Becoming Trauma-Informed

Relias Webinar
Cheryl S. Sharp, MSW, ALWF
September 22, 2014
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  - Human Services Workforce Development
Overview

> Defining Trauma and It’s Impact

> Seven Domains of Trauma-Informed Care

> Implementation Process of Trauma-Informed Approaches

> Resources
Cheryl S. Sharp, MSW, ALWF is the Senior Advisor for Trauma-Informed Care for the National Council for Behavioral Healthcare. She serves as project coordinator and faculty lead for the National Council’s 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 Adoption of Trauma-Informed Practices Learning Communities as well as multiple state and regions learning communities. She holds the unique perspective of a person with lived experience both as a family member and as an ex-consumer of services as well as a provider of services. She is a Master WRAP Trainer and serves as an international trainer/consultant for the Copeland Center for Wellness & Recovery, a Mental Health First Aid Trainer®, and a trainer of Intentional Peer Support (Shery Mead). Cheryl has worked with hundreds of organizations to support their work in trauma-informed practices.
We begin to ask: “What happened to you?” rather than “What is wrong with you?”

We have to ask: “What’s strong in you” rather than “What’s wrong?”
Understanding Trauma is Imperative

- Trauma is pervasive
- Trauma’s impact is broad and diverse
- Trauma’s impact is deep and life-shaping
- Trauma, especially interpersonal violence, is often self-perpetuating
- Trauma is insidious and differentially affects the more vulnerable
- Trauma affects how people approach services
- The service system has often been re-traumatizing
  
  *Healing is possible*
What is Trauma?

Definition (SAMHSA Experts 2012) includes three key elements:

*Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as overwhelming or life-changing and that has profound effects on the individual’s psychological development or well-being, often involving a physiological, social, and/or spiritual impact.*
What Does Trauma Do?

> Trauma shapes a child’s basic beliefs about identity, worldview, and spirituality
> Symptoms are adaptations
> A person often gets stuck in a vicious loop of re-experiencing events and keeps them from being able to move forward in their lives
> Using a trauma framework, the effects of trauma can be addressed and a person can go on to lead a “normal” life
Understanding the Prevalence of Trauma

> 93% of children in detention report significant exposure to adverse events. *(Abram et al., 2004); Ford et al., 2007)*

> 50% of women in SA treatment have history of rape or incest *(Governor’s Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence, Commonwealth of MA, 2006)*

> 90% of public mental health clients have been exposed to trauma, *(Mueser et al., 2004, Mueser et al., 1998)*

> 97% of homeless women with SMI have experienced severe physical & sexual abuse – 87% experience this abuse both in childhood and adulthood *(Goodman et al., 1997)*
Therefore......

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)
A Broader View of Trauma

- Historical trauma
- Intergenerational Trauma
- Trauma and Culture
- Gender and Trauma
Trauma is often overlooked because...

> Behavioral responses resemble common delinquent behaviors and are under-identified as trauma symptoms

> Stress manifestation is different by ages, stages, expression

> Many treaters don’t connect the symptoms to trauma

...Thus leading to punishment rather than help
Resilience

• Resilience is the ability to adapt well to stress, adversity, trauma or tragedy. It means that, overall, you remain stable and maintain healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning in the face of disruption or chaos.

• **PEACE:** It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means to be in the midst of these things and still be calm in your heart. - Anonymous
Promoting Resilience

- Develop awareness and regulation of feelings
- Develop skills for letting others know how he feels
- Support capacity to learn, to relate to others, to use imagination, to see self as part of community
- Encourage relationships with peers, caregivers, parents, community
- Empower personal responsibility
Three Statements of Resilience

- I Have…

- I Am…

- I Can…

From Edith Grotberg, PhD, The International Resilience Project
What Do We Do?

- Set up calm and nurturing environments
- Meticulously observe for triggers
- Train to caring and compassion
- Meticulously interview for triggers
- Adjust the environment
- Adjust what we do
WHAT HURTS?

• Interactions that are humiliating, harsh, impersonal, disrespectful, critical, demanding, judgmental

WHAT HELPS?

• Interactions that express kindness, patience, reassurance, calm and acceptance and listening
• Frequent use of words like PLEASE and THANK YOU
### The Importance of the *Physical Environment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT HURTS?</th>
<th>WHAT HELPS?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Congested areas that are noisy</td>
<td>• Comfortable, calming, and private treatment and waiting. Furniture is clean and comfortable</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Poor signage that is confusing</td>
<td>• No wrong door philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Uncomfortable furniture</td>
<td>• Integrated restrooms</td>
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<td>• Separate bathrooms</td>
<td>• Messages conveyed throughout that are positive and hopeful</td>
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<td>• Cold non-inviting colors and paintings/posters on the wall</td>
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# The Importance of Policies and Procedures

## WHAT HURTS?
- Rules that always seem to be broken
- Policies and Procedures that focus on organizational needs rather than on client needs
- Documentation with minimal involvement of clients
- Many hoops to go through before a client’s needs are met
- Language and cultural barriers

