

SMART (Sensory Motor Arousal Regulation Treatment) is an innovative mental health therapy for complexly traumatized children and adolescents for whom regulation of emotional, behavioral and interpersonal life is a primary problem. The goal is to expand the repertoire of regulating experiences for children and their caregivers, with the aim of nurturing healing and growth. A new array of strategies utilizes a larger therapy space, big pillows, weighted blankets, balance beams, fitness balls, and other basic equipment to facilitate improved regulation, and as a result, more integrated processing of traumatic experiences that otherwise can hijack ordinary daily life.

The new therapy approach is designed to be helpful to children and caregivers alike in improving self-regulation and the rhythms of relationship. Either through participating in the child's therapy, or through private parent guidance work, caregivers can learn these strategies for implementation at home. The Second Edition of the manual has added a chapter specifically geared to work with caregivers.

The SMART team has trained outpatient therapists, clinical teams in residential treatment, and in-home therapists in this approach. In addition to addressing the individual therapy, the SMART team has worked with milieu staff and other caregivers to address new ways to help children and adolescents regulate in their daily life.

The mental health training team draws on expertise from the worlds of trauma-focused psychotherapy, sensory integration, sensorimotor psychotherapy, family therapy and developmental psychology including attachment theory.

Training Model

We offer a SMART Two Day Intensive Training for mental health practitioners interested in learning this approach to a trauma therapy for children and adolescents and their caregivers. For those wishing to attain a level of competency, the training is followed by 9 – 12 months of bi-monthly group consultation utilizing videotape of treatment sessions as the basis for learning. Full use of SMART requires adequate space and some basic equipment.

If you have any questions about the SMART model or training model, please feel free to contact the Project Director, Elizabeth Warner at ewarner@jri.org.

Publications

Warner, E., Cook, A., Westcott, A., & Koomar, J. (2014). *SMART Sensory Motor Arousal Regulation Treatment: A manual for therapists working with children and adolescents: A "bottom up" approach to treatment of complex trauma (Second Edition)*. Brookline, Massachusetts: Trauma Center at JRI.

Warner, E., Lary, B., Koomar, J., & Cook, A. (2013) Can the body change the score? Application of sensory modulation principles in the treatment of traumatized adolescents in residential settings. *Journal of Family Violence*, 28(7), 729-738.

Warner, E., Spinazzola, J., Westcott, A., Gunn, C., & Hodgdon, H. (2014). The body can change the score: Empirical support for somatic regulation in the treatment of traumatized adolescents. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*. DOI 10.1007/s40653-014-0030-z