

Surviving Trauma in the Mental Health Field



PRESENTED BY:
KATIE GODSHALL, LCSW

Objectives



- To learn how trauma influences us, as mental health professionals and survivors. To include symptomology, types of trauma, and how we can grow from our experiences.
- To understand trauma and how we can grow from trauma.
- Explore different approaches to provide support to ourselves, coworkers and ultimately our clients.

The Need

- 70% of adults have experienced trauma at least once
- In behavioral health over 90% of clients have experienced trauma
- Mental health workers interviewed following work with Katrina survivors:
 - 72% reported increase in anxiety
 - 62% experienced increase suspiciousness about the world
 - 42% felt an increase in vulnerability

("How to Manage Trauma")

Trauma Defined

AN EVENT THAT TEMPORARILY
OVERWHELMS A PERSON'S SYSTEM BOTH
PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY

Types of Trauma

- Burn Out
- Compassion Fatigue
- Vicarious Trauma/Secondary Trauma
- First Hand Trauma
- Acute Stress
- Post Traumatic Stress disorder

Causes of Trauma

- Violence
 - Witnessed and victim
- Unexpected loss
- Abuse
 - Physical, emotional, and psychological
- Accidents
- Natural Disasters
- Illness
-everything

Cost of Caring

“THERE IS A COST TO CARING. PROFESSIONALS WHO LISTEN TO CLIENTS’ STORIES OF FEAR, PAIN, AND SUFFERING MAY FEEL SIMILAR FEAR, PAIN, AND SUFFERING BECAUSE THEY CARE. SOMETIMES WE FEEL WE ARE LOSING OUR SENSE OF SELF TO THE CLIENTS WE SERVE... IRONICALLY, THE MOST EFFECTIVE THERAPISTS ARE MOST VULNERABLE TO THIS MIRRORING OR CONTAGION EFFECT. THOSE WHO HAVE ENORMOUS CAPACITY FOR FEELING AND EXPRESSING EMPATHY TEND TO BE MORE AT RISK OF COMPASSION STRESS” (FIGLEY, C.R., 1995).

Physical Effects of Trauma

- Headaches
- Fatigue/Exhaustion
- Insomnia
- Increase in illnesses
- Gastrointestinal issues

Behavioral Signs of Trauma

- Anger
- Irritability
- Increased use of vices
- Absenteeism
- Avoidance of Clients
- Inability to make decisions
- Changing professions
- Compromised care of Clients

Psychological Effects of Trauma

- Distancing/isolation
- Depression
- Negative Self Image
- Reduced ability to feel sympathy/empathy
- Pessimism
- Resentment
- Dread of working with clients
- Loss of hope
- Professional helplessness
- Depersonalization
- Heightened anxiety/fears
- Problems with intimacy
- Intrusive thoughts/imagery
- Hypersensitive to emotional stimuli
- Poor personal relationships

Prevention and Reduction

THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES AND
SYSTEMATIC RESPONSES TO
PREVENT/REDUCE TRAUMA

Systematic Responses to Trauma

- **PFA**- Psychological First Aid
- **CISM**- Critical Incident Stress Management
- **CISD**- Critical Incident Stress Debriefment
- **PsySTART**- Rapid Mental Health Triage and Incident Management System

