



Impact of Childhood Trauma on Delinquency: Implications for Juvenile Justice

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Begun Center



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Begun Center

- Applied community-based work that seeks to bridge the gap between science and practice
- Working with partners to demonstrate the implications of research through
 - Significant behavioral outcomes
 - Improved systems
 - Effective policy



Begun Center Core Activities

1. Evaluating program outcomes
2. Promoting evidence-based best practices
3. Changing policy based on research
4. Consultation and technical assistance
5. Quality data management & analysis
6. Training practitioners and researchers
7. Dissemination of findings



Begun Center Areas of Research

- Justice system involved youth and adults
- Mental health and substance use
- School-based violence prevention
- Law enforcement initiatives
- Community based initiatives



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Overview

- Trauma and Cognitive Impairment
- Prevalence of Trauma
 - Importance of Assessment and Screening
 - Defending Childhood Initiative
- Trauma and Behavioral health in Juvenile Justice
 - Assessment, Screening, and Treatment
 - Behavioral Juvenile Justice Initiative



Trauma

- Emotional response to a terrible event
 - One time events i.e. accidents, crimes, natural disasters, death
 - Chronic or repetitive experiences, i.e. child abuse and neglect, political conflict, community violence, etc.

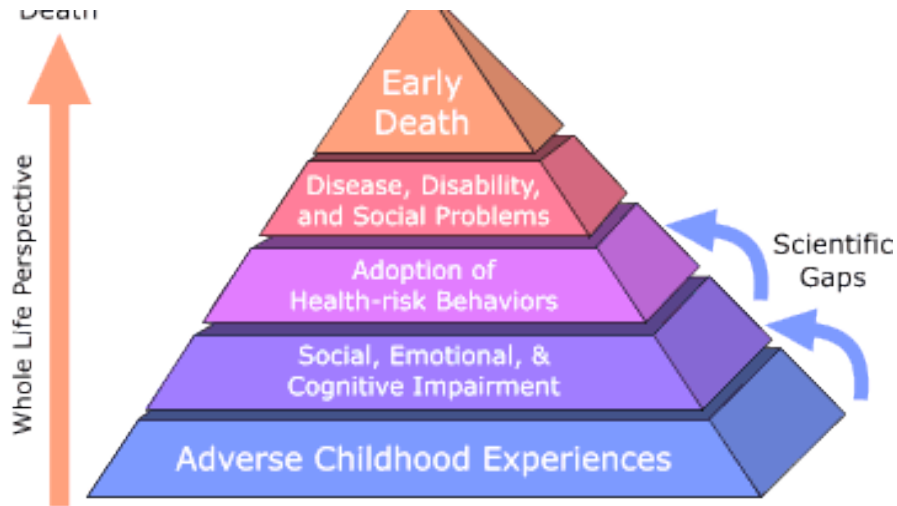


Contextual Location of Trauma

- Children are exposed to violence in three contextual locations
 - Home
 - School
 - Neighborhood
- Location often depends on age
 - Some debate about whether location matters



Research on Trauma



Two Scientific Gaps

- Causal inference between trauma and social, emotional, and cognitive impairment
- Impairment and health-risk behaviors

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>



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Trauma and Brain Development

- Newborns have developed enough to interact with the world around them
 - Recognize mother's voice and smell
 - Some capacity to self-regulate and self-soothe
- Majority of brain development occurs during child's early months and years
 - 80% of adult size by age 3
 - 90% of adult size by age 5



Trauma and Brain Development

- Brain has the most plasticity in infancy and early childhood
 - Most capacity to change
 - Prolonged trauma can be devastating
 - Early intervention can potentially have great positive impact



Trauma Symptoms – Children 0-2

- Cognitive
 - Demonstrate poor verbal skills
 - Exhibit memory problems
- Behavioral
 - Regressive (e.g. fear of strangers)
 - Aggressive
 - Startle easily
 - Act withdrawn



Trauma Symptoms – Children 3-6

- Cognitive
 - Have difficulties focusing or learning in school
 - Develop learning disabilities
 - Show poor skill development
- Behavioral
 - Act out in social situations
 - Are verbally abusive
 - Unable to trust others or make friends



