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Our five *Theme-Based Calls* on Seeking Safety with Adolescents

We hope these phone consultation calls may be helpful to your staff. Each call is one hour and has a theme but there is also a lot of opportunity for general questions and discussion. You can do as few or many of these calls as you choose to, in any order. You can have as many attendees on the phone call as you choose to as long as they are only from your agency and are not charged to attend. Also the calls cannot be taped. See also our description of [our other theme based calls](http://www.treatment-innovations.org/uploads/2/5/5/5/25555853/tbcs_description_10-14_updated_list_exc_.doc) that are not focused on adolescents but can be useful for anyone who is implementing Seeking Safety.

**1. General principles in conducting Seeking Safety with adolescents**

While the “nuts and bolts” of Seeking Safety are the same regardless of whether you are using it with adults or adolescents, there are some variations in how the model is implemented. Adolescents can be more difficult to treat, have a higher need to be entertained, come from challenging home environments/families, operate from more of an emotional center, engage in power struggles and be less receptive to ideas generated by adults. This call will focus on general adaptation principles for maximizing the engagement of adolescents.

**2. Tackling adolescents' substance abuse and other unsafe behavior**

Terms like “addict,” “alcoholic,” and "unsafe behavior" may not resonate with adolescents. They may argue that “everyone’s doing it,” that they only use because “it’s fun” and deny that their use is a problem. The reality is that many adolescent clients don’t meet criteria for substance use disorder as a formal diagnosis because they have not yet started experiencing consequences related to their use or because they are using at an experimental or social level. In fact many adolescents participating in Seeking Safety do not use substances at all. This call will focus on ways to use Seeking Safety for prevention, how to apply the Seeking Safety coping skills to various unsafe behaviors, how to adapt materials to address adolescents who don’t use substances, and how to engage adolescents who are in the precontemplation stage of change and beyond. Resources will be provided.

**3. Helping adolescents understand and recover from trauma using Seeking Safety**

One challenge in working with traumatized adolescents is learning to talk about clinical matters in non-clinical ways. PTSD and trauma may be unfamiliar concepts to adolescents. Abuse and other forms of trauma may still be occurring, thus treatment becomes like shoveling snow while the blizzard is still happening. Symptoms of trauma often manifest in ways that get them in trouble and without a trauma-informed lens, adults may be highly frustrated and critical of symptomatic, acting-out adolescents. This can contribute to a growing internalized belief by the adolescent of simply being a “bad kid.” This call provides strategies for using Seeking Safety to explain trauma and PTSD to adolescents, to navigate complex roles in working with traumatized minors, and to assist adolescents and their parent/caregivers in listening to the message behind the behavior and learning to cope. Resources will be provided.

**4. Working with parents / caregivers as part of adolescent Seeking Safety**

Both trauma and substance abuse tend to occur intergenerationally. Many adolescent clinicians report that they like working with adolescents, but not their parents/caregivers. And yet addressing the home environment and family dynamics are a critical component to treatment. This call will provide methods for involving parents/caregivers and resources for helping families understand and assist with the adolescents’ struggles with substance use and trauma-related symptoms. We will emphasize Seeking Safety topics such as *Case Management, Getting Others to Support Your Recovery,* and *PTSD- Taking Back Your Power*. Resources will be provided.

**5. Adolescent special populations and "tough cases"**

Seeking Safety is implemented with adolescents in a wide variety of settings including juvenile justice, child welfare, schools, residential care, and youth agencies. Special populations may include homeless youth, gang-involved youth, youth in the child welfare system or aging out of foster care, and LGBT youth. Creative adaptations can help adolescents connect with the Seeking Safety coping skills, especially in non-traditional settings. Special populations and cultural adaptation are also discussed. We focus on how to respond to challenges in ways that are supportive yet accountable (the two key processes in Seeking Safety). This call focuses on attendees’ specific settings and rehearsal of Seeking Safety strategies with "tough" adolescent clients.