The Effects of Trauma on Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

And How to Facilitate Recovery

Presented by Karyn Harvey, Ph.D.
kharvey@thearcbaltimore.org
Materials at: Pid.thenadd.org
Books at Amazon.com

Sources of Trauma for Individuals with IDD
- Report on Abuse of People with Disabilities - 2013 Spectrum Institute
- Over 70% of people with Disabilities report being victims of abuse, 90% of them said it was on multiple occasions
- Only 37% reported the abuse to the authorities
- Sexual Abuse - Hingsberger - 8 out of 10 females sexually abused more than once with developmental disabilities
- Males - 6 out of 10
- Social Trauma - Bullying, Name-calling, Verbal Abuse
- Psychology of Exclusion - Stimulation of Anterior Cingular Cortex
- Trauma of Institutionalization, Foster-care Placements
- Trauma of Physical Abuse and Neglect
http://disability-abuse.com/
Trauma of Attachment Disorders:

- Insecure Attachments
- Avoidant Attachments
- Patterns for life-long social interactions are set

Bucharest Early Intervention Orphan Study

- 138 children between 6 and 31 months who were in an orphanage in Bucharest were studied
- 68 kept in institution
- 68 placed in a new foster care system - full time paid parenting
- Results: After 54 months (4 1/2 years):
- Compared to 138 children raised in birth families

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Foster Care</th>
<th>Biological</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Axis 1 Disorders</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Disorders</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavioral Disorders</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>110%</td>
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<td>Average IQ Score</td>
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MIRROR NEURONS: Interaction during infancy is needed for brain wiring

The Effects of Cocaine and/or Alcohol Exposure During Gestation

- Crack Cocaine
- Meth-Amphetamines
- Alcohol
- Combinations

Psychological Trauma – past is present

How did the brain react?

- Neocortex: The rational brain; intellectual tasks
- Limbic: The intermediate brain; emotions
- Reptilian: The primitive brain; self-preservation, aggression

The Triune Brain
Trauma Responses Due to “Buttons Pushed”

- Trigger Response - Something happens in the present that reminds the person of the negative past - person goes into fight, flight or freeze mode:
  - Thinking he or she is in Danger!

- What To Do When Someone is Triggered
  - Symptoms of Trigger (Activation of Sympathetic nervous system)
    - Fight
    - Flight
    - Freeze
    - What does this looks like for individuals with ID?
  - Cool Down System (Activation of Parasympathetic nervous system)
    - Calming
    - Breathing
    - Getting away from trigger
    - Being Safe

- Amygdala
- Hippocampus
Chemistry When Sympathetic Nervous System Is Triggered

- Cortisol goes from Amygdala to Frontal lobe
- Adrenaline is released and floods the system
- Regions of Brain do not communicate and integrate

4 Areas of symptoms of PTSD

1. Re-experiencing (interfering with present to different degrees)
   - Intrusive Memories
   - Nightmares
   - Flashbacks: Person can disconnect from reality and be convinced he or she is being attacked, hurt or threatened due to a memory that becomes present

2. Avoidance
   - Blunted emotions
   - Shut down responses
   - Person can become obsessive about details concerning self and safety
   - Disconnection and withdrawal

Symptoms of PTSD Continued

3. Negative Alterations in Cognition and Mood
   - Persistent negative-trauma related emotions (e.g., fear, horror, anger, guilt and shame)
   - Constricted emotion - inability to express positive emotion
   - Alienation and withdrawal from others

4. Arousal
   - Easy to startle
   - Agitated - can lead to property destruction
   - Periodically Combative
   - Impulsive
   - Also associated with reckless or self-destructive behavior
"If you try to treat someone's illness without knowing its cause, you will only make the person sicker than before." — Nichiren Daishonin

EMDR STUDY

- 8 INDIVIDUALS DIAGNOSED WITH PTSD
- EMDR FOR 1 YEAR
- ALL INDIVIDUALS NO LONGER DIAGNOSED WITH PTSD — SYMPTOMS GONE!

Behavioral Results 2012 - 2013:
- Individual 1 - false accusations - from 6 to 0
- Individual 2 - excessive crying - 58 to 13
- Individual 3 - aggression - 16 to 0

The Behavioral Pyramid

Behavioral Issues:
- Emotions Expressed
- Often Rooted in Trauma

When we only address the behavior, we miss the true cause and root of difficulties.
Ingredients Necessary for Post Traumatic Recovery

The Power of Positive Regard

- Mice and Bob Rosenthal
- Signs were put up for experimenters “Smart Rats” “Dumb Rats” - All rats were actually the same
- Experimenters had rats run mazes -
- Big difference between the performances - Smart rats ran mazes twice as fast!!

Carol Dwek, Ph.d.

“How you see someone determines how they are able to see themselves!”

Teachers who thought they had gifted children got a significantly better performance from classes they were told were “average”. Even though they were the same!
Who Am I?

WHO AM I?

Negative Identity
- NOT the person who gets the job
- NOT the person who gets married
- NOT the person who drives
- NOT the person who plays on a high school sport team
- NOT the person who is popular or liked
- Not the cool one

How am I treated?
- Ignored
- Ridiculed
- Forgotten about
- Left Out
- Workbooks!!

What matters most is how YOU see yourself!
From Recovery to Happiness
Seligman – “Flourish!”

Five levels of Happiness:
1. Pleasure
2. Engagement
3. Positive Relationships
4. Achievement
5. Meaning

HAPPY PEOPLE DON’T PUT HOLES IN THE WALLS!

Here & Now
REFERENCES