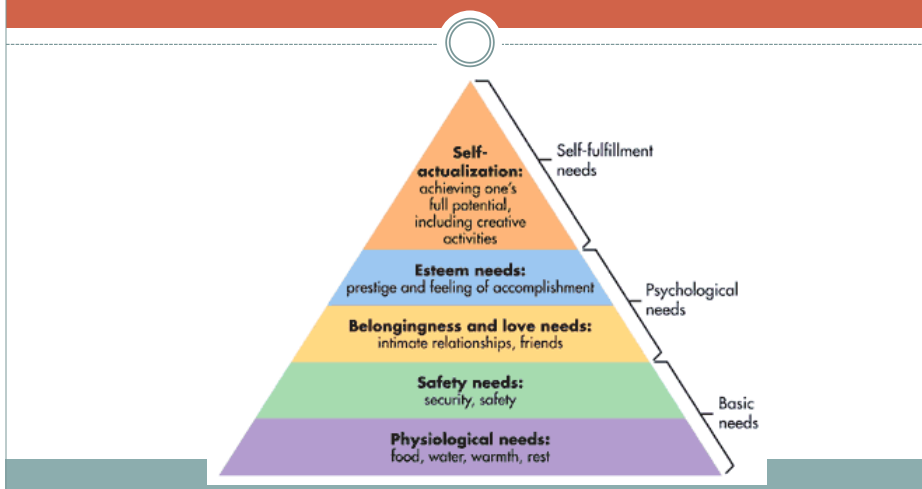
Therapeutic Approaches to Resolving Trauma

- **CBT**- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- **EMDR**- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing
- Talk Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Exposure Therapy

Alternative Interventions for Trauma

- Equine/animal therapy
- Neuro-Linguistic programming
- Massage Therapy
- Acupuncture
- **WRAP**- wellness recovery action plan
- Peer support groups
- Hypnotherapy
- Movement Therapy

Responding to Trauma



Immediate Response

- Purpose: To remain in the moment and contain the situation
- First 72 hours
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Do not smother
- Communication

Early Response



- Purpose: To continue stabilization and reduction of immediate psychological and physical responses
- Begins during the 72 hour window
- Debriefment group

Continued Response



- 3 months and beyond
- Utilize individual and group therapy
- Begin attend support groups
- Recovery from Trauma differs

Benefits of Trauma

Post Traumatic Growth

- Trauma is a powerful conduit to growth
- Extreme grief/trauma allow for positive growth
- Women tend to report more benefits

Positive Results of Trauma



- Emotional Awareness
- Growth in personal relationships
- Increased personal strengths
- Change in behaviors and lifestyles
- Spirituality

Three C's



- Connection
- Compassion
- Contribution

O'Hanlon, Bill. *Quick Steps to Resolving Trauma*

Trauma Support



RHD TRAUMA SUPPORT RESPONSE

Purpose



- To provide support to staff members within the first 72 hours of a trauma/critical incident
- Utilizes numerous fact based techniques
- Trauma support NOT debriefment
- Offer employees the knowledge, experience, support to best recover from a traumatic event
- Aid in the healing process
 - Not an immediate fix

Provides an Opportunity



- Emotional Support
- Safe Environment
- Explore and Validate emotions and responses

Trauma Support vs Debriefment



- **Debriefment:** focuses on identifying events and facts about the incident to create clarity and decrease rumors.
- **Trauma Support:** Assists in resiliency. Acknowledges that the event was an abnormal experience and assists in the recovery and building of resiliency.

Group Model



- **Introduction**

- Establish safe environment
- Confidentiality
- Clarify purpose of group
- Clarify event being discussed

Group Model (cont.)



- **Transition**

- Make accommodations for distractions
- Therapeutic silence
- Awareness of body and mind
- “Allow yourself to experience this free of judgements or expectations”
- Grounding
- Individuals identify where they are currently
 - × **Rate on a scale of 1 to 10**
 - 1 being no emotional response
 - 10 being extreme emotional response

Group Model (cont.)



• Intervention

- Clarify details of event and each individual's relationship with the event
- What were your most prominent thoughts when you heard about _____?
- What was the worst thing about _____ for you personally?
- Have you noticed any symptoms of distress in yourself since you learned about _____?

Group Model (cont.)



• Distress Tolerance

- “Being ok with not being ok”
- Essential key to mental health wellness:
 - ✦ Pain and distress are a part of life, they cannot be avoided or removed
 - ✦ Part and parcel of any attempt to change or grow
- Distractions and self soothing
 - ✦ Activities, generating the opposite emotion, leaving physically/emotionally, reframing, eliciting other intense sensations
- Utilizing the five senses

Group Model (cont.)



