
SUPPORTING OUR CLIENTS WHILE TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES~ A TRAUMA SENSITIVE APPROACH

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Today's Agenda:



Instill Hope!

- Increase understanding of trauma
- Understand those who are homeless through a trauma-informed lens
- Learn critical skills to engage and support those impacted by trauma

AND

- Explore opportunities to ~~~
Care for Ourselves as we Care for Others

DATA FROM SAMHSA

(SHIFT STUDY)

- Trauma is a PREDICTOR of homelessness
- Predictors for those struggling with residential instability for 15 months:
 1. Unemployment
 2. Low levels of education
 3. Poor health
 4. Low self esteem
- Predictors of those struggling with residential instability for 30 months:
 1. Trauma
 2. Low self esteem
- 93% of adult females struggling have history of trauma (SHIFT and Worcester studies)

“TRAUMA IS AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE IN WHICH POWERFUL AND DANGEROUS EVENTS OVERWHELM A PERSON’S CAPACITY TO COPE.”

RICE & GROVES, 2005



COMMON TRAUMATIC EVENTS (WITH INDIVIDUALS STRUGGLING WITH HOMELESSNESS)

- Violence
- Physical/Sexual Abuse
- Interpersonal/ Domestic Violence
- Community Violence
- Poverty (Food/Home)
- Neglect
- Unsafe/unpredictable environment
- Removals (FC)

EXPOSURE TO TRAUMA

- ❖ Surviving Victim/Survivor
- ❖ Witness to the Event
- ❖ Related or Connected to the Victim
- ❖ **Hearing the Details**

Arousal

- Hyper vigilance
- Sleep difficulty
- Concentration/memory problems- difficulty recalling important details
- Irritable behavior/ anger
- Impulsivity and difficulty with decisions
- Cognitive struggles

Intrusive

- Recurrent recollection (thoughts, memories, etc.)
- Distress at specific locations, people, etc.
- Dissociative reactions~ present as feeling helpless
- Preoccupation & worry


Avoidant

- Avoiding specific thoughts feelings, activities or situations
- Diminished interest
- Emotional numbness inability to connect with future
- Helplessness/loss of fear

Cognition /Mood

- Inability to remember important things
- Negative belief about oneself
- Distorted cognitions about cause –blame self or others
- Negative emotional state
- Inability to experience positive emotions
- Diminished interest in activities
- Detached or estranged from others

TRUST



Trauma Impacts:

- Ability to trust others
- Sense of personal/internal regulation or safety
- Ability to manage emotions
- Ability to navigate changes in life
- Response to stressors
- Navigate relationships
- Learn

NEGATIVE LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Attending: organization and comprehension
- Memory Sequencing: does not have template for first, second third...
- Memory: works in the here and now, difficulty with recall
- Use of language: Speaks to control others, difficulty expressing thoughts and feelings, difficulty with abstract thought and literacy
- Cause and Effect: Does not see a natural cause and effect (in academics or social relationships)
- Executive functioning is compromised: internal mapping is not established, abstract reasoning not developed

(Perry (2006)

LIMITATIONS & TRUTHS



- You are one piece of the puzzle:
 - You may never know the entire picture of the family's history or even current life

TRUTH!

- You can choose to work from a place of hope!
- Relationship: Source of 'Resilience' or Stress
- Individuals that move through very difficult circumstances rarely credit a village – they credit an individual

YOUR CONTRIBUTION

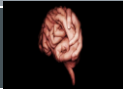
- Patient, accepting, caring (especially when the individual/family is difficult!)
- Tone of voice
- Choice of words
- Gentle eye contact
- Calm response (physical response)
- Physical touch (caution!!) or closeness with kindness
- 'Role model' healthy emotional expression
- "I" language...not "you should" language

THINK CHOICE & EMPOWERMENT



- Do not assume the individual knows what to do (even if exhibited appropriate behavior before)
- Suggest options. Choice (MOST) always exists
- Trauma=powerlessness~
Empower every chance you can!
- See and appreciate strengths; actions that are 'wanted' and healthy.
- Assure them you are willing to support them, listen to them.
- Empathize with emotions.

