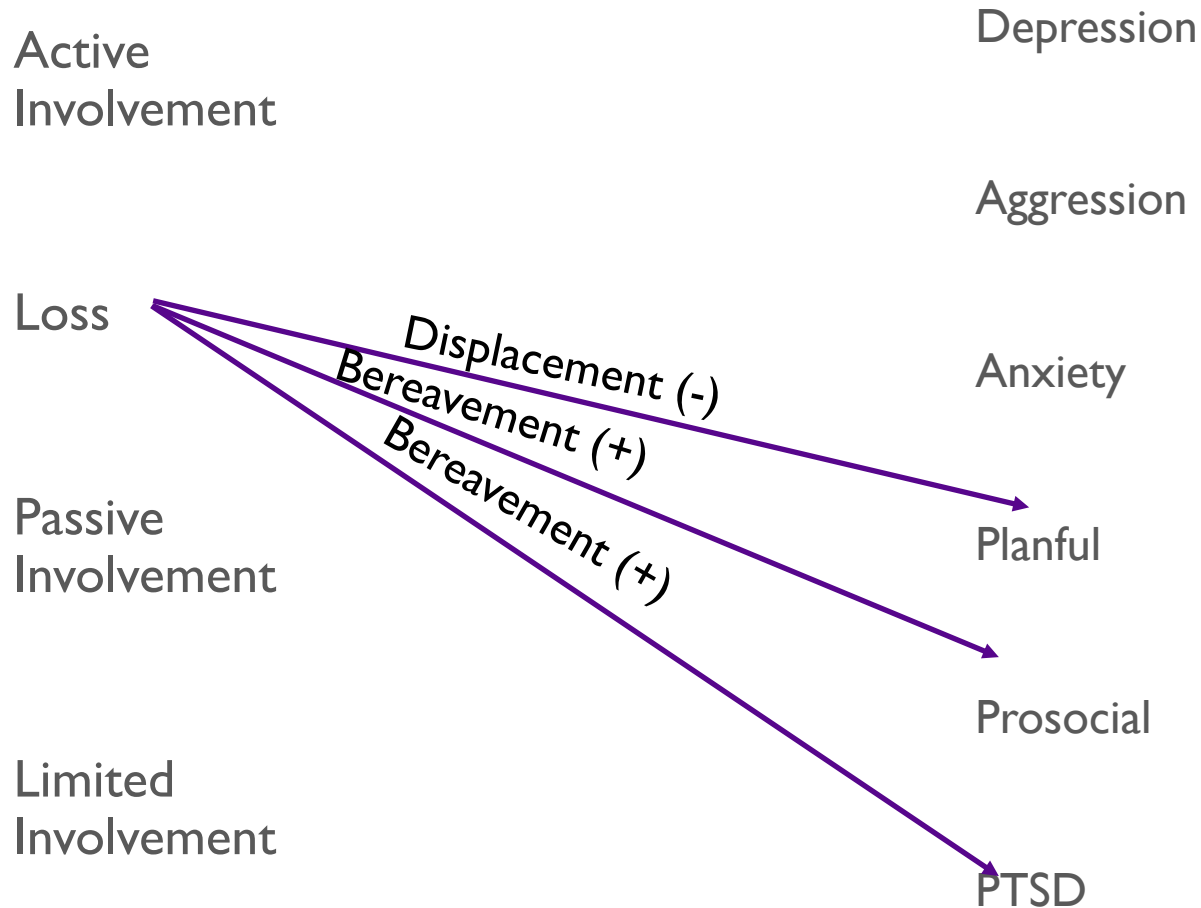
## Limited Involvement

- Emigration
- Extreme Deprivation (-)

