

# Trauma Informed Care

Robert P. Allred, PhD

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# What is Trauma Informed Care?

- An organizational approach to understanding how trauma affects a person's life (SAMHSA, 2014)
  - Realizing the prevalence of trauma
  - Recognizing how trauma affects all individuals at the organization
  - Responding by putting this knowledge into practice

# Why is Trauma Informed Care Important?

- Trauma is not rare and is more common in clinical populations (Gold, 2008)
- General Population
  - >60% of men
  - >50% of women
- Clinical Samples
  - >90% of individuals

# Why is Trauma Informed Care Important?

- Trauma is linked to common mental health disorders (Gold, 2008)
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - PTSD
  - Personality disorders
  - Dissociative disorders
  - Substance abuse
  - Psychosis
  - Somatic complaints

# Why is Trauma Informed Care Important?

- Trauma is associated with serious health risks (Gold, 2008)
  - Asthma
  - Hypertension
  - Obesity
  - Diabetes
  - Cardiovascular disease
  - GI problems
  - Arthritis
  - Substance use problems (Pietrzak, Goldstein, Southwick & Grant, 2012)

# Why is Trauma Informed Care Important?

- Trauma disrupts functioning (Gold, 2000)
- Ongoing trauma disrupts functioning in an ongoing way
  - Growing up in a traumatic context interferes with basic aspects of functioning in the first place
  - These deficits impair the survivors ability to cope with routine daily stressors (Gold, 2008)
- Trauma-related behaviors are adaptive (Gold, 2000; Haley, 1997; SAMHSA, 2014)
  - These behaviors have gotten them to this point in life
  - They are a form of resilience
- Trauma is a barrier to healthy living

# Why is Trauma Informed Care Important?

- Everyday interactions can help improve functioning (Gold, 2000)
  - Modeling of appropriate interactions and behaviors
  - Increased feelings of safety and belonging
- Increased safety for our patient, ourselves, and other visitors to the clinic
  - Reduces risk of future trauma
  - Helps reduce trauma-related behaviors
  - Survivors of trauma are likely to become angry or disruptive when anxious/triggered
- Improves community health and wellbeing
  - Survivors of trauma are likely to avoid healthcare setting

# How does Trauma Affect the Clinic?

- Who do we see in our clinics?
  - Refugees
  - Veterans
  - Homeless individuals
  - Chronic poverty
  - Domestic violence
  - Child abuse/neglect
  - Accident survivors
  - Victims/witnesses of violent crime
  - Torture survivors
  - Cultural trauma (e.g., Native American, Asian Americans, African Americans, etc.)
  - Survivors of natural disasters
  - First responders



# How Do I Respond?

- Avoid assuming malicious intent (Gold, 2000)
- Watch for areas of deficiency
- Distinguish “right” from “appropriate”
- Teach missing information/skills
  - What does it mean to pick up a refill?
  - What is a “CSA” and how is that different from a “CSR”?
  - What is a sliding scale and why do you need my income?

# How Do I Respond?

- Emphasize safety
  - Become aware of potential triggers/problems
  - Establish clear roles and boundaries
    - Model appropriate boundaries
    - Be clear about roles
    - **Warm** handoffs
  - Accept and respect diversity
  - Reflective listening/validation

# How Do I Respond?

- Validate the patient's personhood
  - Make eye contact and SMILE
  - Acknowledge each patient with a verbal welcome
  - Provide choices
  - Stop and listen
- “Turn Towards” the patient (Lisitsa, 2012)
  - Dr. Gottman's technique used to strengthen relationships
  - Applying this to office interaction with patients means using small, unrelated validation to help them feel better about the encounter.
    - For example: comment on a patient's nice scarf or ask them how their trip here was, this feeds a positive bank account
  - Improving the positive to negative ratio (5:1) helps build collaboration and patient loyalty.

# How Do I Respond?

- Empower the patient
  - Provide choice and respect the patient's choice
  - “Cultural Competence”
    - Think about gender!
    - Think about language
  - Ask questions!
    - Approach your questions with the stance that you don't know (you don't)
    - Be willing to be educated by the client
      - Have her or him explain their rationale/beliefs to you
    - Take a one-down position, e.g.:
      - I don't understand...
      - Please explain that to me...
  - Consider a harm reduction approach

# How Do I Respond?

- Positive regard: kindness, benefit of the doubt, sense of being welcome, choices
- Clarity: about what is and is not offered here
  - We offer Behavioral Health as part of primary care, but not extended psychotherapy
  - We do not treat chronic pain with narcotic pain medicines
  - We do not treat chronic anxiety with controlled meds
  - Even if we help diagnose ADHD in adults, we do not treat this with controlled stimulants
- Compassion: everyone has stress; we see patients on some of the worst days of their lives
- Validation: active listening—mirror back what you heard patient say or acknowledge that they may be stressed, in a hurry, and/or feeling frustrated

# How Do I Respond?

- Care for yourself and each other
  - Remind yourself that it's not personal
  - Take a deep breath
  - Step away, take a break
  - Eat a healthy breakfast
  - Exercise regularly
  - Start a regular relaxation regimen
  - SMILE! It's contagious

# How Do I Care for Myself?

- IMPROVE the Moment (Linehan, 2015)
  - Imagery skill: see self coping well, holding a child in arms or on lap, or going to a peaceful place. Have a soothing postcard behind computer to rest mind.
  - Meaning skill: “I am a professional” affirmation may help; I am making the world a better place by being part of this healthcare home.
  - Prayer: “radical acceptance” and being in the moment—trust it will work out
  - Relaxation skill: breathing, respond to stress in body, “tension does not help my response.”
  - One thing in the moment skill: I just have to get through this moment right now.
  - Vacation skill: super-brief, stretch break, bathroom break or other interruption if need to regroup or get grounded again
  - Encouragement skill: Cheer lead self as you would talk to someone else in crisis: “I can handle this one; this too shall pass; I am the grown-up here...”

# How Do I Care for Myself?

- Get a “De-Stress Buddy”
  - Pick 1-2 persons to do this with at work
  - Make a cue word that engages the “buddy” as a stress response helper (for example “buddy time” or “code purple”)
  - Explain cause of stress or need briefly
  - As stress buddy: help your buddy breathe, take a small break, remember skills
  - Balance venting (or listening) with positive regrouping and self regulation reminders.



# Why is Trauma Informed Care Important?

- TIC reduces barriers the health
- TIC is great care

# References

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