- **Symptomology**
 - Educate on possible symptoms
 - Symptoms do not present the same way for everyone
 - Normalize
 - Create a wellness plan to increase positive coping skills
 - Encourage harm reduction

Group Model (cont.)



- **Closing**
 - Thank everyone for engaging
 - Be kind to yourself
 - Everything in moderation
 - Provide information for further follow up
 - Symptoms will likely resolve within a week or two

Group Model (cont.)



- **Movement Exercise!**
 - Tapping
 - Shaking
 - Laughing

Group Model (cont.)



- **Final Statement**
 - You are your client's greatest asset
 - Honor your feelings, treat yourselves with kindness and concern. Allow yourselves time to heal.
- **Follow up with participants who raised flags**
- **Send a reminder a few days following the meeting for participants to engage in self-care**

Building Resiliency



PROACTIVE

Being Proactive



- Identify a plan
- Monthly reminders
- Build a tool kit
 - Sensory box
- Increase self awareness
- Check in with yourself throughout the day

Commit to Yourself



- Sitting outside for 10 minutes even on a cloudy day will increase neurotransmitters and boost mood!
- Make it a point to not eat in your car or at your desk every day this week
- Allow yourself to become a priority
- Healthy boundaries

Recommended Readings



- Quick Steps to Resolving Trauma – Bill O’Hanlon
- Waking the Tiger Within- Peter Lavine
- Compassion fatigue: coping with secondary traumatic stress disorder in those who treat the traumatized- Dr. Charles Figley
- Shattered Assumptions- Ronnie Janoff-Bulman
- Full Catastrophe Living- Jon Kabat-Zinn

Sources



- Figley, C. R. (1995). *Compassion fatigue as secondary stress disorder: An overview. Compassion fatigue: coping with secondary traumatic stress disorder in those who treat the traumatized (1-20)*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Hanlon, B. (2011). *Quick steps to resolving trauma*. New York: W.W. Norton &.
- How to Manage Trauma. (n.d.). Retrieved August 17, 2015, from <http://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Trauma-Infographic-Print.pdf>

Common Signs and Signals of Stress Reaction:

The following are a few examples of potential reactions you may have already experienced or potentially will experience in the coming days, weeks or months. These reactions vary from person to person, and are completely normal. Be mindful of your reactions and take time to acknowledge them without judgment.

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioral
Chills	Confusion	Fear	Withdrawal
Thirst	Nightmares	Guilt	Antisocial acts
Fatigue	Uncertainty	Grief	Inability to rest
Nausea	Hyper-vigilance	Panic	Intensified pace
Fainting	Suspiciousness	Denial	Erratic movements
Twitches	Intrusive images	Anxiety	Change in social activity
Vomiting	Blaming someone	Agitation	Change in speech patterns
Dizziness	Poor problem solving	Irritability	Change in appetite
Chest pain	Poor attention/decisions	Intense anger	Hyper-alert to environment
Headaches	Poor concentration/memory	Apprehension	
Rapid heart rate	Difficulty identifying people/objects	Apprehension	
Grinding teeth		Emotional shock	
Difficulty breathing		Emotional outbursts	
Profuse sweating		Feeling overwhelmed	
Muscle tremors		Loss of emotional control	
Elevated blood pressure		Inappropriate emotional response	

The above list contains examples of reactions that have been commonly noted in people responding to stressful event. If you begin to experience severe persistent symptoms, it is recommended you seek assistance.

Stress Reduction Strategies

- Eat well balanced and regular meals
 - Even if you don't feel like it
- Get plenty of rest
- Physical exercise
- Structure your time
- Accept thoughts and feelings you are having without judgment
- Maintain daily routines
- Do not overindulge in alcohol, sweets, etc
 - Everything in moderation
- Spend time with others
- Speak with co-workers about your reactions and check in with them
- Accept that you are under stress and experiencing normal reactions
- Engage in positive activities
- Spend time in nature
- Use humor
- Engage in relaxing activities