Meeting the Needs of Your Clients: Building Competencies in Mental Health and Addiction Services

Trauma Informed Practices 101

April 9, 2018
• Because this is a webinar, attendees are muted
• Please type any questions you have into the Questions Box
• We are recording this webinar and will send out the link to everyone who registered at a later date.
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Creating a Culture of Trauma-Informed Care

Responding to the effects of traumatic stress, reflecting the different treatment needs of men and women, and creating a healthy space.

Colette Anderson, LCSW, Executive Director
The Connecticut Women’s Consortium

www.womensconsortium.org
Why Trauma is a Problem

- Trauma can be caused by violence, hate crimes, sexual abuse, and other events.
- 50% of women and 60% of men encounter at least one trauma in their lives.
- High rates of trauma are often linked with an increase of substance use, mental health problems, disease, violence, abuse, and suicide.
- High rates of trauma are reported at places that provide help and services such as substance abuse and mental health.

(PTSD.gov)
Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways:

1. Directly experiencing the traumatic event(s).
2. Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it occurred to others.
3. Learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend. In cases of actual or threatened death of a family member or friend, the event(s) must have been violent or accidental.

(cont.)
4. Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s) (e.g., first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse). ¹

¹(Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM 5), American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

Photo: Public Domain Via Wikimedia Commons
The Alarm Won’t Turn Off

1. Reduced Hippocampus
Reduced ability to discriminate between past and present experiences or interpret context correctly.

2. Overactive Amygdala
High alert and perceived threats everywhere.

- The brain can’t tell what’s safe or unsafe
- Everything including normal stressors are threatening
- Automatic stress reactions take over
- Startle responses to harmless stimuli
- Frequent flashbacks
- Intrusive recollections

(Wlassof 2015, Rosenthal 2015, Russo 2012), Photo: Public Domain via Pixabay
# Triggers & Soothing

## Triggers
Reminders of the traumatic event.

### Examples
- Anniversaries
- Smells
- Touching
- Loud Noise
- Locations
- Objects
- Restraints

## Temporarily Soothes
Ways of coping with the effects of trauma.

### Examples
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Eating
- Gambling
- High risk behavior
- Isolation
- Rage/aggression
- Self-Harm
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbness</th>
<th>Sleep Problems</th>
<th>Generalizing triggers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
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<td>Fear</td>
<td>Emotional Detachment</td>
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<td>Anger</td>
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<td>Sadness</td>
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<td>Helplessness</td>
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<td>Disorientation</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Long-term health effects such as liver, autoimmune problems</td>
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<td>Denial</td>
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<td>Feeling overwhelmed</td>
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<td>Difficulty focusing</td>
<td>Flashbacks</td>
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<td>Distortion of time</td>
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<td>Memory Problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restlessness</td>
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*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014*
Becoming Trauma-Informed

- Through the nature of behavioral health services, people seeking such services often have high rates of experiencing trauma

- A **trauma-informed** agency incorporates knowledge and education about the impact of trauma into its culture, is mindful of trauma histories and effects of trauma, and does more than just offer services or therapy that treats trauma

- Is welcoming and engaging and enables healing, recovery, and empowerment

- Everyone is involved – leadership, clinicians, maintenance, receptionists, community, transportation
What are the Objectives of Trauma-Informed Treatment

Establish Safety → Prevent Re-traumatization → Provide Psychoeducation → Offer Peer Support

Normalize Symptoms of Stress → Identify & Manage Triggers → Connect Client Trauma Histories and Subsequent Consequences → Teach Balance

Build Resilience → Address Sleep Disturbances and Disorders → Build Trust → Support Empowerment

Acknowledge Grief and Bereavement → Use Culturally and Gender-Responsive Services

Adapted from A Treatment Improvement Protocol: Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services, 2014
Not Trauma-Informed

- Being disrespectful, minimizing or discounting abuse & traumatic events
- Labeling rage and other feelings as pathological or crazy
- Being insensitive to physical, sexual or emotional boundaries
- Changing schedules & disrupting relationships without notification
- No privacy during trauma discussions
- Rigid rules and policies or inconsistently enforcing rules
- Confrontational approach to counseling
- Failing to provide accurate security
- Accepting agency dysfunction¹
- Forcing/requiring details accounts of traumatic memories²

✔ Minimize Re-traumatization

¹A Treatment Improvement Protocol: Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services, 2014
²Herman, 1992, 1997, Rothschild, 2010
A Culture Shift: The Core Values of a Trauma-Informed System of Care

Safety

Ensuring physical and emotional safety

Trustworthiness

Making tasks clear and maintaining appropriate boundaries

Choice

Prioritizing choice and control

Collaboration

Maximizing collaboration and sharing of power

Empowerment

Prioritizing empowerment and skill-building

Adapted from Roger Fallot, PhD and Maxine Harris, PhD, Community Connections, Inc.
Girls, Trauma & Juvenile Justice

