

Operation Assist

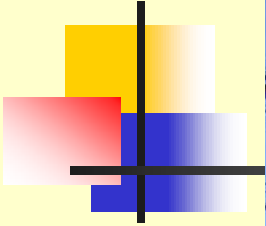


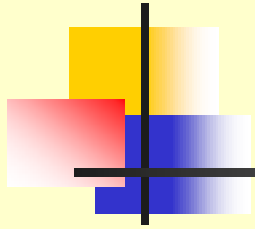
Coping Boxes™

An innovative way to build child resilience in the wake of disasters

Paula Madrid, PsyD, Rita Domnitz, MS Ed, Psych,
Kate Hurowitz, MPP, and Roy Grant, MA

The Children's Health Fund and
the National Center for Disaster Preparedness,
Columbia University
New York, NY





Operation Assist

- Special initiative of The Children's Health Fund and National Center for Disaster Preparedness, Mailman School of Public Health (Columbia University)
- Direct delivery of medical and mental health services after Hurricane Katrina
 - Use of mobile units to reach isolated and underserved communities



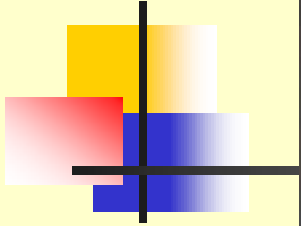
Elements of resilience

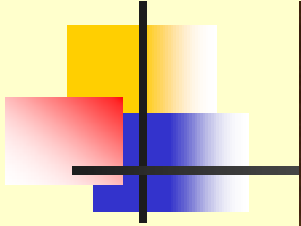
- Ability to overcome adversity and continue normal development
- Positive responses to stress and adversity (Rutter, 1987)
- Maintenance of mastery under stress (Rak & Patterson, 1996)
- Ability to bounce back from a difficult situation (Smith & Prior, 1995)



Building resilience in children

- Takes into account developmental, psychodynamic, behavioral and stress management theories
- “Transitional objects” facilitate transition from dependence to autonomy
 - Friman, P.C. (2000). “Transitional Objects” As establishing operations for thumb sucking: A case study. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 33(4), 507-509
- “Coping boxes™” developed to develop or enhance child’s ability to manage stress
- Small plastic boxes, that resemble lunch boxes containing toys and other possible transitional objects that may have therapeutic value designed to be used in clinical context

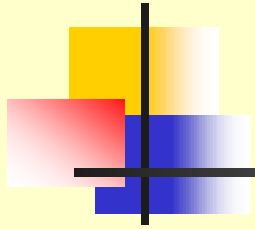






Use of Coping Boxes™

- Early rapport in the initial phases of a therapeutic relationship or as part of an intake
- Elicit positive response and curiosity
 - Encouraged by therapist's own enthusiastic presentation of the objects
- Facilitate growth of therapeutic relationship
- Present to child as personal possession



Therapeutic use of Coping Boxes™

- Encourage creative, projective play
- Model use of the materials for problem-solving
- Suggest discussion of frustrations and ways to feel better about managing them
- Facilitate discussion of the child's important possessions to introduce the issue of loss related to the disaster



Feedback from the field

- Survey monkey used to get feedback
- Mostly used by clinical social workers in school-based settings
- While designed for 6-12 year olds, was also found to be effective with adolescents
- Integrated into individual and group therapy
- Facilitated parent-child interaction



Conclusion

- Coping Boxes™ may be an effective tool within a therapeutic relationship to help children develop, enhance or restore problem-solving skills associated with self-efficacy, stress management and resilience

