



Introduction to Trauma Informed Care

A Course by Shiawassee Health and Wellness



What is Trauma Informed Care?

An approach to engage children, adolescents and adults with histories of trauma that recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives. (SAMHSA, 2011)

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically and emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. (SAMSHA, 2012)



The Three R's

- A definition of trauma-informed incorporates three key elements:
 1. Realizing the prevalence of trauma;
 2. Recognizing how trauma affects all individual's involved with the program, organization, or systems, including its own workforce
 3. Responding by putting this knowledge into practice.

(SAMHSA presentation by Joan Gillece, Ph.D. - Understanding and addressing trauma in the lives of those we serve...)



What is Trauma ?

- Trauma is any stressful event that may be:
 - Prolonged
 - Overwhelming
 - Unpredictable
- Trauma issues may persist due to being:
 - Unexpressed
 - Unprocessed
 - Misunderstood
 - Not validated (Micsak, 2008)



Trauma Can Come From ...

- Disasters (tornados, fire, etc.)
- Witnessing a car accident, bank robbery
- Abuse, neglect
- Domestic violence
- Being a victim or witnessing violence (Micsak, 2008)



Other Traumas

- Adoption/foster care
- Illness/death
- Birth complications
- School/peer pressure/bullying
- Unmet needs (ex. safety, food, clothing, shelter)
- Medical procedures
- Child maltreatment
- War

(Micsak, 2008)



Statistics on Trauma

- About 60% of men and 50% of women have experienced a traumatic event in their lifetime.
(National Center for PTSD)
- Millions of people in the United States suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
(SAMHSA, 2011)
- 1 of every 4 children before the age of 16 will experience a traumatic event.
(Starr Common Wealth, 2010)
- 40% of children and teens have endured at least one traumatic event in their life. (Starr Common Wealth, 2010)



What is PTSD?

- “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that can be caused by experiencing or observing virtually any kind of deep emotional trauma, especially one that is unexpected.” (SAMHSA, brochure)
- “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms are normal human reactions to extreme or pathological stress.” (Kubany, McCaig & Laconsay, 2004)
- An experience that may trigger PTSD in one person won’t do so in another person. Most will not experience the disorder.
- “People who have PTSD may feel stressed or frightened even when they’re no longer in danger.”
- (National Institute of Mental Health)



Terror

- Trauma should be related to an experience, not a diagnostic category. The word that best captures the experience of trauma is terror. Terror is defined by feeling totally unsafe and powerless to do anything about one's situation.
(Trauma Informed Care Article, TLC)



How Does Someone Who Has Been Traumatized Feel?

- Powerless
- Hopeless
- Fear
- Shame
- Guilt
- Rage
- Constant state of alert
- Isolation and disconnection



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Adult Signs and Symptoms

- Relieving the trauma
- Bad dreams
- Suicidal thoughts
- Flashback images
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Being easily startled
- Feeling strong guilt, depression, or worry
(National Institute of Mental Health)



Symptoms of Trauma With Children and Adolescents

- Decrease or increase appetite
- Dreams and nightmares
- Breakdown with communication
- Sleeplessness
- Severe increase in activity level
- Severe decrease in social activities
- Can affect every aspect of a child's development and functioning (Moroz, 2005)



The Biology of Trauma

- “Acute Stress is experienced in response to an immediate physical, emotional, or psychological threat.” The threat is real or imagined; it is the perception of threat that triggers the response.
(Micsak, 2011)
- Acute stress can be short lived and can be helpful. (Ex: When a deadline is due. It can help you get the task done.) The key to overcome acute stress is to work through the threat to be able to bring the body and mind back to a balanced state. (Micsak, 2011)



The Biology of Trauma

- Hormones are the chemical messengers that alert the body and mind to potential danger.
- For these chemicals to be the most effective in a time of danger, the heart and blood must pump faster to disperse the hormones quickly. (DeMarco)
- Neurosteroids are brain chemicals that are thought to play a role in how the body deals with stress. Low neurosteroid levels are associated with high posttraumatic stress symptoms. New research suggests that increasing a person's neurosteroid level decreases PTSD symptoms. (Military Times, 2011)



The Biology of Trauma

- Alexander Neumeister of Yale University School of Medicine reports findings that when treating only the element of depression in PTSD, it does not address the trauma or the substance use issue, if there is one. All areas need to be addressed.
- PTSD, depression, and substance abuse can all be seen as a physical, chemical injury to the brain that occurs when the brain is exposed to trauma.
(Military Times, 2011)



How Can I Help?

- Instead of asking “What’s wrong with you?,” We should ask, “What has happened to you?” (SAMHSA, 2011)
- **Listen** - Without judging or interrupting can be helpful; this will allow them the chance to validate and acknowledge what has happened.
- **Reassure** - At times the survivor may feel that it’s their fault. Reminded them that it is not their fault.
- **Empower** - At times the survivor can feel their lives are beyond their control. Maintaining routines can help and to offer options or possible solutions.
- **Be Patient** - The survivor needs to be patient with themselves and others. It takes time with the healing process.
- **Ask** - If they need help even with the small things.



How to Help with Children and Adolescents

- Caregiver should attempt to maintain the daily schedule to the extent possible.
- Communicate and listen. (TLC)



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