

# Child Trauma Response Team (CTRT)

## Pilot Program

The **Child Trauma Response Team (CTRT)** is a collaborative model designed to reduce the negative impact of children's exposure to domestic violence. From March 2016 to April 2017, a pilot program was implemented in the East Harlem section of Manhattan for families in the 23rd precinct.

The pilot program was a partnership with:



New York City Police  
Department (NYPD)

+



New York County  
District Attorney's  
Office (DANY)

+



Safe Horizon, Inc.

### What does the program do?

- Identify children who have witnessed serious incidents of domestic violence and provide an immediate, coordinated, trauma-focused and interdisciplinary response to children under the age of 18 and their impacted family members
- Provide coordinated home-based outreach by the NYPD and Safe Horizon, case management services, and evidence-based, mental health interventions

### What was the goal of pilot program?

- Determine the impact of the CTRT on children exposed to severe domestic violence and their impacted family members
- Identify key factors that facilitate successful collaborations between law enforcement and domestic violence/child trauma specialists
- Provide a roadmap for expanding and adapting the CTRT program throughout New York City

## Participants

Eligible families were identified by reviewing the NYPD Domestic Incident Reports as well as receiving referrals for the program from a partner domestic violence organization and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office.



**105** families were eligible for the CTRT intervention and **90** families elected to receive services

The majority of caregivers were females between the ages of 24 and 39, identifying as Hispanic/Latina or Black/African-American and caring for one or two children primarily between the ages of 0 and 6.

**82%** of families who elected to receive services had at least one child that screened positive for post-traumatic stress disorder



### Following a severe incident of domestic violence, the Child Trauma Response Team:

- Provides a therapeutic acute response to the family within 72 hours of the traumatic event consisting of either a joint home visit by the DV Police Officer and a Safe Horizon Child Trauma Specialist or a phone call by the SH child trauma specialist
- Completes a child trauma screening and/or assessment
- Educates the caregiver about common trauma reactions and how his/her child's behavior may be linked to the child's exposure to domestic violence
- Provides safety assessment and risk management to the family
- Links the child and impacted family members to evidence-based mental health treatment services, which may include interventions focused on the peri-traumatic phase such as CFTSI

# Recommendations

## Practice Recommendations

- Enhance the identification of eligible families by focusing on increasing police documentation on the Domestic Violence Incident Report when a child is present in the home during an incident
- Collaborate to increase the speed of home visits to families experiencing severe domestic violence within 72-hours post-incident
- Shift the model to address needs across diverse communities
- Explore expanding capacity to offer mental health intervention services to young children
- Discuss the sensitivity and specificity of assessment tools used
- Develop and implement CTRT model guidelines for case review meetings, home visits, and steering committee meetings
- Define and clarify roles of each partner and enhance communication between CTRT team members

## Policy Recommendations

- Consider expanding the CTRT model to other NYC precincts to increase impact of the program
- Consider expanding the CTRT model to focus on all incidents of domestic violence, rather than just severe incidents
- Consider expanding the CTRT model to other forms of trauma and violence experienced and witnessed by children

## Recommendations

### Research Recommendations

- Secure additional funding for a longitudinal program evaluation
- Understand the impact of the CTRT model among a diverse array of communities
- Explore the potential impact of the CTRT model in responding to all domestic violence incidents and/or all traumatic incidents children may witness
- Examine the impact of the CTRT on families' safety, level of post-traumatic stress disorder, access to community services, ability to utilize emotional coping skills, trust in the criminal justice system, and engagement in the criminal justice system
- Understand the impact of CTRT from the perspective of families utilizing the program's services



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