- Girls rate of sexual abuse is 4x times higher than boys’ in juvenile justice and girls’ rate of complex trauma is nearly 2x as high\(^1\)

- Sexual abuse is one of the primary predictors of girls’ entry into the juvenile justice system. The most common crimes for which girls are arrested, including running away, substance abuse and truancy, are the most common signs of abuse\(^2\)

- Human trafficking victims arrested for prostitution, sometimes despite being beneath the legal age of consent\(^3\)

Recommend:
Report: The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls’ Story by Center for Poverty and Inequality at Georgetown University Law Center [www.rights4girls.org](http://www.rights4girls.org)

Speaker: Jeannette Pai-Espinoza [www.nationalcrittenton.org](http://www.nationalcrittenton.org)

\(^1\)Michael T. Baglivio et al., 2014, \(^2\)Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2014 \(^3\)Sherman, 2012
Homelessness & Gender

Men

• 85% of all homeless are men.¹
• Approximately 1/3 of homeless men are veterans².
• Homeless men report alcohol problems at more than 2x rate - abstinence on admission policies therefore disproportionately effect men².
• Stereotype “Men choose to be homeless”²

Women

• The typical homeless family is headed by a single mother, usually in her late twenties. She has with her 2 or 3 young children, typically preschoolers.³
• More than 90% of sheltered and low-income mothers have experienced physical and sexual assault.³
• 41% of homeless men receive income from employment - compared to 27% of homeless women.²

Homelessness & Trauma

• Homelessness can lead to further trauma as it exposes an individual to dangerous situations while simultaneously experiencing a loss of support and safety.

• Homelessness can be caused by trauma including: neglect, psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, community violence, and combat

• Many people experiencing homelessness also suffer from depression, substance abuse and severe mental illness.

¹Hopper, Bassuk, Olivet, 2009
Trauma-Informed Lens to Homelessness Outreach

- Strive to Not Retraumatize
  - Let stories unfold on their own as trust builds; it takes lots of practice and skills to establish trust, recognize the trauma recovery stages, and listening skills.
  - How to deal with a trauma reaction? Training on evidence-based practices such as TIC, MI, Critical Time intervention, local trauma groups, materials from resources slide.
- Welcoming Tour & Warm Hand Off (Visit in housing the first few weeks)
- Survival packs that included gendered items
- Eye contact, inform about the process, who, what, why, when, and limits
- Services – Are you offering more than one option?
- Reexamine Narrowing Criteria for Programs
- Examine your own safety, skills, limits, triggers, compassion fatigue, & burnout
- Collaborate with non-traditional partners
Housing & Practice

Remember housing is about “establishing safety” the first priority in treating trauma.

Homelessness can be disempowering and unpredictable; housing and homelessness services are an opportunity to rebuild control. Prioritize choice for clients.

**Recommended Gender – Responsive Practices:**

- Look at your policies with regards to abstinence? Are they disproportionally effecting men?
- Focus on childcare, employment & income as potential barriers for women
Applying Trauma-Informed Principles

**Safety**
- Lighting, door locks, windows
- Safety for children
- Cleanliness

**Trustworthiness**
- Bathroom privacy
- Clearly displayed policies
- Private rooms for staff discussions

**Empowerment**
- Artwork
- Easy to read signs
- Make a welcoming space through paint and decor

**Collaboration**
- Feedback/Suggestion boxes
- Input from clients and staff
- Show your trauma-informed spaces to the community

**Choice**
- Multifunctional furniture
- Interactive items like books, TV, and toys available in waiting area
- Spaces for children
Practical Resources for Outreach Workers

- **Trauma-Informed Organizational Toolkit for homeless service, 2009**
  - This toolkit will provide programs with a roadmap for becoming trauma-informed, it offers concrete guidelines for how to modify their practices and policies to ensure they are responding to the needs of families who have experienced traumatic stress.

  - Are you burnt out, stressed, dealing with vicarious trauma? This workbook helps you identify the signs and address self-care.

- **Identifying and Responding to Domestic Violence Among Poor and Homeless Women By Sharon M. Melnick, PhD Ellen L. Bassuk, MD, 2000**
  - Although this guide was designed for working with women, it includes multiple tables and real, practical examples of language and common trauma victim experiences.

- **A Long Journey Home: A Guide For Creating Trauma-Informed Services for Mothers and Children Experiencing Homelessness**
  - Another guide designed for mothers and children but with valuable recommendations on language and response to trauma.

- **Childproofing Checklist for Housing and Homeless Service Providers | SchoolHouse Connection**
  - This tool has been designed to ensure that no matter where children and their families are living, the conditions under which they are living are safe.
“Our prime purpose in this life is to help others and if you can’t help them at least don’t hurt them.”

-Dalai Lama
Type in questions below

For additional questions, contact training@cceh.org