Defending Childhood Initiative

- Attorney General Holder's initiative to address childhood exposure to violence and the associated trauma
 - Juvenile justice system is often the first place where youth are screened for violence exposure and trauma
 - Screen and identify children exposed to violence early
- Cuyahoga County was funded by the DOJ as one of four fully funded implementation sites (\$2 million)



Defending Childhood Initiative

- The local plan involves systematic screening of children ages 0-17 in child-serving systems (DCFS, JC), local behavioral health agencies, neighborhood collaboratives, and schools.
 - Children identified as in need of additional assessment referred to Central Intake and Assessment for full diagnostic interview
 - Those children in need of trauma-informed treatment referred to one of several participating treatment agencies



Begun Center Research Activities

- The Begun Center is the local evaluation partner for the Cuyahoga County DCI and has primary responsibilities for the analysis of data related to:
 - Screening
 - Intake Assessment
 - Treatment Outcomes



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CCDCI and Screening

- Need for a consistent trauma and VE screener
 - Purpose was to refer to additional assessment and TIC
- Desired criteria for screeners:
 - combined both violence exposure and trauma;
 - were as brief as we needed;
 - covered infants through 17 year olds;
 - were free.



CCDCI and Screening

- Two screeners were developed
 - Infant through 7 years (caregiver completes) & 8 years and older (self-report)
- Screeners were based on existing instruments (TSCC, Briere; VBO & REVS, Singer et al, JVQ, Finkelhor et al)
- For the 8 and older version, existing data from other projects (N = ~6000) was used to:
 - Identify items on violence screeners that best predicted trauma (EFA)
 - Identify trauma items most representative of each subscale (anger, anxiety, depression, dissociation, pts) (CFA)



Pilot Phase

- Purposes of pilot:
 - Ease of use, Item endorsement, Provider burden, Establishment of cutoff scores
- Screeners took an average of 4-6 minutes to complete
- Review from national experts
- All items were retained in original form
 - Imminent risk and self-harm/suicide risk added
 - Identification of critical items



Scoring

- We had several tasks related to scoring:
 - Determine how the screeners would be scored (one total score or section scores)
 - Establish thresholds for referral to fuller assessment (agencies pushed for this)
 - Allow room for clinical judgment



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Screening data (0-7)

- 8361 screenings
 - Males = 53.1%
 - African American = 62.6%, Caucasian = 24.3%
 - Average Age = 5.8 years
- Where does your child witness/experience the most violence?
 - At home = 31.8%, In the neighborhood = 14.1%,
At School = 6.3%, Many places = 33.7%



Screening data (0-7)

- Is the child at imminent risk = 0.5% (n = 43)
- Met any threshold = 3.0% (n = 239)
- Child didn't meet threshold but worker wanted to refer (Override) = 8.0% (n = 646)
- Screening Agency: DCFS = 77.1% (n = 6265)



Violence Exposure Ages (0-7)

Violence Exposure Items	No	Yes
At any time in your child's life, did anyone hit or attack your child on purpose with an object or weapon?	96.5% (n = 7734)	3.5% (n = 282)
At any time in your child's life, did anyone hit or attack your child on purpose without using a weapon?	92.5% (n = 7415)	7.5% (n = 604)
Did a grownup in your child's life hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt your child in any way?	96.1% (n = 7703)	3.9% (n = 311)
At any time in your child's life, did your child witness violence in the home by any other family member?	85.4% (n = 6852)	14.6% (n = 1169)
At any time in your child's life did your child witness violence at home by another adult?	89.1% (n = 7145)	10.9% (n = 870)
At any time in your child's life did your child see or hear anyone get attacked on purpose with or without a weapon?	84.4% (n = 6759)	15.6% (n = 1249)
At any time in your child's life did a grown-up or older child touch your child's private parts when they shouldn't have or make your child touch their private parts? Or did a grown-up or older child force your child to have sex?	96.9% (n = 7759)	3.1% (n = 250)



Trauma (0-7)

