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Understanding Trauma and Its Impact

Creating a Trauma-Informed Community

What comes to mind, when you think of trauma?

Trauma Definition

- An event involving actual or threatened death, serious injury, or threat to physical integrity.
- The individual's response includes fear, horror, or helplessness and their ability to cope is dramatically undermined.

Continuum of Trauma

- A single event that lasts for a limited time
- The experience of multiple traumatic events, often over a long period of time
- Impact of trauma not determined by number of events or frequency of experiences

Complex Trauma

- Exposure to multiple traumatic events, frequently within a caregiving system that is supposed to be the source of safety and stability.
- The impact of traumatic events is determined by both the objective nature of the event and the person's subjective response to it.

Grounding Principles

A trauma-sensitive community benefits all members of that community- those whose trauma history is known, those whose trauma will never be clearly identified, and those who maybe impacted by their traumatized peers, families or neighborhoods.

Real Statistics-National

- Research tells us that 70% of all Americans within their lifetime will experience some type of major traumatic event. Out of that group, about 20% will develop symptoms of PTSD.

Real Statistics-National

- In addition, 10% of all women develop Posttraumatic Stress Disorder during their lifetime. It may be surprising to learn that women are two times as likely as men to suffer from PTSD. Women can be more susceptible to violence, including domestic violence, rape, and beatings.

Real Statistics-National

- Children who experience abuse, neglect, or molestation are also highly susceptible to PTSD sometime in their lifetime.
- There is a demonstrated association of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) with health and social problems as an adult.

Real Statistics-Local

2015 Annual Offense Counts and Calls for Service for Burlington

Charged Offenses

- 2-Homicide
- 20-Rape
- 38-Robbery
- 56-Felony Assault
- 46-Domestic Assault-Felony
- 96-Domestic Assault-Misdemeanor
- 300-Disorderly Conduct

Calls for Service

- 552-Domestic Disturbance
- 44-Sexual Offense
- 1219-Intoxication
- 69-Overdose
- 1100-Noise
- 536-Mental Health Issue

Real Statistics- National Children 2012

Child Maltreatment

- Estimated 3.4 million CPS referrals for of children being abused or neglected
 - Estimated 686,000 children (9.2 per 1000) were victims of maltreatment
 - Of the child victims
 - 78% neglect
 - 18% physical abuse
 - 9% sexual abuse
 - 11% other types

Real Statistics- National Children 2012

Characteristics of Victims

- 27% of victims younger than age 3
- 20% of victims between ages 3-5
- Children under 1 year old had highest rate of victimization (21.9 per 1,000 children)
- 8.7 per 1,000 children boys
- 9.5 per 1,000 children girls

Real Statistics- Vermont Children

Child Maltreatment

- 19,288 calls to Child Protection Line (up 10.5% over last year)
- 5,846 calls accepted for intervention (30%)
- 2,908 child abuse investigations
- 829 cases opened for on-going services based on assessed risk as high or very high
- 652 reports substantiated

Real Statistics- Vermont Children

Based on Substantiated Reports

- 992 unique child victims
- 906 substantiated incidents of abuse
 - 145 physical abuse (16%)
 - 365 sexual abuse (40%)
 - 128 risk of sexual abuse (14%)
 - 242 risk of harm (27%)
 - 26 emotional abuse/neglect (2%)

Beyond Statistics

1 in 4 US Children experience some form of child maltreatment in their lifetime

Strong correlation between child maltreatment and factors such as:

substance abuse

domestic violence

mental health

financial insecurity

The presence of any one of these factors increases the risk of child abuse and neglect.

The presence of multiple risk factors has an exponential impact on a child's likelihood of experiencing abuse and neglect.

FACTS

- Everyone who experiences a life-threatening event **will not** develop PTSD
- Developing PTSD after a traumatic event has nothing to do with strength of character or perceived weakness.

