



## TRAUMA

### What is trauma?

Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

### Trauma can be:

- A single event
- Series of events
- Chronic condition (e.g., childhood neglect, domestic violence)

### Other characteristics of trauma:

- Can affect individuals, families, groups, communities, specific cultures and generations
- Overwhelms an individual's or community's resources to cope and can often ignite the "fight or flight or freeze" reaction at the time of the event(s).
- Often unexpected
- May be human-made (war, terrorism, sexual abuse, etc.)
- Products of nature (flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes)
- Dependent upon an individual's experience of the event
  - Various biopsychosocial and cultural factors influence an individual's response and long-term reactions to trauma
- The impact of trauma is very broad and touches many life domains
- The impact of trauma is often deep and life-shaping
- Violent trauma is often self-perpetuating
- Trauma is insidious and preys particularly on the more vulnerable among us
- Trauma affects the way people approach potentially helpful relationships
- Trauma has often occurred in the service context itself
- Trauma affects staff members as well as consumers in human services programs

### Prevalence of trauma:

- National Comorbidity study (Kessler et al., 1999)
  - 61% of men and 51% of women reported experiencing at least one trauma in their lifetime
- Wave 2 of the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions
  - 71.6% of the sample reported witnessing trauma
  - 30.7% experienced a trauma that resulted in injury
  - 17.3% experienced psychological trauma
- Trauma and Substance Abuse
  - Substance abuse disorders predisposes people to higher rates of trauma-dangerous situations, accidents while under the influence
  - Those with substance use disorders have worse treatment outcomes than those with no trauma history

## TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

What is Trauma-Informed Care?

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is an intervention and organizational approach that focuses on how trauma may affect an individual's life and his or her response to behavioral health services from prevention through treatment.

A trauma-informed approach incorporates three key elements:

1. **Realizing** the prevalence of trauma
2. **Recognizing** how trauma affects all individuals involved with the program, organization, or system, including its own workforce
3. **Responding** by putting this knowledge into practice

"A program, organization, or system that is trauma informed realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for healing; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in staff, clients, and others involved with the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings." (SAMHSA, 2012, p. 4)

TIC involves reevaluating each service delivery component through a trauma-aware lens.

"Trauma informed care embraces a perspective that highlights adaptation over symptoms and resilience over pathology." (Elliot, Bjelajac, Fallott, Markoff, & Reed, 2005, p. 467)

The core TIC principles outlined by Harris and Fallott are:

- Safety – Ensuring a physically and emotionally safe environment for the client.
- Trustworthiness – Establishing trust and trustworthiness, making client responsibilities and tasks clear, and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.
- Choice – Emphasizing and encouraging consumer choice and control.
- Collaboration – Focusing on a collaborative approach and sharing power with the client.
- Empowerment – Stressing the development of client empowerment and skill building.

Values of Trauma-Informed Care:

1. Understand the prevalence and impact of trauma
2. Pursue the person's strength, choice and autonomy
3. Providers must earn trust
4. Healing happens in relationships
5. Provide holistic care
6. Share power
7. Communicate with compassion
8. Promote safety
9. Embrace diversity
10. Respect human rights

## GENERAL TRAUMA RESPONSE RESOURCES

National Center for Trauma-Informed Care

<http://beta.samhsa.gov/nctic>

National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

<http://www.nctsn.org/>

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies

<http://www.istss.org/>

International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation

<http://www.isst-d.org/>

The Anna Institute

<http://www.theannainstitute.org/>

### CONTACT INFORMATION

If you would like more information, please contact Scott Webb at 608-266-3610 or

<mailto:Scott.Webb@wisconsin.gov>