Past 30 days	Not at all	Once in a while	Often	Almost all the time
Didn't want to play or be active?	88.8% (n = 7110)	9.6% (n = 768)	1.2% (n = 95)	0.5% (n = 37)
Had trouble going to sleep?	79.9% (n = 6400)	14.2% (n = 1136)	3.6% (n = 291)	2.3% (n = 187)
Had difficulty concentrating or focusing?	70.4% (n = 5636)	15.6% (n = 1251)	7.8% (n = 626)	6.2% (n = 497)
Got startled or spooked easily?	84.3% (n = 6754)	10.9% (n = 872)	3.2% (n = 255)	1.6% (n = 129)
Was aggressive to people or animals?	83.9% (n = 6716)	10.9% (n = 869)	3.8% (n = 302)	1.5% (n = 122)
Seemed afraid of the dark?	80.6% (n = 6452)	12.6% (n = 1005)	3.1% (n = 245)	3.8% (n = 305)
Refused to eat?	91.6% (n = 7340)	6.8% (n = 547)	1.2% (n = 97)	0.3% (n = 26)
Cried or had a tantrum until s/he was exhausted?	81.3% (n = 6514)	12.3% (n = 985)	4.3% (n = 347)	2.1% (n = 169)



Screening data (8 and older)

- 10038 screenings
 - Males = 52.8%
 - African American = 62.9%, Caucasian = 24.3%
 - Average Age = 14.4 years
- Where does your child witness/experience the most violence?
 - At home = 12.4%, In the neighborhood = 17.6%,
At School = 25.2%, Many places = 39.5%



Screening data (8 and older)

- Is the child at imminent risk = 1.6% (n = 160)
- Met any threshold = 5.9% (n = 588)
- Child didn't meet threshold but worker wanted to refer (Override) = 11.0% (n = 1034)
- Screening Agency: DCFS = 54% (n = 5430)
CCJC = 10.1% (1013)



Violence Exposure (8 and older)

How often over the past year has any of the following happened to you?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
You being slapped, punched, or hit?	61.8% (n = 6122)	31.3% (n = 3097)	5.0% (n = 494)	1.9% (n = 187)
Seeing someone else being slapped, punched, or hit?	49.9% (n = 4941)	35.2% (n = 3489)	9.6% (n = 946)	5.3% (n = 526)
You being threatened?	73.2% (n = 7247)	19.1% (n = 1895)	5.0% (n = 493)	2.6% (n = 261)
Seeing someone else being threatened?	64.5% (n = 6387)	23.9% (n = 2363)	7.5% (n = 742)	4.1% (n = 406)
You being beaten up?	87.1% (n = 8616)	10.4% (n = 1029)	1.8% (n = 174)	0.7% (n = 71)
Seeing someone else being beaten up?	61.2% (n = 6056)	27.2% (n = 2693)	7.7% (n = 761)	3.9% (n = 381)
You being touched in a private place on your body where you didn't want to be touched?	94.1% (n = 9306)	4.5% (n = 450)	0.7% (n = 65)	0.7% (n = 72)

Violent Behaviors (8 and older)

How often over the past year have you...	Never	Sometimes	Often	Almost every day
Told others that you would hurt them?	72.6% (n = 7180)	21.1% (n = 2093)	4.6% (n = 452)	1.7% (n = 171)
Slapped, punched, or hit someone before they hit you?	72.6% (n = 7183)	21.4% (n = 2118)	4.2% (n = 416)	1.8% (n = 178)
Slapped, punched, or hit someone after they hit you?	49.2% (n = 4871)	34.3% (n = 3390)	10.2% (n = 1009)	6.3% (n = 621)



Trauma (8 and older)

These items describe things that kids sometimes think, feel, or do. Read each item and mark how often it happened to you. How often do you...	Not at all	Once in a while	Often	Almost all the time
Feel mean?	51.7% (n = 5120)	33.8% (n = 3340)	9.9% (n = 979)	4.6% (n = 455)
Feel afraid?	64.1% (n = 6347)	24.7% (n = 2448)	7.4% (n = 735)	3.7% (n = 364)
Feel like nobody likes you?	64.4% (n = 6367)	21.1% (n = 2089)	8.6% (n = 853)	5.9% (n = 579)
Feel like things are not real?	74.8% (n = 7394)	16.2% (n = 1597)	6.1% (n = 600)	3.0% (n = 295)
Remember things you don't want to remember?	60.1% (n = 5940)	20.6% (n = 2036)	10.9% (n = 1082)	8.4% (n = 832)



Trauma and Substance Use

- In a survey of adolescents receiving treatment for substance abuse, more than 70% of patients had a history of trauma exposure
- Up to 59% of youth with PTSD subsequently develop substance abuse problems



