Trauma-Informed Care in Mental Health

Scott A Webb, MSE, LCSW

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Learning Objectives

- Be able to define and identify the types of trauma
- Understand the significance of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study as it relates to mental illness
- Articulate what trauma-informed care is, and be able to identify the five pillars of trauma-informed culture change for an organization

ScienceDaily

What Do Asthma, Heart Disease And Cancer Have In Common? Maybe Childhood Trauma
This is a Difficult Topic

Be gentle on yourself
- Breathe
- Self empathy
- Positive self-talk
- Count to ten
- Use fidgets
- Feel feet on floor
- Doodle
- Get up and walk around

How would you define trauma based on your personal or professional experience?

What is trauma?
- Literally a wound
- Traumatic events are external, but quickly become incorporated into the mind (Terr, 1990)
- Disease of disconnection (Judith Herman)
- Creates lasting adverse effects on the individual’s physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being
- Is subjective
- Lives in the body
- Interferes with relationships
- More common than you think
Why Are So Many Talking About Trauma?

- People with lived experience are telling their stories
- Prevalence
- Science
- Services
- Hope

Father Gregory Boyle

ACUTE
- Adult onset
- Single event
- Adequate child development

COMPLEX
- Early onset
- Multiple events over time
- Highly invasive
- Interpersonal
- Stigmatizing (shame)

HISTORICAL
- Collective and cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations
- Creates survivor guilt, depression, low self-esteem, numbing out, anger

SANCTUARY
- Overt and covert Traumatic events that occur in settings that are socially sanctioned as safe
- Medical, mental health, and substance abuse services
- Foster care
- Schools
- Places of worship

VICARIOUS
- The experience of learning about another person’s trauma and experiencing trauma-related distress as a result of this exposure.
Estimated that at least half of all adults in the U.S. have experienced one incident that was caused by a major traumatizing event (Briere and Scott, 2006).

Ninety percent of behavioral health consumers have been exposed to a traumatic event, most have multiple exposures (Mueser, 1998).

Prevalence

Children with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities were:
- 2.9 times as likely to have been emotionally abused
- 6.4 times as likely to have been sexually abused
- 3.4 times as likely to have been physically abused
- 5.3 times as likely to have been neglected

Than children without disabilities

(Quinn, et al., 2005)
Prevalence

Eight out of ten females (and six out of ten males) were sexually abused more than once with DD (Hinsberger, 1991)

Seventy-one percent of people with disabilities reported being abused — sexually, physically, or financially; ninety percent reported it was repeated (2013 Spectrum Institute Report)

Those with Developmental Disabilities, Signs of Abuse

- New disruptive behaviors (aggressive, avoidant)
- Sleep disturbances
- Physical complaints
- Attention difficulties
- Attempts to self-soothe
- Excessive fears, phobias, or worries
- Decline in skill development
- Repetition of statements about an event
- Bed wetting or bowel accidents
- Lack of energy or and/or loss of joy

Trauma and the Elderly

Many factors make it more or less difficult for elders before, during, and after traumatic events

- Impaired cognition, mobility, or senses
- Decreased or unavailable social network
- Limited finances
- Mental or medical problems
- History of exposure to extreme traumatic stressor
- Substance use disorder
- Language or cultural barriers
Trauma and the Elderly

Older adults often face new traumas or stressors
- Transitions
- Loss
- Emotional adjustments
- Potential elder abuse
- Changes in health status
- Retirement

ACE Study

- Designed to examine the health and social effects of ACEs throughout the lifespan among 17,421 members of the Kaiser Health Plan in San Diego County
- What do we mean by adverse childhood experiences?
  - Childhood abuse and neglect
  - Growing up with domestic violence, substance use disorder, or mental illness in the home, parental discord, crime

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

ACEs:
- Are common
- Can have long-term, damaging consequences
- Can happen in any family
- Have a cumulative effect—the higher the score, the higher the likelihood of health risk behaviors and poor health outcomes
- May be a significant driver of health care spending
57% of Wisconsin Residents have at least 1 ACE

Findings from the 2011-2015 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey

Household Dysfunction

26% of Wisconsin residents grew up with someone who struggled with substance abuse

- Substance abuse: 26%
- Parent separate/divorce: 23%
- Violence between adults: 16%
- Mental illness: 16%
- Incarceration: 7%

2011-2015 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey

ACE Distribution by Race

Blacks and Native Americans have higher rates of ACEs than Whites, Hispanics/Latinos, and Asians

- 0 ACEs
- Any ACE

- Black: 26% vs. 23%
- Native American: 22% vs. 17%
- Hispanic/Latino: 33% vs. 17%
- White: 41% vs. 15%
- Asian: 56% vs. 17%

2011-2015 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey
Abuse

28% of Wisconsin residents grew up experiencing emotional abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>9%</td>
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2011-2015 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey

Trauma and Disrupted Neurodevelopment

Person experiences trauma

Brain and body become overwhelmed; nervous system is unable to return to equilibrium

