

Trauma Informed Care

James L. West Center for
Dementia Care

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Objectives:

Identify

Identify trauma.

Describe

Describe Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE).

Define

Define Trauma Informed Care.

Explain

Explain how healthcare providers can help patients heal from trauma.

Recognize

Recognize how to prevent re-traumatization.

What is Trauma?

CHCS: Center for Health Care Strategies

- ▶ Trauma results from exposure to an incident or series of events that is emotionally disturbing or life-threatening.
 - ▶ Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse
 - ▶ Childhood neglect
 - ▶ Having a family member with a mental health or substance use disorder
 - ▶ Violence in the community
 - ▶ Natural or human-made disasters and forced displacement
 - ▶ Sudden, unexplained separation from a loved one
 - ▶ Poverty and discrimination



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Prevalence of Trauma

- ▶ A study done by the Philadelphia Urban ACE Study found that 83% of adults in the US have at least 1 Adverse Childhood Experience and that 37% have 4 or more.
- ▶ CDC statistics show that 1 in 4 children in the US will experience some sort of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional).
- ▶ 1 in 4 women has experienced domestic violence.
- ▶ 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men have experience rape. 12% of women and 30% of men were less than 10 years old when the rape occurred.



Examples of Trauma:

1. As a child he survived a life-threatening illness, but as an adult all needles and doctor's visits make him extremely anxious.
2. A woman having multiple miscarriages and/or failed IVF treatments who sobs during routine gynecologic exams.
3. 99% of women in substance abuse programs report a history of trauma most of which was in their childhood. *psychologytoday.com*
4. A man who was in the military takes cover or hides when he hears thunder or sirens.
5. Men and women who won't allow anyone to get close to them because they will cause them some type of harm.
6. Experiencing or observing physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.
7. Childhood neglect
8. Having a family member with a mental health or substance use disorder
9. Experiencing or witnessing violence in the community or while serving in the military.
10. Poverty and systemic discrimination.



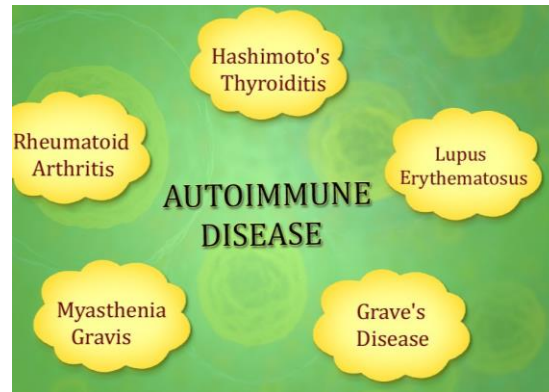


What is Adverse Childhood Experiences?

- ▶ Study that demonstrated that the more a child is exposed to physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, discriminations, and violence, the greater the risk for chronic health conditions and health-risk behaviors later in life such as heart disease, depression, liver disease, sexually transmitted diseases, and substance use.



How does exposure to Trauma Affect an Individual's Health?



- ▶ Multiple studies from the CHCS have concluded that there is a link between childhood trauma and lifelong health problems including:
 - ▶ Chronic lung and heart disease
 - ▶ Liver disease, hepatitis, and cancer
 - ▶ Autoimmune disease
 - ▶ Sexually transmitted infections
 - ▶ Depression and other mental health conditions



How Does Childhood Trauma Affect Neurobiology?

- ▶ Positive experiences in life lead to healthy brain development before the age of five.
- ▶ Negative experiences promotes unhealthy development.
- ▶ Prolonged trauma can decrease the volume in areas of the brain responsible for cognitive functions, such as short-term memory, emotional regulation, and other higher cognitive functions.



Which populations are more at risk for experience trauma?



- ▶ People living in low-income communities
- ▶ Ethnic and racial minorities
- ▶ LGBTQ individuals
- ▶ Individuals with disabilities
- ▶ Women and girls



How does trauma affect health risk behaviors?

- ▶ Children often develop coping mechanisms to help alleviate the hurt of trauma.
- ▶ Sometimes these evolve into health risk behaviors such as eating unhealthy foods, overeating, tobacco use, drug and alcohol use.
- ▶ The coping mechanisms then contribute to anxiety, depression, social isolation, or chronic illness.



How can health care providers help patients heal from trauma?

- ▶ The first step is to recognize how common trauma is, and to understand that everyone resident may have experienced serious trauma at some point in their life.
- ▶ By using trauma informed care that creates a safe, caring, inclusive, environment.
- ▶ Understanding that a patients life experiences are key to delivering effective care
- ▶ When used it has the potential to improve patient engagement, treatment adherence, and health outcomes.
- ▶ It also helps avoid provider and staff burnout and turnover.
- ▶ Providers may use Prolonged Exposure Therapy, Seeking Safety, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and the Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model to start addressing the needs of their clients.