Trauma and Behavioral Health in the Juvenile Justice System

- 65%-75% of juvenile justice-involved youth have a mental health or substance use disorder
- Over 90% of juvenile detainees reported experiencing one or more traumas
 - Average of over 14 separate incidents



Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice Initiative

- 11 counties in Ohio
- Several programs to reduce commitments to DYS
- Effort to assess and identify juvenile justice-involved youth with behavioral health issues
- Each county is free to determine which behavioral health screening is used



Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice Initiative

- Target population
 - History of juvenile justice involvement
 - Diagnosed with at least one mental health or substance use disorder
 - Ages 10-18
- Diverted into community treatment
 - Must use evidence-based treatment



Enrollment by County

County	Total Number of Youth Enrolled
Cuyahoga	277
Franklin	346
Hamilton	166
Lucas	145
Montgomery	1,040
Summit	116
All Other Counties	455
Total	2,545



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Demographics

	Total	Since July 1, 2011
Gender		
Male	58.4% (n = 1,478)	67.4% (n = 464)
Female	41.6% (n = 1,054)	32.6% (n = 224)
Race		
White	52.3% (n = 1,316)	42.9% (n = 295)
Nonwhite	47.7% (n = 1,201)	57.1% (n = 393)
Average Age	15.6 years	15.5 years

Nearly 25% of BHJJ families report an average household income less than \$10,000 and 48% report an average household income less than \$20,000.