FACTS

- PTSD is treatable and symptoms of traumatic experiences can go away
- There is no specific amount of time that, “I should be over my trauma”.
- Many people who experience trauma resolve it with the support and care of family and friends.

Post Traumatic Growth

- Viewing trauma as an injury shifts the perspective/belief away from “sickness” to “impact” -from “what is wrong with you” to “what has happened to you”.
- The research suggests that between 30-70% of individuals who experienced trauma also report positive change and growth coming out of the traumatic experience (Joseph and Butler, 2010)

Post Traumatic Growth

- What is essential to keep in mind is that post traumatic growth is not a direct result of trauma but rather related to how the individual struggles as a result of the trauma (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 2004)

Normative Stress Response

- Fight
- Flight
- Freeze
- Flock

Arousal Continuum

- **Body is hard wired physiologically and emotionally to respond to extreme danger readying us for fight, flight, freeze or flock**
- **Chronic hyperarousal is a distressing, physically uncomfortable state, and interferes with other functioning**
- **Individual can look constantly on edge, startles easily, cannot relax, overreacts to minor provocations, disrupted sleep**

Effects of Trauma Exposure

- Attachment
- Biology
- Emotion
- Dissociation
- Behavior
- Cognition
- Spirit
- Self-Concept

Trauma responses impacting healthy functioning

- Befriend/Indiscriminate attachment
- Mood Dysregulation
- Memory impairment/intrusive memory
- Flashbacks
- Lack of future-orientation
- Poor self-concept
- Unavailable to learn
- Hyperarousal/Hypervigilance
- Biologically Hypersensitive
- Detachment/emotional numbness
- Shame/Guilt
- The world is not safe belief system.

Protective Factors for Children

- Presence of stable adult figure
- Close positive bond with at least one caring adult
- Affection from family members
- A good support network beyond family
- Parental Efficacy
- High expectations and clear communications
- Having routines and rituals within the family
- Sense of humor
- Self-monitoring skills and self-control

Traumatic Resilience

- Hopefulness
- High self-esteem and confidence
- A sense of purpose and meaning
- Self-efficacy
- An ability to deal with change
- A good range of social problem-solving skills
- Aspiration for the future
- Ability to identify choices and options
- Previous experience of success and achievement

Helpful Trauma Informed Responses

- **Safety** — is everything being done to ensure physical and emotional safety (welcoming, respectful, sufficient personal space, consistency)
- **Trustworthiness** — are expectations and interactions for everyone clear and consistent (boundaries, respect, non-judgmental)
- **Choice** — is a condition being created so individuals experience a feeling of choice and control (providing options, choices, other supports)
- **Collaboration** — is the approach of sharing and collaboration in all interactions (learning from each other, seeking input, listening first)
- **Empowerment** — is there a fostering of the individual's strengths, experiences, and uniqueness for building upon (recovery, hope, skill building)

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- Healing Trauma: Attachment, Mind, Body, and Brain by Daniel Siegel & Marion Solomon (2003)
- In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts by Gabor Mate (2008)
- Trauma and the Body : A sensory Approach to Psychotherapy by Pat Ogden, Kekuni Minton and Claire Pain (2006)
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- Treating Complex Traumatic Stress Disorders by Judith Herman, Bessel van der Kolk, Christine Courtois, and Julian Ford (2009)

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Online Resources

- Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network .The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network is an American anti-sexual assault organization, the largest in the United States. www.rainn.org
- International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. Organization for the study of psychological trauma that promotes advancement and exchange of knowledge about traumatic stress. www.istss.org
- Sidran Institute. PTSD and Dissociation resources for survivors, family and clinicians www.sidran.org
- Veterans Administration National Center for PTSD-
<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/>

Closing Activity

- Please pair up with a neighbor
- Discuss ways you or your family could contribute to a trauma-informed community
- Think about home, work, school, or general community

Q & A

The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love and to be greater than our suffering.

-Ben Okri