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What is Trauma Informed Care?

www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org

- ▶ Shifts the focus of care from “What’s wrong with you?” to “What happened to you?”
- ▶ Healthcare providers need to have a complete picture of a patient’s life - past and present, to provide the best individualized care possible
- ▶ It is the open-mindedness and compassion that all patients deserve, because everyone has a history
- ▶ As healthcare providers we have to recognize that many patients and staff have a history of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse as well as serious illnesses in their past.
- ▶ It has been proven to improve a patient's engagement, treatment adherence, and outcomes, as well as staff wellness.



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Goals of Trauma Informed Care:

1. Realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand paths for recovery
2. Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in patients, families, and staff
3. Integrate knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices
4. Actively avoid re-traumatization



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Goals of Trauma Informed Care:

4. Collaboration: Power difference-between staff and clients and among organizational staff-are leveled to support shared decision-making.
5. Empowerment: Patient and staff strengths are recognized, built on, and validated-this includes a belief in resilience and the ability to heal from trauma.
6. Humility and Responsiveness: Biases and stereotypes (based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, geography) and historical trauma are recognized and addressed.

Benefits of Trauma Informed Care:

- ▶ For patients it offers the opportunity to engage more fully in their health care, develop a trusting relationship with their provider, and improve long-term health outcomes.
- ▶ For staff it has been shown to reduce burnout.



Principles of Trauma Informed Care:

1. **Safety:** Throughout the organization, patients and staff feel physically and psychologically safe.
2. **Trustworthiness and Transparency:** Decisions are made with transparency, and with the goal of building and maintaining trust.
3. **Peer Support:** Individuals with shared experiences are integrated into the organization and viewed as integral to service delivery.
4. **Recognize:** Know the signs and symptoms of trauma exposure on physical and mental health.
5. **Promote:** patient centered evidence-based care.
6. **Provide:** care that is sensitive to the patients' racial, ethnic, and cultural background, and gender identity.



Key Ingredients for Trauma Informed Care (CHCS: Center for Health Care Strategies)

Organizational

- ▶ Lead and communicate about the transformation process
- ▶ Engage patients in organizational planning
- ▶ Train clinical as well as non-clinical staff members
- ▶ Create a safe physical and emotional environment
- ▶ Prevent secondary traumatic stress in staff
- ▶ Hire a trauma-informed workforce

Clinical

- ▶ Involve patients in the treatment process
- ▶ Screen for trauma
- ▶ Train staff in trauma-specific treatment approaches
- ▶ Engage referral sources and partner organizations



Implementing a Comprehensive Trauma-Informed Approach

- ▶ Empowerment: use individuals' strengths to empower them
- ▶ Choice: allow choices to be made
- ▶ Collaboration: maximize collaboration among health care staff, residents and their families in organizational and treatment planning
- ▶ Safety: develop health care setting and activities that ensure residents physical and emotional safety
- ▶ Trustworthiness: create clear expectations about treatments, who will provide services, and how care will be provided.



Where do we begin?

1. Build awareness and generate buy-in for a trauma informed approach to care
2. Support a culture of staff wellness
3. Hire a workforce that embodies the values of trauma informed care
4. Create a safe physical, social, and emotional environment.



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1. Build awareness and generate buy-in for a trauma informed approach to care

- ▶ Communicate to staff the value of trauma-informed care and its potential for improving resident outcomes and staff well-being
- ▶ Promote the potential to improve patient outcomes as well as staff wellness.
- ▶ Incorporate the patient voice and choice. (focus groups, peer navigators, informal feedback)
- ▶ Offer trainings for *all staff* on trauma and its impact on health and behavior.
 - ▶ ACEs Too High
 - ▶ Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach
 - ▶ Key Ingredients for Successful Trauma-Informed Care Implementation
- ▶ Identify champions and leaders to help build awareness about trauma.
 - ▶ Create workshops
 - ▶ Lunch and learns
 - ▶ Resources
- ▶ Incorporate trauma training into regularly scheduled staff meetings

2. Support a culture of staff wellness

- ▶ Educate staff on secondary traumatic stress, vicarious trauma, burnout, and self-care.
- ▶ Engage leadership to promote a culture of wellness and demonstrate they value the employee's well-being.
 - ▶ Promote usage of PTO for “mental health days”.
 - ▶ Promote a work/life balance.
- ▶ Incorporate staff wellness activities not meetings and daily work/life.
 - ▶ 3-5 minutes of deep breathing and mindfulness at beginning of staff meetings
 - ▶ Mindful minute: breath relax and get ready for the day
 - ▶ Stretches during lunch breaks
 - ▶ Lunch away from desk
- ▶ Promote in-house and external opportunities to foster staff wellness.
 - ▶ Yoga
 - ▶ Meditation



3. Hire a workforce that embodies the values of trauma informed care

- ▶ Include interviewers from a variety of cultural and racial backgrounds, as well as different levels within the organization during the interview process.
- ▶ Incorporate behavioral interviewing strategies to look for characteristics such as empathy and non-judgement.
 - ▶ Ask questions about how they have handled previous situations to better understand how they might behave in future scenarios.
 - ▶ Incorporate questions about trauma into the interview process.
- ▶ Ask potential new hires about their knowledge around trauma and ACE's and whether they've received any training.