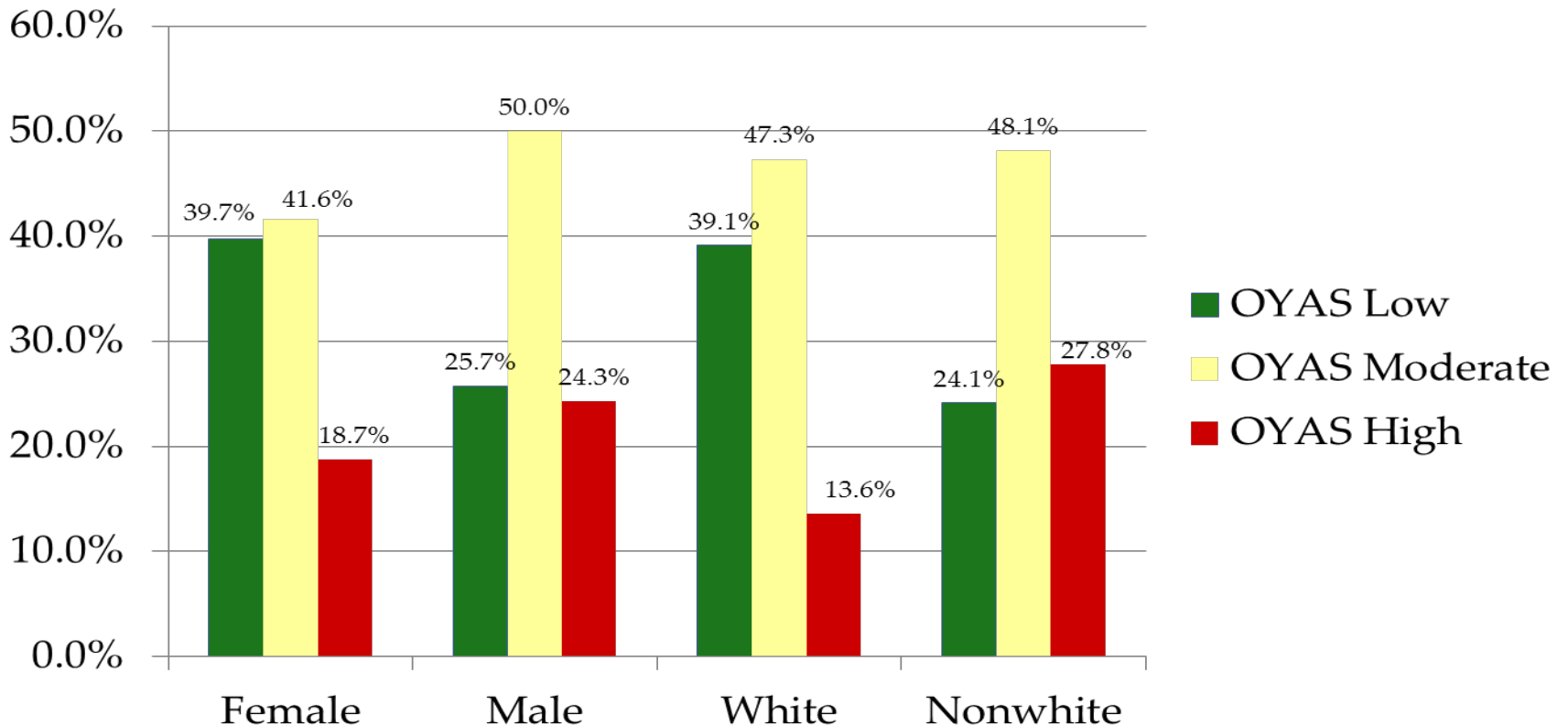


Youth and Family History

Question	Females	Males
Has the child ever been physically abused?	20.5% (n=194)**	15.3% (n=208)
Has the child ever been sexually abused?	28.1% (n=262)***	7.1% (n=95)
Has the child ever run away?	59.4% (n=558)***	43.9% (n=584)
Has the child ever had a problem with substance abuse, including alcohol and/or drugs?	43.9% (n=411)	50.3% (n=674)**
Has the child ever talked about committing suicide?	49.6% (n=468)***	31.3% (n=425)
Has the child ever attempted suicide?	22.2% (n=207)***	9.6% (n=129)
Has the child ever been exposed to domestic violence or spousal abuse, of which the child was not the direct target?	43.8% (n=414)*	39.4% (n=536)
Has anyone in the child's biological family ever been diagnosed with depression or shown signs of depression?	68.2% (n=626)***	60.3% (n=793)
Has anyone in the child's biological family had a mental illness, other than depression?	47.8% (n=440)***	39.7% (n=511)
Has the child ever lived in a household in which someone was convicted of a crime?	40.6% (n=372)	40.9% (n=540)
Has anyone in the child's biological family had a drinking or drug problem?	63.9% (n=590)*	59.2% (n=787)



OYAS Risk Categories by Gender and Race



Most Common Axis I Diagnoses

	Females	Males
Oppositional Defiant Disorder	41.3%	38.9%
Cannabis-related Disorders***	27.5%	35.3%
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder***	26.5%	42.5%
Depressive Disorders***	23.0%	12.5%
Alcohol-related Disorders**	13.3%	9.9%
Bipolar Disorder*	10.3%	7.5%
Conduct Disorder***	9.7%	21.2%
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder***	9.4%	5.3%
Adjustment Disorder*	7.2%	5.1%
Mood Disorder	11.1%	9.1%
Disruptive Behavior Disorder	6.6%	7.8%

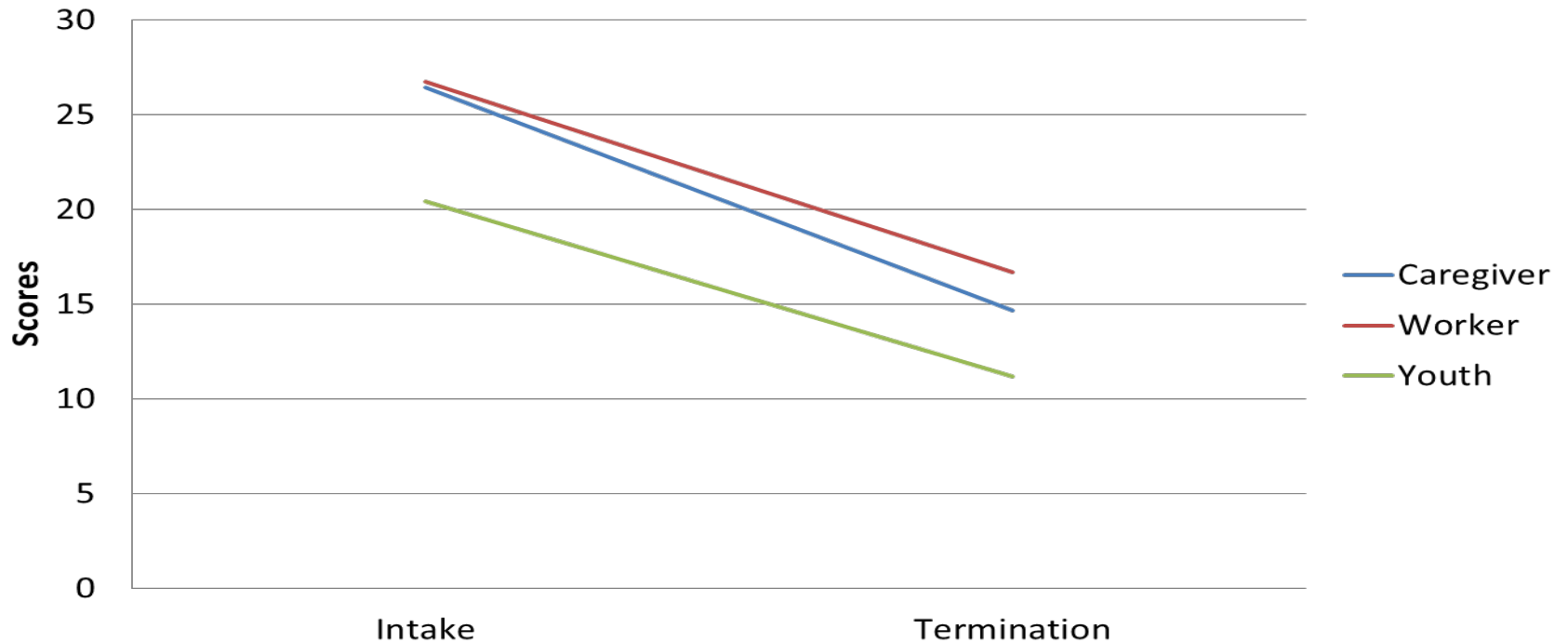
Total 5,628 Axis I diagnoses for 2,426 youth (2.31 diagnoses per youth)