Trauma goes untreated; person stays in "stress response" mode

Cues continue to trigger trauma (e.g. loud noises, smells, textures)

Person reacts to trauma cues from a state of fear

S. Covington, Ph.D., 2016
Stress Response and the Brain

- If there is danger, the thinking brain goes off line allowing the doing brain to act.
- Traumatized children may experience changes in brain structures, neuro-chemistry, and genetic expression.
### Reminders or “Triggers”
- Lack of control
- Threats or feeling threatened
- Isolation
- Authority figures
- Being told what to do
- Lack of privacy
- Separation or loss
- Transitions or disruptions in routine
- Being touched or watched
- Loud noises
- Intrusiveness
- Being locked in a room
- Being ignored
- Condescending looks

*A trigger can be a person, (or approach), place, thing, event, date, smell, or texture*

### The Trauma World View
- No place is safe
- My own actions, thoughts, and feelings are unsafe
- Other people are unsafe and can’t be trusted
- I have no worth and no abilities
- I expect crisis, danger and loss

### SHIFT YOUR PERSPECTIVE
*Trauma-Informed Care*
Do No Harm

“We need to presume the clients we serve have a history of traumatic stress and exercise “universal precautions” by creating systems of care that are trauma-informed.” (Hodas, 2005)

The Transformational Question

“’What’s wrong with you?’

“What happened to you?”

“What’s right with you?”

Wisconsin’s TIC guiding principles

“'The oldest medicine in the world is love and compassion'

VADM Vivek Murthy, M.D.
Former United States Surgeon General
Five Primary TIC Principles

- Safety
- Trustworthiness
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment

(Tait and Harris, 2006)

Comparison

**Traditional**
Key Question: “What’s wrong with you?”
- Elder isn’t fitting well here, has limited social skills, not making friends, isolating
- Not remembering anything

**Trauma-Informed**
Key Question: “What happened to you?”
- Experienced a significant loss or transition recently?
- Is there a medical condition? Medication interaction? Trauma history?

Re-traumatization
- A situation, attitude, interaction, or environment replicates the events or dynamics of the original trauma (a trigger)
- Can be obvious, or not
- Usually unintentional
- Always hurtful
What Does TIC Look Like?

- Avoid forcing eye contact
- Be aware of your proximity
- Avoid asking too many questions
- Pace client meetings by offering breaks (water, stretch, etc.)
- Draw upon past success
- Ask before touching or hugging
- Provide choice when possible
- Ask about the client’s goals and priorities

What TIC Looks Like

- During emotional times ask “How can I support you right now?”
- When the trauma story overwhelms or leaves you speechless, be willing to sit in supportive silence
- Provide clear information about when, where, and by whom services will be provided
- Be prepared to repeat information many times; repetition is commonly needed when consumers are working with an overwhelmed nervous system

Responding to People in Need

- Listen (Active listening)
- Validate (“That must be very hard”; “I’m sorry you were hurt in that way”)
- Normalize
- Assist (Grounding techniques, making referral)
- Avoid re-traumatization
Organizational Change

- Leader buy-in and support throughout process
- TIC Guide Team (six to ten members)
- Consumer involvement
- Creating a safety plan
- Trauma-sensitive environment (physical and emotional)
- Work towards fidelity

Final Thought

“Every life is a piece of art, put together with all means available”

-Pierre Janet
Trauma-Specific Models and Interventions

- Sanctuary Model [http://www.sanctuaryweb.com/](http://www.sanctuaryweb.com/)
- Trauma, Addiction, Mental Health and Recovery (TAMAR) [http://nicic.gov/wolp/program/246-trauma-addictions-mental-health-and-recovery-tamar](http://nicic.gov/wolp/program/246-trauma-addictions-mental-health-and-recovery-tamar)

General Trauma Resources

- ACEs Connection [https://www.acesconnection.com/](https://www.acesconnection.com/)
- Fostering Futures Wisconsin [http://www.fosteringfutureswisconsin.org/](http://www.fosteringfutureswisconsin.org/)
- Wisconsin ACE Study [http://wichildrentrustfund.org/files/WisconsinACEs.pdf](http://wichildrentrustfund.org/files/WisconsinACEs.pdf)
- National Center for Trauma-Informed Care [http://beta.samhsa.gov/nctic](http://beta.samhsa.gov/nctic)

General Trauma Resources

- Aceresponse (ACEs and Developmental Disabilities) [http://www.aceresponse.org/](http://www.aceresponse.org/)
Other Tools You Can Use

- Alphabetical list of trauma and PTSD measures: [http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/all_measures.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/all_measures.asp)

Books

Thank You!

Scott A. Webb, MSE, LCSW
Trauma Informed Care Coordinator
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Division of Care and Treatment Services
Bureau of Prevention Treatment and Recovery
608-296-3610
scott.webb@dhs.wisconsin.gov

Join the TIC Email List
Visit dhs.wisconsin.gov/tic to sign up to receive email notices for trauma-related research, resources, training opportunities, etc.