4. Create a safe physical, social, and emotional environment.

- ▶ People with histories of trauma often feel unsafe in unfamiliar environments which leads to anxiety and/or stress.
- ▶ Minor changes can help improve the feelings of safety.
- ▶ Minor changes can help reduce an occurrence of re-traumatization.

Creating a Safe Physical Environment

- ▶ Make sure all parking lots, common areas, bathrooms, entrances, and exits are well lit. Especially important after dark and on weekends when there might not be as many people around.
- ▶ Ensure security guards are readily available in settings if necessary. This can help keep people from loitering, smoking, and congregating at entrances.
- ▶ Monitor who is coming in and out of the building.
- ▶ Noise levels should be kept low. Avoid using overhead loudspeakers when possible.
- ▶ Decorate with warm colors and artwork that creates safety and relaxation.



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Creating a Safe Social and Emotional Environment

- ▶ Use positive and welcoming language on signage with requests rather than commands. Example: “Please refrain from Using Your Cellphone in the Lobby” vs. “No Cellphone Use in the Lobby.”
- ▶ Train front desk staff to greet patients in a warm and welcoming manner. This sets the tone.
- ▶ Train all staff on how to talk to family members, residents, and each other. Basic communication skills and de-escalation techniques convey respect.



Creating a Safe Social and Emotional Environment

- ▶ Ensure staff maintain healthy interpersonal boundaries and manage conflict appropriately
- ▶ Keep consistent schedules and procedures
- ▶ Offer sufficient notice and preparation when changes are necessary
- ▶ Maintain communication that is consistent, open, respectful and compassionate.
- ▶ Be aware of how an individual's culture affects how they perceive trauma, safety, and privacy.



Anticipate Emotional Responses and Avoid Re-traumatization

- ▶ People who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) may feel shame, blame, anger, sadness, and/or embarrassment.
- ▶ Other may feel empowered and report a positive emotional response to being able to overcome stress and focus on their current health.
- ▶ Maintain emotional safety throughout by approaching those who have had ACE's with non-judgmental support. Recognize and integrate their strengths and experiences into a treatment plan.
- ▶ Provide supportive, compassionate responses to trauma histories without eliciting specific details.
- ▶ Avoid creating an environment that inadvertently reminds them of their traumatic experiences and causes them to experience emotional and biological stress.
- ▶ Empower them by providing education on things they can do every day to recognize how stress shows up in their bodies and help regulate their stress response system and buffer the negative impacts of toxic stress.



Preventing Secondary Traumatic Stress in Staff

- ▶ Provide trainings that raise awareness of secondary traumatic stress
- ▶ Offer opportunities for staff to explore their own trauma histories
- ▶ Support reflective supervision, in which a service provider and supervisor meet regularly to address feelings regarding resident interactions
- ▶ Encourage and incentivize physical activity, yoga, and meditation
- ▶ Allow mental health days for staff

Knowledge
is
power!



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Additional Tips:

www.bettercareplaybook.org

- ▶ Adopting a trauma-informed approach to care takes time to implement and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Take the time necessary to ensure a strategic approach tailored for your population and setting.
- ▶ Early in the planning process, identify trauma-informed care champions within your organization who can generate interest in trauma-informed care and sustain momentum when adopting new organizational practices. Establish talking points for making the case to leadership for a trauma-informed approach.
- ▶ Oftentimes, non-clinical staff like front desk staff or dietary interact with residents and play a large role in making the resident feel safe. It is important to include them and all staff in trainings and awareness-building events.
- ▶ Gain buy-in from senior leadership. They must encourage all staff to participate in trainings, promote staff wellness through policy and practice, and other organizational changes.



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- ▶ www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org
- ▶ www.bettercareplaybook.org
- ▶ www.acesaware.org

- ▶ The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- ▶ National Council for Behavioral Health
- ▶ National Center for Trauma-Informed Care
- ▶ Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc.

Resources

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- Specialized residential care for individuals with dementia and their families
- Respite Care
- West Center Day Program
- Dementia & Caregiver Education & Support

*Providing hope for the
journey*



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