Responding to Trauma in a Trauma-Informed way

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Agenda

➢ Trauma
  • Definition
  • Symptoms & Types
  • Impacts

➢ Trauma Informed Care

➢ Responses/Resources
What is Trauma?

An emotional response to a terrible event

- http://www.apa.org/topics/trauma
US Trauma Rates

General Population

- 61% of men
- 51% of women

Reported experiencing at least one trauma in their lifetime

Alcohol/Related Substance Abusers

- 71.6% reported witnessing trauma
- 30.7% experienced a trauma that resulted in injury
- 17.3% experienced psychological trauma

- Kessler et al., 1999
- El-Gabalawy, R. 2012
Trauma Rates & IPV

Traumatic stress is thought to be the main mechanism that explains why intimate partner violence may cause subsequent depression and suicide attempts.
Trauma and the Brain

The Limbic System
Common Symptoms of Trauma

Emotional

- Shock, denial, or disbelief
- Anger, irritability, mood swings
- Guilt, shame, self-blame
- Feeling sad or hopeless
Common Symptoms of Trauma

Emotional

- Confusion, difficulty concentrating
- Anxiety and fear
- Withdrawing from others
- Feeling disconnected or numb
Common Symptoms of Trauma

Physical

- Insomnia or nightmares
- Being startled easily
- Racing heartbeat
- Aches and pains
- Fatigue
Common Symptoms of Trauma

Physical

- Difficulty concentrating
- Edginess and agitation
- Muscle tension
Complex Trauma

Exposure to multiple or prolonged traumatic events and the impact of this exposure on development

- Chronic
- Begins in early childhood
- Occurs within the primary caregiving system
Complex Trauma - Impact

- Attachment and Relationships
- Physical Health: Body and Brain
- Emotional Responses
- Self-concept and Future Orientation
- Thinking and Learning
- Behavior
- Dissociation
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Re-experiencing
- Avoidance
- Negative cognitions and mood
- Arousal
Complex Post Traumatic Stress

- Emotional Flashbacks
- Toxic Shame
- Self-abandonment
- Inner Critic
- Social Anxiety
Trauma – Etiology and Impacts

- Intergenerational trauma - IMPACT
- Biochemical Imbalances
- Environmental Stressors
Trauma Informed

Trauma-informed care embraces a perspective that highlights adaptation over symptoms and resilience over pathology.

- Elliot, Bjelajac, Fallot, Markoff, & Reed, 2005, p. 467
Trauma Informed

“...traumatic stress symptoms or trauma-related disorders should not preclude an individual from mental health or substance abuse treatment...all co-occurring disorders need to be addressed on some level in the treatment plan and setting.”

-samhsa.gov
Common Language

A trauma informed organization, program, or system:

- Recognizes the signs and symptoms
- Realizes the widespread impact of trauma
- Responds by fully integrating knowledge
- Resists re-traumatization
**Grounding? Mindfulness?**

**Grounding:** A coping strategy designed to immediately connect you with the present moment.

**Mindfulness:** The practice of being fully present and aware in the current moment.
Have Set Policy

Does agency have written policy/guidelines for front line staff on working with/referring clients with trauma symptoms?
Have Set Policy

- Are all clients screened at intake for trauma exposure and possible related psychological symptoms and/or mental disorders?
Is assessment focused on how trauma symptoms affect clients’ current functioning and integrated into clients’ treatment plans?

- Does client need outside therapeutic support for symptoms?
Resources

- National Center for PTSD - http://www.ptsd.va.gov/
- State of NJ Directory of Mental Health Services
  http://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dmhas/home/hotlines/MH_DIR_COMPLETE.pdf
- New Jersey Mental Health Cares
  http://www.njmentalhealthcares.org/
- Designated Crisis Centers (Handout)
- National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health
  http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/
Final Thoughts and Questions

Ooh ooh
Pick me
Pick me
Pick me
Pick me