TRIUMA-INFORMED CARE IN A TIME OF COVID-19: 
A PRIMER FOR FAMILIES

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A Shattered World
“One size does not fit all”
Individual Responses are Multifaceted

- Pre-pandemic circumstances and resources
  - Prior exposure to adversity
  - Physical and mental health vulnerabilities
  - Economic and social supports

- Exposures encountered since the pandemic:
  - Illness of a family member
  - Loss of job or health insurance
  - Job status – essential health care workers
  - Time immersed in social media, news, over-exposure to information
  - Community-level stressors – e.g., “Hot spots”
Trauma-Informed Care

- SAMHSA’s Trauma-Informed Approach:
  - Behavioral Health is essential to health
  - Prevention works
  - Treatment is effective
Trauma Informed Care Elements

Understanding the **prevalence** of trauma
Recognizing how trauma **impacts** individuals
Putting this knowledge into **practice**
to **actively resist re-traumatization**
Prevalence of Trauma: Approach

- Underlying question = “What happened to you?”
- Symptoms = Adaptations to traumatic events
- Healing happens = In relationships
Prevalence of Trauma: Approach

Video: Power of Empathy  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw
What is Trauma?

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.
### Potential Traumatic Events

#### Abuse
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Physical
- Domestic violence
- Witnessing violence
- Bullying
- Cyberbullying
- Institutional

#### Loss
- Death
- Abandonment
- Neglect
- Separation
- Natural disaster
- Accidents
- Terrorism
- War

#### Chronic Stressors
- Poverty
- Racism
- Invasive medical procedure
- Community trauma
- Historical trauma
- Family member with substance use disorder
Exposure to trauma is ubiquitous: seven out of ten respondents worldwide and nine out of ten adults in the USA report experiencing one or more lifetime traumas.
Impact of Trauma on the Brain

- The brain has a bottom-up organization
- Experiences build brain architecture
- Fear activates the amygdala and shuts down the frontal lobes of the cortex.
- Toxic stress derails healthy development, and interferes with normal functioning

Perry, 2006
Impact of Trauma: Adverse Childhood Experiences

Mechanism by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

CDC
Impact of Trauma

The effect of trauma on an individual can be conceptualized as a normal response to an abnormal situation.
Impact of Trauma: Problems OR Adaptations?

**Fight**
- “Non-compliant, combative” OR
- Struggling to regain or hold onto personal power

**Flight**
- “Treatment resistant, uncooperative” OR
- Disengaging, withdrawing

**Freeze**
- “Passive, unmotivated” OR
- Giving in to those in power
Impact of Trauma: Signs of Trauma Responses

Flashbacks or frequent nightmares
Sensitivity to noise or to being touched
Always expecting something bad to happen
Not remembering periods of one’s life
Feeling emotionally numb
Lack of concentration
Irritability
Excessive watchfulness, anxiety, anger, shame or sadness
Six Core Principles of Trauma Informed Care
Principles of Trauma Informed Care

Understanding

Safety

Trustworthiness and Transparency

Choice

Collaboration and Mutuality

Empowerment

SAMHSA
Principles of Trauma Informed Care: Understanding

Through knowledge and understanding of trauma and stress we can act compassionately and take well-informed steps towards wellness. LTC communities actively move past cultural stereotypes and biases, offer gender-responsive services, leverage the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and recognize and address historical trauma.
Principles of Trauma Informed Care: Safety

Staff and the people served feel physically and psychologically safe.
Principles of Trauma Informed Care: Safety

For Clients
- Safety means maximizing control over their own lives

For Providers
- Safety means maximizing control over the service environment and minimizing risk
Principles of Trauma Informed Care: Trustworthiness & Transparency

Operations and decisions are conducted with transparency and the goal of building and maintaining trust among participants, family members, staff, and others, including through meaningful sharing of power, mutual decision-making, authenticity, and consistency.

Roger D. Fallot and Maxine Harris, 2006
Principles of Trauma Informed Care: Choice

Individuals’ strengths and experiences are recognized and built upon. The experience of having a voice and choice is validated and new skills developed. The organization fosters a belief in resilience. Residents are supported in developing self-advocacy skills.
Principles of Trauma Informed Care: Collaboration & Mutuality

Partnership and leveling of power differences, recognizing healing happens in relationships and meaningful sharing of power in decision making.
Principles of Trauma Informed Care: Empowerment

Communities recognize, build on and validate resident’s strengths, individually and through peer support. Peer support and mutual self-help are key vehicles for establishing safety and hope, building trust, enhancing collaboration, serving as models of recovery and healing, and maximizing a sense of empowerment.
Peer support is a flexible approach to building mutual, healing relationships among equals, based on core values and principles:

- Voluntary
- Non-judgmental
- Respectful
- Reciprocal
- Empathetic
Healing happens in relationships

- Communicate with compassion
- Understand the prevalence and impact of trauma
- Promote safety
- Share power
- Earn trust
- Embrace diversity
- Pursue the person's strengths, choice, and autonomy
- Respect human rights
- Provide holistic care
Thank you
Trauma Informed Care: Further Reading

Judith Herman (2015)  *Trauma and Recovery*

Linda Sanford (1991) *Strong at the Broken Places*


Bessel Van Der Kolk (2014). *The Body Keeps the Score*
Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services. Trauma Informed Care. alamedacountytraumainformedcare.org


Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html


Read et al, 2008

National Center for PTSD.

Trauma Informed Care: Bibliography

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, National Center for Trauma Informed Care. *SAMHSA’s Trauma Informed Approach: Key Assumptions and Principles Curriculum.*


Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Trauma Informed Care Skill Development. Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/tic/skilldev.pdf
RESOURCES
Trauma-Informed, Person-Centered Care Resources

• **NORC**
  - Trauma-informed care – [https://ltcombudsman.org/issues/trauma-informed-care](https://ltcombudsman.org/issues/trauma-informed-care)
  - Person-centered care - [https://ltcombudsman.org/issues/person-centered-care](https://ltcombudsman.org/issues/person-centered-care)

• **Consumer Voice**
  - Resident-Directed Care/Culture Change [https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/for-advocates/resident-directed-care](https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/for-advocates/resident-directed-care)
  - My Personal Directions for Quality Living - [Blank Form & Sample](https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/recipients)
    - A tool from Consumer Voice, with edits by SAGE, for individuals to share what matters to them for person-centered care.
  - Information for LTC consumers - [https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/recipients](https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/recipients)
  - Information for Family Members - [https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/family](https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/family)
Resources

National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC)
www.ltcombudsman.org
• Coronavirus Prevention in Long-Term Care Facilities: Information for Ombudsman Programs
  https://ltcombudsman.org/omb_support/COVID-19

National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (Consumer Voice)
www.theconsumervoice.org
• Coronavirus in Long-Term Care Facilities: Information for Advocates
  https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/other-issues-and-resources/covid-19
• Coronavirus in Long-Term Care Facilities: Information for Residents and Families
  https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/other-issues-and-resources/covid-19/residents-families