## WHAT HELPS?
- Clear, sensible and fair rules (focus on what you CAN DO rather than what you CAN’T)
- Transparency in documentation and service planning
- Communication in the person’s language
- Continual feedback from clients about their experience in the program
<table>
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<td>• Asking questions that convey the idea that “there is something wrong with the person”</td>
<td>• Asking questions for the purpose of understanding what harmful events may contribute to current problems</td>
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<td>• Judgments and prejudices based on cultural ignorance</td>
<td>• Understanding the role of culture in trauma response</td>
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<td>• Regarding a person’s difficulties only as symptoms</td>
<td>• Recognizing that symptoms of a mental health, substance use or medical problem are often a person’s way of coping with trauma or are adaptations</td>
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TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES
“We always recognized the importance of physical safety. Our refusal to tolerate violence of any sort constituted our best defense against any breach in physical safety. But a physically safe environment, although necessary, was not sufficient. So there had to be other kinds of safety, which I have termed psychological safety, social safety, and moral safety.”

(Sandra L. Bloom, Creating Sanctuary, 2013)
Psychological Safety

“Refers to the ability to be safe within oneself, to rely on one’s ability to self-protect and keep oneself out of harm’s way.”

(Bloom, 2013)

If you have never felt safe or remembered safety, how will you know it when it is present?
“The sense of feeling safe with other people…There are so many traumatized people that there will never be enough individual therapists to treat them. We must begin to create naturally occurring, healing environments that provide some of the corrective experiences that are vital for recovery.”

(Bloom, 2013)
Moral Safety

The never-ending quest for understanding how organizations function in the healing process.

- An attempt to reduce the hypocrisy that is present, both explicitly and implicitly
- A morally safe environment struggles with the issues of honesty and integrity

(Bloom, 2013)
A program, organization or system that is trauma-informed -

**realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;

**recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;

**resists** re-traumatization, and

**responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings.
What are the Benefits of Adopting Trauma-Informed Approaches?

- Increases safety for all
- Improves the social environment
- Cares for the caregivers
- Improves the quality of services
- Reduces negative encounters and events
- Creates a community of hope, healing and recovery
- Increases success and satisfaction at work
- Promotes organizational wellness
- Improves the bottom line
What Does a Trauma-Informed Organization Include?

- Safe, calm, and secure environment with supportive care
- System wide understanding of trauma prevalence, impact and trauma-informed care
- Cultural Competence
- Consumer voice, choice and advocacy
- Recovery, consumer-driven and trauma specific services
- Healing, hopeful, honest and trusting relationships

Contact: Communications@TheNationalCouncil.org
202.684.7457
“Takes into account an understanding of trauma in all aspects of service delivery and places priority on the person’s safety, choice and control”

*Harris and Fallot*
Trauma-Informed Care and Trauma-Specific Treatment

- Trauma Informed Care/Services – organizational culture
- Trauma Specific or Focused Practices/Approaches – treatment or clinical interventions
Does not require disclosure of trauma; rather there is a recognition of the need for:

- Physical and emotional safety
- Choice and control in decisions affecting treatment
- Practices that avoid confrontational approaches
The 7 Domains of Trauma-Informed Care

- **Domain 1**: Early Screening & Comprehensive Assessment of Trauma
- **Domain 2**: Consumer Driven Care & Services
- **Domain 3**: Trauma-Informed, Educated & Responsive Workforce
- **Domain 4**: Provision of Trauma-Informed, Evidence-Based and Emerging Best Practices
- **Domain 5**: Create a Safe and Secure Environment
- **Domain 6**: Engage in Community Outreach and Partnership Building
- **Domain 7**: Ongoing Performance Improvement
Domain 1. Early Screening and Comprehensive Assessment of Trauma

Developing a respectful screening and assessment process that is routine, competently done and culturally relevant and sensitive and revisited over time
Domain 2. Consumer Driven Care and Services

Involving and engaging people who are or have been recipients of our services to play numerous roles (e.g., paid employee, volunteer, members of decision making committees, peer specialists) and meaningfully participate in planning, implementing and evaluating our improvement efforts.
Domain 3. Trauma-Informed, Educated and Responsive Workforce

Increasing the awareness, knowledge and skills of the entire workforce to deliver services that are effective, efficient, timely, respectful and person centered taking into consideration that service providers also have histories of trauma
Domain 4. Provision of Trauma-Informed, Evidence Based and Emerging Best Practices

Increase the awareness, knowledge and skills of the clinical workforce in delivering research informed treatment services designed to address the cognitive, emotional, behavioral, substance use and physical problems associated with trauma.
Domain 5. Create a Safe and Secure Environment

Increase the awareness, knowledge and skills of the workforce to create a safe, trusting and healing environment as well as examining and changing policies, procedures and practices that may unintentionally cause distress and may re-traumatize (cause harm) those we serve.
Domain 6. Engage in Community Outreach and Partnership Building

Recognize that the people we serve may be part of and affected by a larger service system including housing, corrections, courts, primary health, emergency care, social services, education and treatment environments such as substance use programs. We have an opportunity to engage and increase the awareness of these other service providers to the principles and practices of trauma-informed care. In this way, our efforts are less likely to be undermined by other parts of the system.
Domain 7. Ongoing Performance Improvement and Evaluation

