Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Trauma-Informed Care
The Many Faces of Trauma

Scott Webb, LCSW
Trauma-Informed Care Coordinator

Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Welcome

- Think about going into an unfamiliar environment be it a meeting, social event, etc.
- What helps you feel welcome and safe?
TRAUMA DEFINED

Trauma-Informed Care: The Many Faces of Trauma
Trauma Defined

- It refers to extreme stress. (threat to life, bodily integrity, or sanity)
- It is subjective.
- It often results in feelings of vulnerability, helplessness and fear.
- It often interferes with relationships.
- It affects the fundamental beliefs about themselves and others.
Trauma Defined

- Trauma causes one to question their place in the world.
- Trauma disrupts the nervous system.
Why trauma? Why now?

- Consumer activism
- Prevalence
- Science
- Effective services
- Hope
Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

“…the peace of mind you deserve in the present is held hostage by the terror of your past.” Lily Burana (2009, p. 227)
Trauma Touches All of Us

- Trauma is universal.
- Trauma happens regardless of:
  - Age.
  - Culture.
  - Gender.
  - Class.
- Trauma is a life-shaping event.
Types of Trauma

- Acute
- Complex
- Historical
- Sanctuary
- Vicarious
Acute and Complex Trauma

**Acute Trauma**
- Adult onset
- Single incident
- Adequate child development
- No co-morbid psychological disorders

**Complex Trauma**
- Early onset
- Multiple incidents
- Extended over time
- Highly invasive
- Interpersonal
- Highly stigmatizing
- Vulnerable
Complex Trauma

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
(Re-experiencing, avoidance, hyper-arousal)

Dysregulation:

- **Emotional:** Difficulty managing feelings; low frustration tolerance; shame; chronic emptiness

- **Cognitive:** Catastrophizing; concrete thinking; memory impairments
Complex Trauma

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
(Re-experiencing, avoidance, hyper-arousal)

Dysregulation:

- **Interpersonal**: Difficulty assessing social cues; difficulty seeking attention in appropriate ways; challenges in seeing another’s point of view; difficulty in maintaining relationships

- **Behavioral**: Impulsive; suicidal; self-injurious, chemical use/dependency; trauma re-enactment
Complex Trauma

“Our labels don’t describe the complex interrelated, physical, psychological, social, and moral impacts of trauma … and they rarely help us know what to do to help”

Sandra Bloom
Historical Trauma

- Collective and cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, emanating from massive group trauma
- Generates survivor guilt, depression, low self-esteem, psychic numbing, anger, and other physical symptoms
- Creates the community’s “soul mood”

(Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart)
Sanctuary Trauma

The overt and covert traumatic events that occur in settings that are socially sanctioned as safe.

- Medical, mental health, and substance use disorder services
- Corrections
- Foster care
- Home
- School or boarding schools
- Places of worship
Vicarious Trauma

The experience of learning about another person’s trauma and experiencing trauma-related distress as a result of this exposure.
Psychological Trauma

- **Violence (physical, verbal, witnessing)**
  - Home
  - Personal relationships
  - Workplace
  - School
- **Maltreatment or abuse**
  - Emotional or Spiritual
  - Verbal or physical
  - Sexual
Psychological Trauma

- Exploitation
  - Sexual
  - Financial
  - Psychological

- Abrupt change in health, employment, living situation over which people have no control
“Being traumatized means continuing to organize your life as if the trauma were still going on—unchanged.”

Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.
Trauma Facts

People who experience trauma are:
- Fifteen times more likely to attempt suicide.
- Four times more likely to become an alcoholic.
- Four times more likely to develop a sexually transmitted disease.
- Four times more likely to inject drugs.

SAMHSA 2012
Prevalence of Trauma

- **Fifty-six percent** of the general population report at least one traumatic event in their life. (Kessler, 1996)

- **Ninety percent** of behavioral health consumers have been exposed to a traumatic event; most have multiple exposures. (Muesar, 1998)
Prevalence of Trauma

- **Sixty percent** of adults report experiencing abuse or other difficult family circumstances during childhood.
- **Twenty-six percent** of children in the United States will witness or experience a traumatic event before they turn four.

(National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention 2012)
Prevalence of Trauma

- Seventy-five to ninety-three percent of youth entering the juvenile justice system are estimated to have experienced some degree of traumatic victimization. (Healing Invisible Wounds, Justice Policy Institute)

- Ninety-two percent of incarcerated girls reported sexual, physical, or severe emotional abuse in childhood. (Healing Invisible Wounds, Justice Policy Institute)
Trauma and Substance Use

Adults who experience trauma may self medicate; self medication may also increase risk for further abuse and traumatic experiences.

(Review of possible order effects by Simpson & Miller, 2002)
Prevalence of Trauma and Substance Abuse

- More than 50 percent of women seeking substance use treatment report one or more lifetime traumas.
- A majority of women in substance use treatment have a history of physical and sexual abuse.
- A significant number of clients in inpatient treatment also have subclinical traumatic stress symptoms or PTSD.
Mediating and Exacerbating Factors

- **Person**
  - Age or developmental stage
  - Past experiences
  - Strengths and coping skills
  - Cultural beliefs

- **Environment**
  - Supportive responses from significant others
  - Access to safety and resources

Protecting and promoting the health and safety of the people of Wisconsin
Mediating and Exacerbating Factors

Event

- Severity and chronicity
- Interpersonal as opposed to an act of nature
- Intentional or accidental
Contact Information

Scott Webb, LCSW
Trauma-Informed Care Coordinator
Division of Care and Treatment Services
608-266-3610
scott.webb@dhs.wisconsin.gov
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/tic/index.htm