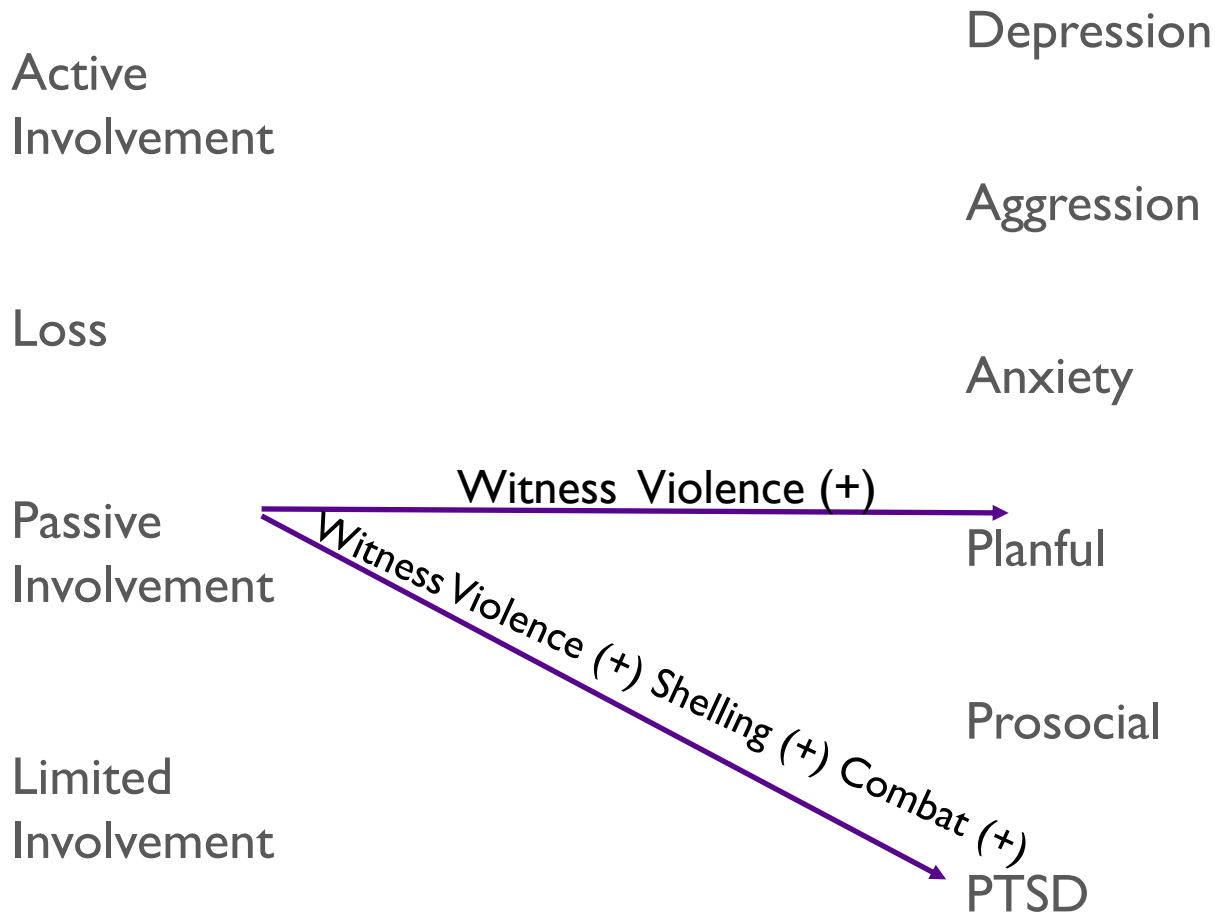
# War Exposure and Children's Development




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“...adaptive capacity for resilience in the context of significant threats to adaptation and development depends to a large extent on fundamental human adaptive systems embedded in individuals, relationships, families, friends, communities and cultures.”

(Masten, A.S. & Narayan, A.J., 2012, p. 232)




“This burgeoning literature (on the treatment of trauma-related conditions) conveys the impression that to effectively respond to trauma-related conditions, it is necessary to have advanced therapeutic skills and years of formal study.”

(Bath, H., 2008. The Three Pillars of Trauma-Informed Care)



“However...much of the healing can take place in non-clinical settings ...There is some evidence to suggest that trauma-informed living environments in which healing and growth can take place are a necessary precursor to any formal therapy that might be offered to a traumatized child.”

(Bath, H., 2008.The Three Pillars of Trauma-Informed Care)



“All who interact with traumatized children in home, school and community can make important contributions to healing and growth. This care involves actions to strengthen three pillars: safety, connections and managing emotional impulses.”

(Bath, H., 2008. [The Three Pillars of Trauma-Informed Care](#))



## Clinical Interventions for “Complex Trauma”



- Attachment
- Self-Regulation
- Competency

## Setting-Level Interventions for “Mass Trauma”



- Safety
- Managing Emotional Impulses
- Connections

# Setting-based Strategies to Promote Development of Children Exposed to Violence and Related Traumas



- Biggest influences in children's lives are the micro-systems, meso-systems and exo-systems in which they develop.
- Family, Peer-System, Schools, Communities.
- What Works? For Whom? How? Under What Conditions?

# Implications for Practice



- Treating Complex Trauma:  
Addressing Systems Within Persons.
- Treating Mass Trauma:  
Addressing Issues Between Persons  
and Settings.

# Related Emergent Initiatives:



## 1. Early Childhood Peace-Building Consortium

- Paul Connolly, Queen's University Belfast
- Friedrich ("Fritz") Affolter, UNICEF

## 2. Sesame Seeds

- Sarah Smith, International Rescue Committee
- Shari Rosenfeld, Sesame Workshop
- Hiro Yoshikawa, Global TIES, New York University





THANK YOU!

Global TIES for Children:  
Transforming Intervention  
Effectiveness and Scale

[www.steinhardt.nyu.edu/global-ties/](http://www.steinhardt.nyu.edu/global-ties/)

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