



## MT. HOPE FAMILY CENTER

# RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

### **Background Information:**

The teenage years are a time of considerable stress. This stress can be made more challenging for teens who have experienced child maltreatment. Rates of depression are higher among girls than boys during the teen years.

Also, teens with limited access to economic resources and teens of color face additional stress. Relationship-based therapy (known as interpersonal psychotherapy for adolescents or IPT) is based in science and has been shown to help teens cope with stress and depression.

### **What is the IPT study?**

IPT is a study of teen girls who were experiencing depression and socioeconomic stress. The majority of girls in the study were teens of color. Many of the girls also experienced child maltreatment. About half of the girls participated in relationship-based therapy (IPT) and half participated in other routine counseling services. The goal of this study was to learn whether therapy focused specifically on relationships is more or less helpful for teen girls who have experienced maltreatment. We wanted to learn how best to match therapy to the individual needs of teens.

### **Here's a quick summary of what we found:**

- The girls in this study were not seeking mental health treatment when we asked them if they wanted to be in the study. We expected mild levels of depression but instead found very high rates of depression and thoughts of suicide among the girls.
- Both types of therapy (relationship-based therapy (IPT) and routine counseling) were helpful overall to girls in this study.
- Girls who experienced maltreatment benefited more from relationship-based therapy (IPT) than they did from routine counseling services.

### **Why does this research matter??**

1. Understanding how to tailor or individualize therapy to best meet the needs of teens can help us make sure we are providing the best support to our clients.
2. Our findings show that to support teen girls with depression and maltreatment histories, therapy focused on relationships and social supports (IPT) is more helpful than other approaches.
3. Our results highlight the incredible stress many teen girls are facing on a daily basis, especially teens of color and those with limited access to financial resources. This study underscores the current disparities in access to care and the need for widely available therapy support.
4. Due to systemic barriers, many teens had limited access to support services in spite of high levels of depression and thoughts of suicide. This study shows the importance of community outreach to non-treatment seeking youth.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE? READ:

[The moderating role of child maltreatment in treatment efficacy for adolescent depression](#) by Sheree Toth, Liz Handley, Jody Todd Manly, Robin Sturm, Tangeria Adams,

Liz Demeusy and Dante Cicchetti