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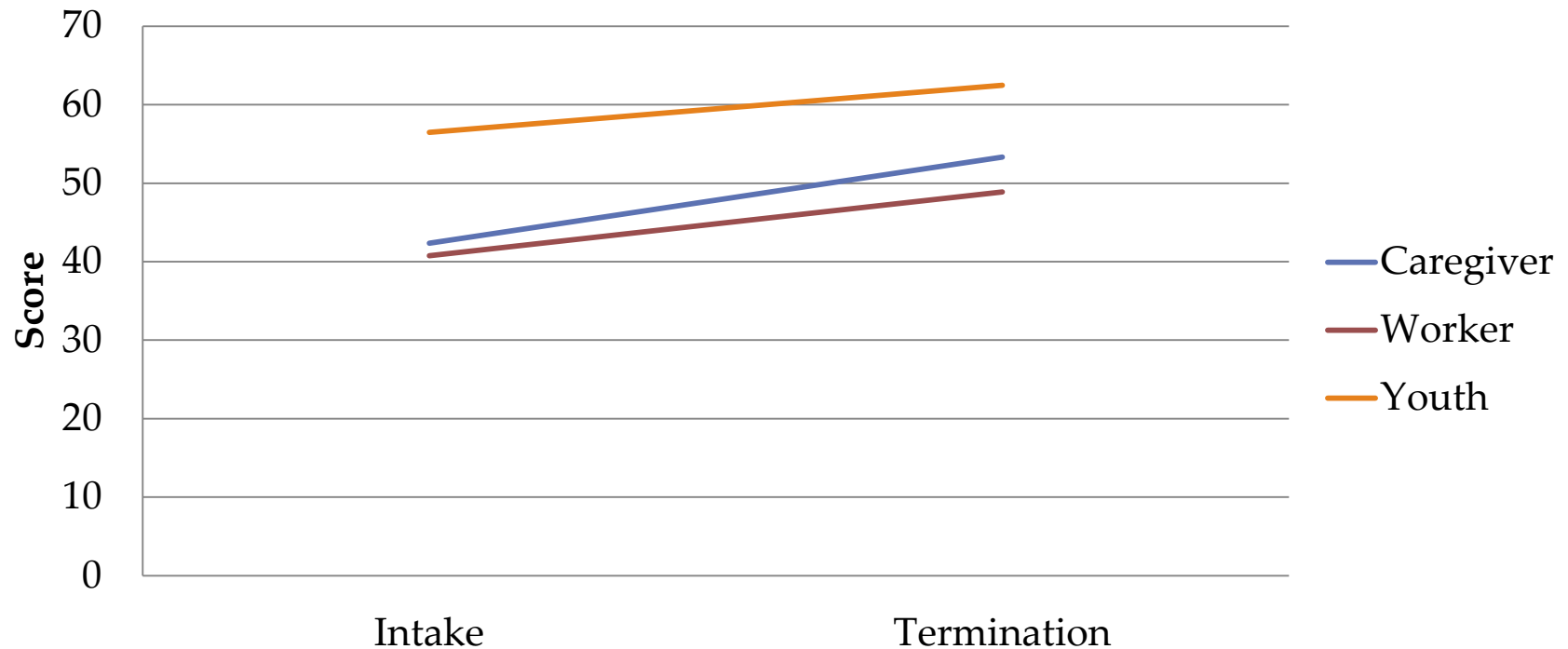
Ohio Scales Problem Severity Scores from Intake to Termination