The organization values a systematic approach to measuring performance on each of the core trauma-informed domains. Data is used to track, measure and analyze performance improvement in order to inform leadership and its core implementation team on areas needing improvement as well as guiding the process of sustainable change.
IMPLEMENTATION
Implementation

- Build a Core Team
- Get the Vision Right
- Assess Your Organization
- Develop an Implementation Plan
- Measure Your Progress
- Build Sustainability Up Front
John Kotter’s Eight Stages of Change

1. Increase urgency
2. Build guiding teams
3. Get the vision right
4. Communication for buy-in
5. Enable action
6. Create short-term wins
7. Don’t let-up
8. Make it stick
Step 1: Increase Urgency

Leadership Communication

- Communicate to everyone
- Organization “owns” the change
- Content of the message
  - The change is important
  - The change is not easy
  - Everyone is part of making change successful
  - Pros of success and the cons of failure
Ask Yourself

• Who is responsible for conveying urgency?

• Why do we consider TIC to be urgent?

• What is our message (3 key points)?

• Who do we need to convey this message to?

• When and how can we do this?
Step 2: Build Guiding Teams

Who to include:

- Leadership with responsibility and authority to guide the change process
- Those affected by the change (consumers)
- Those expected to carry out the change day to day
- Those with experience or knowledge related to trauma-informed care
- Those with quality improvement and data related expertise
- Those who can provide needed resources
- Those whose values, interests, beliefs, and orientation aligns with the improvement effort (trauma champions)
Build the Right Core Implementation Team (CIT)

- Leadership/Program Director
- Clinical Director
- Consumer/Family Leaders (2)
- Quality Improvement Staff
Step 3: Get the Vision Right

- To accomplish significant organizational change, the guiding implementation team produces a clear sense of direction through a shared vision.
- A trauma informed care vision helps stakeholders “see” the direction where all the organizational plans and strategies will take you.
- Visioning requires the creativity to see possible futures.
- The goal is to articulate a vision that is so clear that it fits on one page and takes less than a minute to share.
Get the Vision Right

Developing a shared understanding of what it means to be a trauma-informed organization

• Communicate vision with clarity and consistency
• Bridge current practices with future practices
• Focus on the positive goal rather than the problem

Vision guides the organization in deciding what to...

Keep Doing

Do Differently

Start Doing
Ask Yourself

• What is our vision statement?

• Who needs to know this?

• What opportunities do we have to communicate this?
Step 4: Communication for Buy In

What is it?

• Influencing attitudes, beliefs, expectations, perceptions and worries in a direction that supports the adoption of trauma informed care principles and practices

• Increasing positive feelings about the change in a way that overcomes the “negative” feelings often associated with change:
  > Control
  > Meaning
  > Status
Step 5: Enable Action

The Core Implementation Team has:

• Direct and timely access to organizational leadership

• Time and resources to take on serious tasks associated with adopting and sustaining TIC goals

• Executive leadership communicates to entire organization that it stands behind core implementation team

  Leadership expects everyone to support the work of the team (Minimizes “hoops to jump through to get a green light”)
Step 6: Create Short Term Wins

- Short term action steps are observable and meaningful
- The organization has a system in place to communicate across the organization…
  ✓ Progress towards the aims of the initiative
  ✓ Short term wins
  ✓ Data as well as human stories behind the data
- Reinforce positive changes and acknowledge how everyone contributes to positive outcomes
6. Create Short Term Wins

The CIT is tracking and analyzing data to identify short term progress/achievements

- Short term action steps are observable and meaningful

System is in place for communicating across the organization…

- Progress towards the aims of the initiative
- Data as well as human stories behind the data

- Contribution of all to positive outcomes
Step 7: Don’t Let Up

Change takes passion, commitment and persistence

• Ask yourself: What has your organization recently done that demonstrates its ability to stick with a change process?

• What were the things that happened that made it possible to change?
7. Don’t Let Up

• Expect process to be non-linear - bumps are inevitable and signs you’re making real change
• There will be inevitable forces at work to resist the change and return to the more comfortable habituated state
• Keep an eye on the process at all times
• Have a system in place to insure that initiative is a high priority goal of the organization
Organizations historically have adopted new strategies, interventions and policies and procedures that as soon as attention is turned elsewhere lose all momentum and lapse back into old ways of doing business.

**Ask yourself:**

- What are ways we can maintain our momentum and continue moving forward?
- What do we need to be aware of?
- How can we begin to think about sustainability?
Make Changes Stick

- Institutionalize changes you wish to sustain (policy and procedural requirements)
- Change performance expectations
- Change performance standards to support change
- Change documentation requirements
- Use data to provide continuous feedback
- Visibly reinforce and recognize positive changes
- Align changes with reliable fiscal streams
Get the Vision Right

- How will your organization/system look differently as you adopt trauma-informed approaches?
- Create a common language
- How will you deliver your message to the entire organization/system?
Poll Question:

Would you like Relias Learning to contact you after this webinar?
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National Council Resources

- National Council National Learning Community
- Local/Regional/Statewide Learning Communities
- Individual Organizational Technical Assistance
- National Council - TIC Site