

Coping with Crisis During COVID-19 Webinar Series



Part 5: Providers Report: Sharing Experiences From the Field

**Kellee Simone, LMSW
Leny Bolivar, MS, LCSW
Wednesday, July 8th
12-1 PM**

And the CTAC and McSilver Institute Staff for a Discussion and Q&A

Webinar Information



Chat

- All are muted. Chat your questions to “ALL PANELISTS” throughout the webinar
- Links to resources will be posted in the chat box or will be at the end of the presentation in a slide
- Please complete the survey following the webinar
- Slides, recording, and resources will be posted on the CTAC website www.ctacny.org
- Thank you to all of you, who are essential workers, during this pandemic!

Today, we will cover:

- ▶ Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, part five of this series will focus on experiences from the field.
- ▶ This offering will involve two providers in direct services sharing their experiences, followed by a Q&A with them.
- ▶ We will then have several “Let’s Chats” with my McSilver and CTAC colleagues and you, our participants!
 - **“Let’s Chat: Promoting Safety with your Clients?”**
 - **“Let’s Chat: Your Challenges?”**
 - **“Let’s Chat: Your own Safety and Well Being?”**

Providers' Reports!



Kellee Simone, LMSW
Leny Bolivar, MS, LCSW

Kellee Simone, LMSW

- ▶ **Kellee Simone** has over 20 years of experience in the social service field. She received her Masters degree from Columbia University. Her education and career have always focused on her passion for working with children and families. She also has been an advocate for women and domestic violence survivors.
- ▶ As a direct service provider, Kellee Simone equips clients with the tools needed to begin their journey to healing. Kellee Simone also works to ensure the implementation of client-centered, trauma informed care by providing supervisory support and education to the staff she supervises.

What Impact Did COVID-19 Have on Your Clients?

- **Sheltering in place confined many victims of abuse with their abusers** without the resources to keep themselves or their children safe.
- **New opportunities for abusers to exert power and control over victims** (I.e.–screaming and yelling about COVID-19, exploiting fears and vulnerabilities, refusing victims to work outside of home, not allowing victim to work remotely, rationing food and supplies,
- **Fear of the unknown**– scared to come into shelter due to concerns about cleanliness, not wanting to share with other families, fear of not having any supports, not knowing that there are resources available during COVID-19,etc.
- **Increased isolation and intensified grief**
- **Increase symptoms of mental health issues** in parents and children (i.e. anxiety, depression, post traumatic stress disorder)

What Impact Did COVID-19 Have on Your Clients?

- **Resurfaced feelings of powerless** and had client questioning their basic assumptions about life, safety and security. (I.e. immigration status, divorce, housing programs, etc)
- **Increase in symptoms of medical conditions in parents and children**
- **Difficulties adjusting to new appointment procedures** (virtual/face to face)
 - **Adjusting to the removal of the physical face-to-face resources and supports**
- **Learning to deal with being socially isolated** with family members (parent & sibling) for extended amounts of time or being isolated with another family that they didn't really know
- **Frustrations/fears about children participating in school remotely**

How Did You Keep Clients Safe?

- ▶ **Changes in structure/procedures to ensure physical and emotional safety of families during COVID-19. 4R's of Trauma.**
 - Support to staff (increase trauma awareness /education and response, compassionate resistance)
 - Addition of PPE and increase supplies
 - Service Delivery (Virtual/telephone, practicing social distancing utilizing PPE)
 - Limiting interactions with outside service providers, getting creative in how to continue services
 - Safety Planning
- ▶ **Intervention: Trauma informed approach**
 - Trustworthiness & Transparency: Keeping families informed of changes in agency and external agencies. Being okay with saying “I don’t know, but I will look into it.”
 - Collaboration/support: Family driven care and services, reevaluating and working with families to restructure goals to reflect current circumstance when necessary. Helping families stay connected though quarantine (social distancing)
 - Empowerment, Voice & Choice - Family empowerment, education and skill building. Helping families understand physical and mental health implications of COVID, provide referrals when needed

