

The Center for Childhood Resilience (CCR) at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago trains educators and clinicians in schools and community organizations to identify children affected by trauma and help them heal and become more resilient.

To accomplish this, CCR teaches evidence-based strategies and promotes safe and supportive school environments. In 2016, CCR staff trained more than 2,300 teachers, school social workers and school-based community health providers.

The initiative dates to 2013, when CCR began training mental health providers in the skill-building resiliency program “Bounce Back.” A recent study of program participants found that:

- 93 percent of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students experienced a reduction in post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms.

Yana Melnik, LCPC, a therapist with a CCR-trained community mental health agency, uses Bounce Back at two CPS elementary schools in the North Lawndale neighborhood, which has one of the highest violent crime rates in Chicago. Melnik teaches students skills to challenge upsetting thoughts, process stressful events and problem-solve issues with other students.

“Since we instituted the Bounce Back program, I’ve seen a reduction in anxiety, hyperarousal and hypervigilance in these kids,” Melnik said. “They have enhanced social skills and more confidence and resilience, which has enabled them to build relationships with other students.”

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