INTRO

Definition of Trauma:
Trauma occurs when an external threat overwhelms a person’s internal and external positive coping resources.

(Bloom & Fallot, 2009)

What is “Trauma Informed” Care?

- Purposeful approach to providing a safe environment.
- Services are sensitive to trauma.
- All components of a given system have been reconsidered with an understanding of the role that violence plays.
- Designed service systems to be delivered in a way that will avoid inadvertent re-traumatization and will facilitate (healing, recovery, empowerment and) participation in treatment.

* From Federations of Families for Children’s MH

CHILDHOOD TRAUMATIC STRESS:
refers to the physical and emotional responses of a child to events that threaten the life or physical integrity of the child or of someone critically important to the child (such as a parent or sibling).

What is a traumatic response?

overwhelm a child’s capacity to cope
elicit feelings of terror and powerlessness
out-of-control physiological arousal.
profound effect on his or her perception of self, the world, and the future.
Ability to trust others
Sense of personal safety
**TRAUMA TYPES**

**Acute Trauma**

is a single traumatic event that is limited in time.

**Chronic Trauma**

refers to the experience of multiple traumatic events.

The effects of chronic trauma are often cumulative, as each event serves to remind the child of prior trauma and reinforce its negative impact.

**Complex Trauma**

**Complex Trauma** describes both exposure to chronic trauma—usually caused by adults entrusted with the child’s care—and the impact of such exposure on the child.

Children who experienced complex trauma have endured multiple interpersonal traumatic events from a very young age.

Complex trauma has profound effects on nearly every aspect of a child’s development and functioning.

**Other sources of stress**

Children in the child welfare system frequently face other sources of ongoing stress that can challenge workers’ ability to intervene. Some of these sources of stress include:

- Poverty
- Discrimination
- Separations from parent/siblings
- Frequent moves
- School problems
- Traumatic grief and loss
- Refugee or immigrant experiences
The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

METHOD
- 1995 to 1997
- more than 17,000 participants
- standardized physical examination
- confidential survey with questions about...
  - childhood maltreatment
  - family dysfunction
  - recent health status and behaviors.


THE 9 ADVERSE EXPERIENCES

Your experiences include:

1. recurrent and severe physical abuse
2. recurrent and severe emotional abuse
3. contact sexual abuse
4. emotional or physical neglect

You grew up in a household with:

5. an alcoholic or drug-user
6. a member being imprisoned
7. a mentally ill, chronically depressed, or institutionalized member
8. the mother being treated violently
9. both biological parents not being present

THE SCORING SYSTEM:

Exposure during childhood or adolescence to any category of ACE was scored as one point.

Multiple exposures within a category were not scored: one alcoholic within a household counted the same as an alcoholic and a drug user.

The ACE Score can range from 0 to 9.
What are YOUR Scores?

As the number of ACE increase, the risk for the following health problems increases:
- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Depression
- Fetal death
- Illicit drug use
- Ischemic heart disease (IHD)
- Liver disease
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of smoking
- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Adolescent pregnancy

Effects of exposure on children...

- The impact of a potentially traumatic event depends on several factors, including:
  - The child's age and developmental stage
  - The child's perception of the danger faced
  - Whether the child was the victim or a witness
  - The child's relationship to the victim or perpetrator
  - The child's past experience with trauma
  - The adversities the child faces following the trauma
  - The presence/availability of adults who can offer help and protection

Effects of exposure on children...

- Trauma can take many forms:
  - Emotional, sexual or physical abuse
  - Neglect and/or abandonment
  - Extremely painful and frightening medical procedures
  - Catastrophic injuries and illnesses
  - Rape or assault
  - Muggings
  - Domestic violence
  - Burglary

Kid#2 is 4600 times MORE likely to have a substance abuse problem later in life due to a combination of his experiences.
Effects of exposure on children...

Traumatic Events (cont.)
- Witnessing murder
- Automobile accidents
- Immigration
- Natural disasters (hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, floods, volcanoes)
- Abandonment (especially for small children)
- Terrorism such as September 11, 2001
- Witnessing violence such as a parent harming another parent

Effects of exposure on children...

Traumatic Events (cont.)
- Loss of a loved one and severe bereavements (even of a pet)
- Intergenerational (cultural) trauma
- Combat/war
- Torture
- Kidnapping
- Bullying

Effects of exposure on the BRAIN...

Trauma can have serious consequences for normal development of children’s brains, brain chemistry, and nervous system.

Each developmental stage may react differently to trauma.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

In early childhood, TRAUMA is associated with a smaller cortex, leading to decreases in:
- Memory
- Attention
- Perceptual Awareness
- Thinking
- Language
- Consciousness

...other exposure concerns are lower IQ, regulating emotions, and increased fearfulness.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

The child could look...
- Passive, quiet, and easily alarmed
- Fearful to new situations
- Confused about safety
- Regress
- Language
- Aggression
- Night terrors

SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

In school aged children, TRAUMA "undermines" the development of brain regions that...
- Manage fears, anxieties, and aggression
- Sustain attention
- Control impulses
- Manage "Fight or Flight"
- Sleep
The child could have...
- Intrusive thoughts and images
- Focus on and replay traumatic event
- Develop intense new fears related to the event

In adolescents, trauma can interfere with the development of the frontal precortex, leading to decreases in...
- Considering consequences
- Recognizing danger
- Controlling behavior
- Meeting goals

The adolescent may feel like they are...
- Weak, strange, childish, or "going crazy"
- Anxiety and depression
- Intense anger
- Alone
- Embarrassed
- Low self-esteem
- Helplessness

What can an STAFF do to RECONNECT a CHILD's BRAIN?

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

UNDERSTAND THEIR BELIEFS
Understanding the research on Trauma

1. ACE's Study
2. Brain research

***find brain study from other conference materials***

I'm Stupid

I get an "A" on a TEST

What is Tom thinking?

CHANGE THEIR LIFE PATH

GET PAST THE DIAGNOSIS

It's a BEHAVIORAL DESCRIPTION at ONE POINT IN TIME.

STRENGTHS & SUPPORTS

CONNECT VERBAL TO NON-VERBAL

EMDR, TRAUMA ART, & PLAY THERAPY

STOP TRAUMA FROM RELIVING BAD EXPERIENCE
Understanding the research on Trauma

1. ACE's Study
2. Brain research

Victim
Persecutor
Rescuer

Safety
Emotions
Loss
Future

ASSESSMENTS

UCLA PTSD Index for DSM-IV
Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children (TSCC)
Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children (TSCYC)
Child Sexual Behavior Inventory

Questions?

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