Lessons Learned

- ▶ COVID-19 has disrupted the social and family life in unprecedented ways
- ▶ The tools of power and control have changed but the dynamics have not
- ▶ The risks to survivors and children have changed but the risk factors have not
- ▶ Benefits of integrating a trauma-informed approach during COVID-19
- ▶ We must use what we've learned to provide individualized support, advocacy and safety planning.
- ▶ The importance of being open to nontraditional and creative ways to engage, support and provide services to our clients.
- ▶ Benefits of resilience and coping skills
- ▶ There is a need for more resources to:
 - Support healing in communities that were vulnerable before the pandemic
 - Support frontline workers tackling the physical, emotional and psychological impacts of COVID-19
 - Strengthen services to those who experience domestic violence

Leny Bolivar, MS, LCSW

- ▶ **Leny Bolivar** was born and raised in Venezuela. She completed her training as a clinical psychologist at the Universidad Central De Venezuela.
- ▶ Leny has been practicing in New York for over ten years and obtained her MSW from NYU. Her training has been focused on helping individuals and families to overcome trauma, loss, manage crises, and difficult life transitions, as well as anxiety, depression, and major psychiatric disorders.
- ▶ Leny is currently the Director of the Children and Adolescent Mobile Crisis Team at ABC, serving Manhattan, and Fast Break Plus, a Community Based Mental Health Clinic. Leny provides clinical supervision and a variety of staff training within the organization.

What Impact Did COVID-19 Have on Your Clients?

- ▶ Increased in abrupt separation from attachment figures & meaningful relationships (No access to school community and friends)
- ▶ Youth compromised with severe mental health diagnosis, that were connected or in the process to be connected to higher levels of care there has been an abrupt loss of support and plan (i.e. day tx programs, residential, etc.).
- ▶ Having to share space with multiple family members that they are not used to spending time with.
- ▶ Difficulty managing and processing excessive news consumption.
- ▶ Shared loss, facing the death of family members & significant others. For youth having parents in distress or emotionally inaccessible due to their own experiences of loss.
- ▶ Amplified frustration with family members, due to not being able to have control over their life.

How Did You Keep Clients Safe?

Pandemic related procedures:

- Developing measurements for staff safety surrounding COVID-19; including but not limited to PPE, social distancing (when possible), avoiding use of public transportation, following hygiene standards & asking pre-screening questions.
- Assessing risk before attending face to face home visit when possible. If deemed appropriate use virtual platform for intervention: balancing high risk nature of the crisis, accessibility to assessing the youth, and family access to technology.
- Equip team with extra PPE to share with families upon arrival to the homes.
- Creating an opportunity during the visits to provide psychoeducation around COVID-19 safety, transition to the virtual platforms.
- Increased staff support and supervision

How Did You Keep Clients Safe?

Clinical approach with families:

- ▶ ***A systems approach to safety:*** during the pandemic -where psychosocial stressors increased across the board-. In order to move towards safety consider not just the youth mental health but the family system vulnerabilities. Including basic needs that take precedence to promote emotional health and crisis stabilization. Previously these specific needs would be taken care of by other providers/systems, currently not available in the same way.
- ▶ ***Safety planning:*** doing our best to work with the resources families have. Assess access to natural coping skills, and “outside” support (providers, community) which at times might be diminished. When thinking about safety, including family’s strengths, or helping them built strategies to support youth’s stabilization.
- ▶ **More intensive & frequent interactions by our team to support stability.**
- ▶ **Helping parents/caregivers to think about “advance directives” around the pandemic and what to do if they are sick.**
- ▶ **Trauma informed approach, identifying the macro crisis has a possible trigger for crisis and how to prevent and intervene properly.**

Lessons Learned

- ▶ We are able to quickly adapt to challenges & continue to support the community.
- ▶ Accessibility to crisis services is a strength, youth do not need to have a diagnosis to be referred. Avoiding social exclusion in a time of shared vulnerability.
- ▶ As a crisis response team, we are not trained to specifically face a situation as big as a Pandemic.
- ▶ Staff training, support, & recognition is key to be able to support our community.
- ▶ Flexibility in clinical approaches/interventions is important when facing abrupt changes. Including new ways to communicate with our families
- ▶ Areas of need from a macro level: staff vicarious trauma support, oppression and disparity in the community, continued support from governmental and non governmental partners.

