Addressing Crisis in a Trauma-Informed Manner

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Today’s Presenter

Elizabeth Guroff, MA, LCMFT

Consultant, Trauma-Informed Services
National Council for Behavioral Health

ElizabethG@TheNationalCouncil.org
Learning Objectives

• Understand how to identify someone in a stress state
• Identify steps to achieve emotional regulation and one’s own level of arousal
• Identify two interventions you can implement to respond to crisis in a Trauma-Informed manner
Anxiety is a normal human response to a stressful situation.
### 16 Simple Ways to Relieve Stress and Anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Consider Supplements</th>
<th>Light a Candle</th>
<th>Reduce your caffeine Intake</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write it Down</td>
<td>Chew Gum</td>
<td>Spend Time with Friends and Family</td>
<td>Laugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to Say No</td>
<td>Learn to avoid procrastination</td>
<td>Take a yoga class</td>
<td>Practice mindfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuddle</td>
<td>Listen to soothing music</td>
<td>Deep breathing</td>
<td>Spend time with your pet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
"Trauma is not what happens to you, it’s what happens inside you as a result of what happened to you. Trauma is that scarring that makes you less flexible, more rigid, less feeling and more defended.”- Dr. Gabor Mate

“Trauma is an inability to inhabit one’s body without being possessed by its defenses and the emotional numbing that shuts down all experience, including pleasure and satisfaction.”- Bessel van der Kolk
Survival Mode Response
Survival Mode Response

Inability to

• Respond
• Learn
• Process
Discharge of Trauma

Resilient Nervous System

easy charge
sympathetic
parasympathetic
easy discharge
Parasympathetic - (rest and digest)
Sympathetic - (fight, flight or freeze)
Discharge of Trauma

Resilient Nervous System

easy charge

sympathetic

parasympathetic

easy discharge
When trauma is not discharged
FIGHT  FLIGHT  Oohhala!  FREEZE

FIGHT  FLIGHT  Oohhala!  FREEZE

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Resilience

“Resilience is the capability of individuals to cope successfully in the face of significant change, adversity, or risk. The capacity changes over time and is enhanced by protective factors in the individual and environment.”

(Stewart et al., 1997)
What might be causing other’s “bad” behavior?

- Internal or external cause or stimuli we have little control over

- An unmet need
- Loss of personal power and need for control
- External activating stimuli in the environment
- Internal activating stimuli such as intense anxiety or fear
Brain Development

Abstract thought
Concrete thought
Verbal and non-verbal communication
Reward
Sexual behavior
Emotional reactivity
Motor regulation
Appetite/Satiety
Sleep
Blood pressure
Heart rate
Body temperature

Cortex
Limbic
Midbrain
Brainstem

### Arousal Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal State</th>
<th>CALM</th>
<th>ALERT</th>
<th>ALARM</th>
<th>FEAR</th>
<th>TERROR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Style</td>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>CONCRETE</td>
<td>EMOTIONAL</td>
<td>REACTIVE</td>
<td>REFLEXIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating Brain Region</td>
<td>NEOCORTEX Cortex</td>
<td>CORTEX Limbic</td>
<td>LIMBIC Midbrain</td>
<td>MIDBRAIN Brainstem</td>
<td>BRAINSTEM Autonomic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociative Continuum</td>
<td>REST</td>
<td>AVOIDANCE</td>
<td>COMPLIANCE Robotic</td>
<td>DISOCIATION Fetal Rocking</td>
<td>FAINTING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arousal Continuum</td>
<td>REST</td>
<td>VIGILANCE</td>
<td>RESISTANCE Crying</td>
<td>DEFIANE Tantrums</td>
<td>AGGRESSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Time</td>
<td>EXTENDED FUTURE</td>
<td>DAYS HOURS</td>
<td>HOURS MINUTES</td>
<td>MINUTES SECONDS</td>
<td>NO SENSE OF TIME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relational Contagion
A calm, regulated adult can regulate a dysregulated person.

BUT
A dysregulated adult can NEVER calm anyone.
Co-regulation
Reactive child and well-regulated adult (e.g. teacher)

Present, parallel, patient, persistent – facilitate multisensory, multi-domain, repetitive activity

Child

Rhythm & Relationship = Regulation

Adult

Time

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Co-dysregulation
Reactive child and overwhelmed adult (e.g. teacher)

Present, overwhelmed, frustrated, angry = escalation = increased incidents/restraint

Time
Self-Regulation Strategies

Breathing
Movement
  • Walk & talk
Trigger identification
Take a break/safe spot
Mindfulness
Yoga techniques
Music
Sensory breaks
Grounding techniques
Progressive muscle relaxation
Impact the Lower Brain

- Rhythmic
- Respectful
- Rewarding
- Repetitive
- Relational
- Relevant

Roadmap for Regulation

Regulate – physical calming strategies needed for the brainstem and midbrain
Relate – focused on the relationship
Reason – focused on reasoning and solving problems

Strategies for preventing further escalation

Remain respectful and non-judgmental
Seek to gather more information
  • How can I help?
  • What do you need?
Actively listen for the unmet need
Reflect and clarify to be sure you understand
Allow for silence
Allow expression of emotions
Always empower
Grounding Exercises