TEACHING & LEARNING



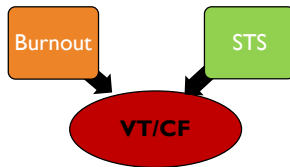
- Trauma impacts learning and retention
- Attending: organization and comprehension
- Memory: works in the here and now, difficulty with recall
- Sequencing: does not have template for first, second third...

TO DO!

- Work with individual to articulate steps in completion
- Write down order/activities
- Call on them to use their card/reminder/planner
- Refer back to success in steps

VICARIOUS TRAUMA (VT)~ COMPASSION FATIGUE (CF)

- "The response of those persons who have witnessed, been subject to explicit knowledge of or, had the responsibility to intervene in a seriously distressing or tragic event:"
- Experienced by individuals who have cumulative secondary traumatic exposure.
- Often coupled with extreme demand.



(Leroux & Byrne, p. 130, 2003)

VT/CF SYMPTOMS~

- Psychological
 - Emotional responses: sadness, anxiety, dread, fear, powerlessness, guilt/shame, "sense of failure".
- Health
 - Physical responses: sleep disturbances, GI problems, muscle tension, headaches.
- Relational Disturbances
- Challenges with trust and intimate relationships

VT/CF SYMPTOMS: CONTINUED

- Safety~ heighten state of vulnerability (self and others).
- Diminished self worth both as employee and in general.
- Sense of helplessness, lack of problem solving.
- Disassociate with Emotions~ avoid, invulnerable.
- Questioning~ of self, ability, boundaries, etc.

VT/CF SYMPTOMS: CONTINUED

- Schema:
 - Affects one's identity
 - Affect Values
 - World View
 - Belief and Trust Interpersonal Relationships

▪ Mendenhall & Tieleman

STRESS, PERCEPTION & ATTITUDE

Connect with your compass!

- Be aware of your thinking patterns/responses and attitude
- Agency~Keep expectations in check
- Clients~Marvel at the strength and resilience of your client
- Take stock in what is good...Humility

TECHNIQUES TO INTERRUPT STRESS RESPONSE ~ENGAGE PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM!

- Breathing
- Yawning
- Muscle Relaxation
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation
 - Wet Noodle
 - Drop Three
- Bringing attention in/mindfulness



BALANCE~

- Boundaries:
 - Clients
 - Work (!!!)
 - Emails/texts
 - Leave on time
 - Vacations
 - Lunch break
- Transition/Location Ritual
- Do you escape from work?



GOOD FOR THE GOOSE

- Support System~Mentor
 - Specific request for support
 - Can listen empathetically and without judgment
 - Will call you on your stuff~may naturally deny it
- Supervision
 - Agenda
 - Reflective
 - Reframing problems..
 - Continual support for personal risk factors
 - Therapy

Must Access Support!



SELF CARE~

- What do you do to restore?
- Wellness is not only reactive – it is proactive.
- Restoring equates with coping...
- It is built into to your everyday routine.
- **MAKEA PLAN!** Ask your co-workers, family and friends to hold you accountable to it!
- Think exercise, proper eating, relationships, **CONNECTIONS**, spirituality, hobbies, etc.

SELF CARE EXAMPLES: WHAT HAS HELPED YOU FEEL RENEWED, REVITALIZED IN PAST?

- **Have fun!**
- Start each day with a "Stop, Breathe and Think" App
- Sleep 7-9 hours per night
- Massage
- Meditation~ just sit in quiet
- Yoga
- Healthy Eating
- Take a Walk/ Exercise/ Move
- Social Connections
- Hobbies/Activities
- Spiritual Connections
- Plan/take vacations
- Read
- Decrease negative social media
- Help with immediate gratification

COMPASSION SATISFACTION

- ❖ Positive relationship with colleagues.
- ❖ A belief that your life has purpose.
- ❖ Confirmation that your work does make a difference.
- ❖ Personal **growth** and learning from the hardships/pain/despair of our profession.



Thank You For the Important Work You Do!



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