Q&A

Let's hear your questions and concerns for Kellee and Leny!

Chat in your questions to “ALL PANELISTS” in the chat box!

If you do not see the chat box, click in the center of the screen and click on the chat bubble icon.

Some Experiences from the Field



Let's hear about your experiences!

Let's Chat: Promoting Safety with your Clients?

- ▶ How are you attending to safety and crisis experiences in your work?
 - What have you done to intervene during a crisis or to increase safety with children and families?



Let's Chat: Your Challenges?

- ▶ What are you experiencing in your work with clients?
 - How do you meet the needs of families and children at this time?
 - What are some of your challenges?



Let's Chat: Your own Safety and Well Being?

- ▶ How do you balance your own needs with the needs of your clients?
- ▶ What needs to change in our system to support both providers and clients?



Resources

1-888-NYC-WELL Crisis Hotline- single point of access for the Children Mobile Crisis Team
COVID-19 Resources for Children: <https://www.a-b-c.org/blog>

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- NYS Domestic Violence Hotline- texting program launched as a result of COVID 19 due to rise in domestic violence cases. To chat confidentially with a professional 24/7 text 844-997-2121 or visit www.opdv.ny.gov.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline- 1800-799-7233, www.thehotline.org, @ndvh on social media platform
- NYC Domestic Violence Hotline- available 24/7. Call 1800-621-4673

EDUCATION & ACTIVITIES

- Talking to Children about COVID 19- https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_663581b63f80450491c400530fcfb2f6.pdf?fbclid=IwAR257d1rMnwRqduYVDIc-jw-lj7X9AzMnDsTKzSP7zQylzNkoZ7hmcrgT7M
- Learnincolor- Free educational website offering math, science, social studies and more - <https://learnincolor.com/category/freebies>
- Twin Cities Club – Information for virtual tours and field trips <https://twincitieskidsclub.com/cabin-fever-from-covid-19/>
- Apps to download for individuals with learning/ developmental disabilities: Sound Literacy, Happy Math Multiplication Rhymes, Read 2 Me, Phonics with Phonograms, Sight Words, Sequences for Autism, See Touch Learn, Words on Wheels, Verbal Me, Speech with Milo, The Writing Machine, Letter School, Word Magic

FOOD RESOURCES

- City Harvest Mobile Food Pantries: <https://www.cityharvest.org/programs/mobile-markets>
- NYC COVID 19 Food Assistance- NYC Food Delivery Assistance If you cannot go out to get food, no one can bring you food, and you are not able to use private delivery options, New York City will deliver emergency meals to you in the coming days. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/contact/services/COVID-19FoodAssistance.shtml>
- NYC Food Delivery Assistance (see website for eligibility and enrollment): <https://cv19engagementportal.cityofnewyork.us/#/display/5e7555117ad6750216160409>

Thank you!

If you have questions about CTAC, please contact
ctac.info@nyu.edu

Upcoming CTAC Events

- ▶ **Getting the Right People In the Door**
July 16, 2020 | 11am – 12pm
- ▶ **Dreading Those Difficult Conversations? What Supervisors Need to Know and Do to Hold Supervisees Accountable**
July 16, 2020 | 12pm – 1pm
- ▶ **Positive Resourcing in Your Clinical Practice**
July 23, 2020 | 12pm – 1pm
- ▶ **Organizational Culture**
July 30, 2020 | 11am – 12pm
- ▶ **Hiring Youth Peer Advocates**
July 30, 2020 | 12pm - 1pm