

ARBEST

Arkansas Building Effective Services for Trauma
A Program of the UAMS Psychiatric Research Institute



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Noteworthy News

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Dear Partners,

We love the promise a fresh year offers and hope yours is off to a wonderful start. This month we are looking ahead to what is on tap for ARBEST in the upcoming year, taking stock of appropriations in the first half of FY15, and noting some national mental health moments of 2014. For newsletter subscriptions, ideas, or comments, [email us](#).

[Highlight](#)

ARBEST in 2015: Another Busy Year

- **January-throughout the year:** Hold regular meetings with our relatively new councils—Mental Health, Community, and Strategic Planning—to share knowledge, develop relationships, interact, develop trainings, and create channels for evaluation, quality improvement, and long-range planning.
- **January-December:** Continue to offer monthly webinars on critical and timely topics related to providing adolescents with trauma-informed care.
- **February:** Provide CAC directors a report on the CAC peer review process.
- **February-March:** Visit CACs around the state.
- **March:** Begin MYTE (Mothering Youth with Trauma Experience) Consultation Calls for

Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS)
Specialized Women's Services (SWS) programs.

- **March-June:** Assist in training DCFS workers in the trauma section of their new assessment tool, the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS).
- **April:** Conduct Sixth Annual Introductory Training on TF-CBT (April 8-9) and Fifth Annual Advanced Training on TF-CBT (April 10), both at UAMS.
- **April:** Help promote Child Abuse Prevention Month.
- **July:** Send CAC annual report to center directors.

Later This Year

- In order to better address the needs of children and families, evaluate who accesses mental health services after trauma exposure and determine who has difficulty accessing services or declines services.
- Execute a study to ensure that ARBEST's training and interventions continue to benefit Arkansas children after our involvement is complete. To study this, prospectively, an ARBEST work group will be formed to follow this year's TF-CBT trainees to determine how well mental health professionals are able to continue using TF-CBT after the training and what factors influence their ability to do so.
- Create an active social media presence for ARBEST.

Update

FY14 vs. FY15: How the Numbers Stack Up

Last month we compared data entered during the first quarters of FY14 and FY15, and we noticed major improvements. When we look at data for the second quarters of the two fiscal years to draw comparisons, we continue to see improvements! Here are some highlights:

- CAC-affiliated MHPs are registering **more** eligible clients this year: 31% this year compared to 14%

this same time last year.

- The number of direct client hours has **also increased**: 1,747 this year compared to 1,524 this same time last year.

Resources

Hindsight Perspective: NIMH Director Looks Back at the Year

Many organizations and individuals create "Best Of" lists purporting to be helpful or at least clever that inundate our inboxes and media streams every December and January, but here's one that is truly informative and deserving of your reading time. Dr. Thomas Insel, Director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), publishes an exceptionally well written monthly blog that is accessible and engaging even for lay people. His December 16 issue covered mental health stories of note in 2014. Before jumping in, he offered this sliver of a disclaimer, "As always, finding the top ten is both unfair and unsatisfying. But that will not keep me from trying." Making his list were mental health philanthropy, exosomes, the NIH Brain Initiative, and the Recovery After an Initial Schizophrenia Episode ([RAISE](#)) project. Read his complete list at "[Director's Blog: Best of 2014.](#)"

In an interesting preamble to his list, Dr. Insel discussed a sore point our readership is probably already plugged into, the lack of media and public attention on mental health. He called Ebola the top medical story of 2014, and then compared the frenzied heed paid it, from which one person in the U.S. died, to the lack of attention given to suicide, deaths from which probably surpassed 40,000 in 2014 (roughly one every 13 minutes). This disparity in collective national attention seems to pain him. Said Dr. Insel, "For the week after the suicide of Robin Williams, the nation focused on this issue, but for 51 weeks this year, suicide remained the silent epidemic." Suicide affects our country's children in many ways, from their suffering trauma when a loved one commits suicide to the danger of them committing it themselves. According to NAMI

(National Alliance on Mental Health), each year in the U.S. approximately 2 million U.S. adolescents attempt suicide and almost 700,000 receive medical attention for their attempt. It is estimated that each year approximately 2,000 youth ages 10-19 complete suicide.

Meet a VIP

We feature a VIP (Very Interesting Person) working with a Child Advocacy Center in every newsletter. This month meet forensic interviewer and back-up advocate Laurel Gass, Grandma's House Children's Advocacy Center in Harrison.

January VIP: Laurel Gass

Laurel Gass loves her job at Grandma's House Children's Advocacy Center in Harrison and says that it grows her as a person every day. As the center's main forensic interviewer and back-up child and family advocate, Laurel enjoys conducting interviews and continuing to learn about child development and how disclosures happen. She adds, "I love interviewing the kids as it seems like there is a different key to every story that I have to unlock. The challenge is great and keeps me inspired to learn more."

Laurel graduated from high school in 2010, went to work at Grandma's House in 2012, and just graduated in December from Arkansas Tech University with a bachelor's degree in elementary education. While she plans on pursuing a master's degree in education or rehabilitation counseling next, she will take a year or so off first to spend time with her 10-month-old baby. She shares, "I would love to teach forensic interviewing or become a TF-CBT therapist, but taking time to see my son grow is just as important right now."



Laurel Gass (with son Tristan), Forensic Interviewer and Back-Up Advocate, Grandma's House Children's Advocacy Center, Harrison

Advice to new advocates: Watch ARBEST's webinars and know what TF-CBT entails so you can address any issues clients may have with taking their kids in for assessment. A lot of parents are concerned that the therapist is going to immediately go over the traumatic things that happened, which we know is not what TF-CBT is about. Let them know they will learn coping skills and parent-child communication skills to deal with the things going on.

Likes to do when not at work: I'm an extremely active person--yoga, meditate, run, and garden.

Claim to fame: I love eating raw (a diet of uncooked vegetables and no meat), so I have made some pretty awesome, unique salads!

Proudest accomplishment: I have a 10 month old boy, Tristan, and he is growing and becoming more interesting every day. We exclusively breast-feed, and I am extremely proud to say I have been working full-time and keeping up with him while doing so!

A VIP from a CAC will be featured in the ARBEST newsletter every month. Send us your [suggestions](#) for our next VIP.

[Calendar](#)

January 16 ▪ Quarterly ARBEST Report to CAC
Directors ([12/16/14-1/15/15](#))

January 28 ▪ 8:30 am-3 pm [Kids Count Day at the Capitol](#), Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families,
State Capitol, Little Rock

January 29 ▪ 10:30-11:30 am ARBEST Strategic
Council, PRI Clothier Library at UAMS, Little Rock

January 30▪ 12 pm Webinar with Karin Vanderzee
—"[TF-CBT with an Adolescent: A Case Presentation](#)"

February 5 ▪ 9-10 am ARBEST Mental Health Council,
PRI Clothier Library at UAMS, Little Rock

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