



## Charlotte-Mecklenburg Child Development-Community Policing The Police-Mental Health-Child Protective Services Partnership



The Southeast Regional Training Center of the  
National Center for Children Exposed to Violence at Yale University

### Program Goals:

- To ensure that identified children and families receive developmentally appropriate, timely interventions following exposure to violence and other trauma, preventing the onset of serious emotional disturbance.
- To increase the awareness among police officers about the needs of children who have been exposed to violence, abuse, neglect, and other trauma.
- To establish closer working relationships between police officers, mental health clinicians, and child protective service workers, ensuring a coordinated community response to children and families experiencing, abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, and other trauma.



### Participating agencies:

- Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD)  
Link: [www.cmpd.org](http://www.cmpd.org)
- Mecklenburg County Area Mental Health (AMH)  
Link: <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Area+Mental+Health/Home.htm>
- Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services Youth & Family Services (DSS/YFS)  
Link: <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/DSS/Youth+and+Family+Services/Home.htm>

### Staff:

- Major Eddie Levins, CMPD Executive Sponsor
- Sarah M. Greene, ACSW, LCSW, CD-CP Program Director
- Stacey Flaherty, LCSW, CD-CP Clinician
- Marguerita Garrison, LPA, CD-CP Clinical Supervisor
- Jamica Kelley, LPC, CD-CP Clinician
- Andrea Larrick, LPC, CD-CP Clinician
- Alyssa Layne, LCSW, CD-CP Clinician (bi-lingual)
- Christen Pendleton, CD-CP Clinician
- Sarah Stutts, LPA, CD-CP Clinician
- Vanessa Torres, Research Assistant
- Valorie Williams, CD-CP Administrative Assistant

### Program Overview:

A gunfight erupts in a local housing project, and a five-year-old girl is struck in the leg by a stray bullet. Charlotte-Mecklenburg patrol officers are the first responders to the scene. Recognizing the psychological trauma that could develop for the victim and her family, they call their mental health partner, the Child Development-Community Policing (CD-CP) clinician on-call. She responds to the scene in minutes to provide acute trauma services to the child and family. When the team suspects neglect due to lack of supervision, a Child Protective Services referral is made. The officers, clinician and child protective services worker follow up over the next few days and weeks to assess needs, provide services, and help reestablish a sense of safety and security in the home.

In 1996, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department began this collaborative initiative which makes possible the kind of intervention described above. The goals of the CD-CP program are to increase officer awareness and identification of children at risk and increase clinical assessment and service provision to youth in need. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg CD-CP is a replication of the parent program in New Haven, Connecticut, between the Yale Child Study Center and the New Haven Department of Police Service. The U. S. Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention recognizes the program as a successful model for others to follow and has designated Yale as the National Center for Children Exposed to Violence.



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### Program Overview (continued):

To begin program implementation, sergeants team with mental health therapists and child protective service (CPS) workers in the classroom as well as in cross training. Clinicians and CPS workers go on police ride alongs, learning about routine police operations and the neighborhoods served. Sergeants observe mental health and child protective services operations, increasing their knowledge of abuse, neglect, and treatment issues, as well as services available. These activities promote the formation of a strong working partnership, which is the foundation for the success of the CD-CP. Following the cross training, sergeant-clinician-CPS worker teams teach all officers in the district about the effects of violence on child development and when and how to make appropriate CD-CP and CPS referrals. A CD-CP clinician is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for consultation and intervention. Officers on the scene can access their mental health partner whenever they encounter a child impacted by violence or other trauma. All CD-CP staff participate in a weekly program conference to plan follow-up clinical, child protection, and police interventions.

In Charlotte, the pilot project began in the Metro division, a 5-square mile area on the westside with a high incidence of violent crime and a large population of families with children. The program expanded into North Tryon in 1998, into Freedom and Steele Creek in 2001, Westover in 2004, Eastway in 2006, and Providence in 2007. The hope is to expand into all thirteen CMPD patrol divisions when sufficient resources are acquired.

### Program Data (September 2008):

- Over 10,648 cases referred, with an average of 2 children per case. A total of 1,994 families were referred in 2007.
- Over half of the cases include at least one child 5 years old or younger.
- On average, approximately 50% of all referrals are a result of domestic violence.
- Approximately 922 officers have been trained, including 98 supervisors. 35 clinicians trained; 8 current clinical fellows.
- The CD-CP curriculum is established for credit through the police training academy.
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg CD-CP representatives are on the faculty at the National Center for Children Exposed to Violence and provide consultation and technical assistance on program replication. Replication training has been provided for Clearwater, Florida, and Raleigh, North Carolina.
- Recipient of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Outstanding County Program Award 2002.
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg CD-CP was designated as the Southeast Regional Training Center of the National Center for Children Exposed to Violence at Yale University March 2004.
- Recipient of an Honorable Mention for the Thomas M. Wernert Award for Innovations in Community Behavioral Healthcare June 2004.

For more information on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg CD-CP, contact the following:

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