- Hold a pillow, stuffed animal or a ball
- Place a cool cloth on your face, or hold something cool such as a can of soda
- Listen to soothing music
- Put your feet firmly on the ground
- FOCUS on someone’s voice or a neutral conversation
- 5-4-3-2-1 Game

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Consider This…

Proxemics
Our personal space

Kinesics
Nonverbal messages we communicate via our body’s posture and motions

Para verbal Communication
Tone, volume and cadence of our speech
If behavior escalates

- Remain calm and centered
- Avoid talking too much
- Give individual their space
- Respectfully set limits
  - Clear and simple
  - Reasonable
  - Enforceable
- Ask for help
Extreme Behavior: Things to remember when nothing seems to work

1. The behavior is not about us!
2. Separate the problem from the person.
3. Resist reacting.
4. There is always another way.
5. Power struggles can be avoided and often result in no winners.
6. Extreme behavior is challenging for everyone.
Friendly and Fearless

Understanding bravery as “fearing less” rather than becoming truly “fearless.”

Increasingly moving toward “responding” rather than “reacting,” and expanding the space between stimulus and response, by calming the physical fears that arise in interpersonal situations.

Developing both inter- and intra-personal skills for effective relating.

Consider WAIT

Why am I talking?

Coach yourself to calm down and keep focusing on the end in mind.

- What are the outcomes?
- What do I want to have happen?

Increase the space between a stimulus and a response

Strive to respond rather than react

“In between every action and reaction, there is a space. Usually the space is extremely small because we react so quickly but take notice of that space and expand it. Be aware in that space you have a choice to make.”

-Rebecca Eanes
Breathing

SQUARE BREATHING

1 2 3 4
breathe in for 4 seconds

4 3 2 1
hold for 4 seconds

4 3 2 1
breathe out for 4 seconds

1 2 3 4
hold for 4 seconds

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Learn to Rumble

A rumble is a discussion, conversation or meeting defined by a commitment to:
Lean into vulnerability
Stay curious and generous
Stick with the messy middle of problem identification and solving
Take a break and circle back when necessary
Listen with the same passion with which we want to be heard (Harriet Lerner)

Let’s have a real conversation, even if it’s tough.
It’s an intention setter and a behavioral cue or reminder

Rumbling Topics

Grief, Vulnerability, Failure, Forgiveness, Blame and accountability, Disappointment, expectations, and resentment, Fear, Nostalgia, Stereotypes and labels, Boundaries, Perfectionism, Identity, Trust, Love, belonging, and heartbreak, Regret, Need and connection, Criticism, Generosity, Shame, Integrity.
Rumble Language

- The story I make up
- I'm curious about
- Tell me more
- That's not my experience
- I'm wondering
- Help me understand
- Walk me through that
- What's your passion around this
- Tell me why this doesn't fit/work for you
Remember Grounded Confidence

Grounded confidence = rumble skills + curiosity + practice

“This is hard and awkward, and uncomfortable. I may not know how it’s going to turn out, but I am strong and have practiced what it takes to create and hold the space for this.”

Be mindful of the story we make up

And remember self-care

Chat Box: What are some of your self-care ideas?
## Coping with Stress and Fear

### Stay informed—but don’t obsessively check the news

### Focus on the things you can control
- Plan for what you can
- Ground yourself when you start to feel “what-ifs” spiraling

### Stay connected—even when physically isolated
- Emotions are contagious, so be wise about who you turn to for support

### Take care of your body and spirit
- Be kind to yourself
- Maintain a routine as best you can
- Take time out for activities you enjoy
- Get out in nature, if possible
- Find ways to exercise
- Avoid self-medicating
- Take up a relaxation practice
- Help others (it will make you feel better)
HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESS AND ANXIETY

MIND

Accept that you cannot control everything.
Put your stress in perspective: Is it really as bad as you think?

Do your best.
Instead of aiming for perfection, which isn’t possible, be proud of however close you get.

Maintain a positive attitude.
Make an effort to replace negative thoughts with positive ones

Learn what triggers your anxiety.
Is it work, family, school, or something else you can identify? Write in a journal when you’re feeling stressed or anxious, and look for a pattern.

Limit alcohol and caffeine.
Alcohol and caffeine can aggravate anxiety and trigger panic attacks. Instead, drink water.

Eat well-balanced meals.
Do not skip any meals and always keep healthy, energy-boosting snacks on hand.

Get enough sleep.
When stressed, your body needs additional sleep and rest. It’s important to get 8 hours of sleep per night!

Exercise daily.
Exercising can help you feel good and maintain your health.
Remember

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations

Take care of yourself and your community

Know the facts to help reduce stress

Take care of your mental health

Ways to cope with stress

• Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories
• Take care of your body
• Make time to unwind
• Connect with others

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Resources

www.7cups.com
https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/16-ways-relieve-stress-anxiety#section1
https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/coronavirus-anxiety.htm
https://adaa.org/tips-manage-anxiety-and-stress
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Bs0qUB3BHQ
https://www.neurosequential.com/covid-19-resources