All comparisons from intake to termination are significant at the $p < .001$ level



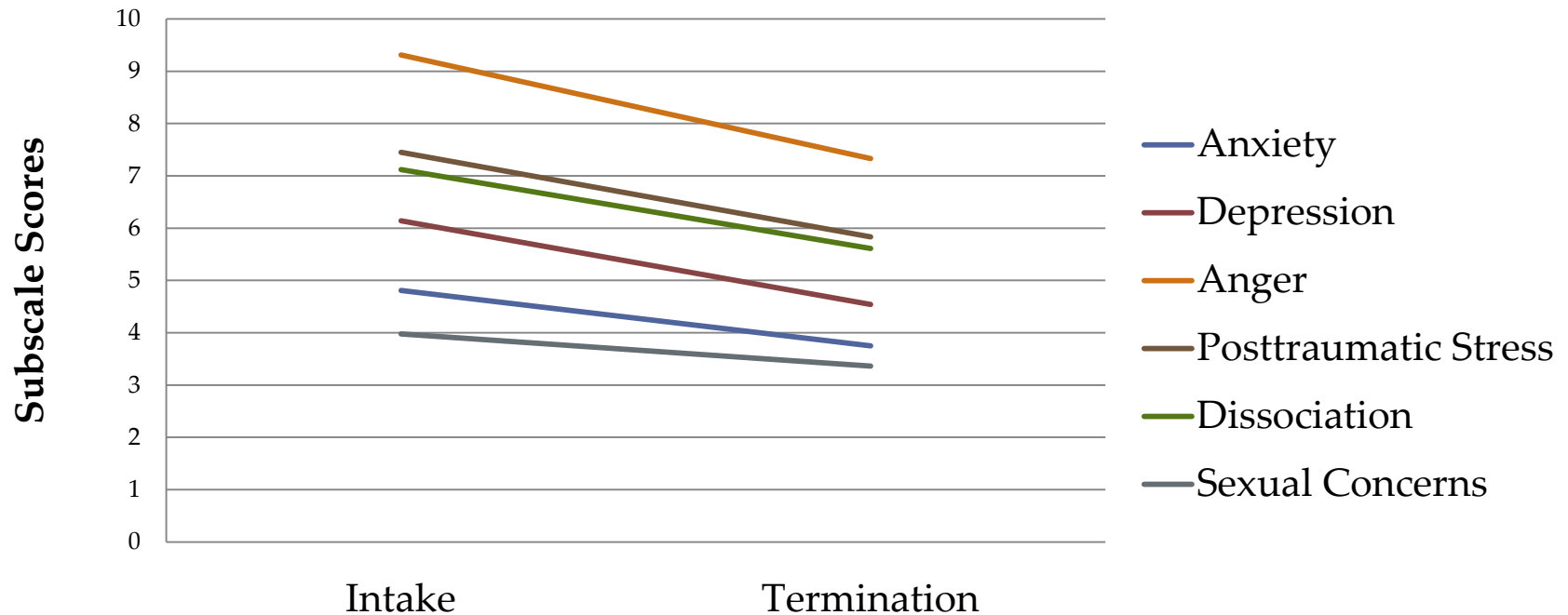
Ohio Scales Functioning Scores from Intake to Termination



All comparisons from intake to termination are significant at the $p < .001$ level



Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children



All comparisons significant at the $p < .001$ level



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<http://www.nctsn.org/trauma-types/early-childhood-trauma/Symptoms-and-Behaviors-Associated-with-Exposure-to-Trauma>

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/pyramid.html>

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/braindevtrauma.pdf>



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Questions

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