Objectives: What will we learn?

As a result of this session, participants will be able to:

- Define trauma
- Characterize the impact of trauma on the developing brain
- Identify helpful strategies for trauma informed parenting
- Recognize the importance of self care
Practice self care
Listen nonjudgmentally
Questions at the end
Main Points of Trauma Informed Care:

Universal Precautions

“Symptoms” are understood not as pathology, but attempts to cope and survive (Symptoms as strengths)

Key is a collaborative and trusting relationship between child & parent/caregiver (and school)

The primary goals of being trauma informed: to be consistent, safe, and supportive
When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it's our job to share our calm, not join their chaos.

~ L. R. Knost
• Trauma arises from an inescapable stressful event that overwhelms an individual’s coping mechanism.

• Childhood trauma is not an event itself, but a response to a stressful experience:
  • Actual or threatened death or serious injury to self or others
  • Threat to psychological or physical integrity of self or others
  • Intense fear, helplessness, or horror
Types of Trauma

Early Childhood Trauma
Complex Trauma
Disasters (Hurricanes)
Generational (Covid 19 Crisis)
And more...
Brief Explanation of ACES

Early Adversity has Lasting Impacts
Instead of, ‘What’s wrong with you?’

Instead of, “Why did you do that?”

Think, “What could have happened?”
What we think worry & anxiety looks like!
What worry & anxiety might look like for a child who has experienced trauma:
Trauma’s Impact on the Developing Brain

- Affects the stress response

- Constant danger requires a state of constant alertness

- Children in abusive environments develop the extraordinary ability to scan for warning signs of attack

- Traumatized children cannot remove their “trauma glasses” as they go between dangerous place to safe place
Trauma’s Impact on the Developing Brain

Healthy Brain
This PET scan of the brain of a normal child shows regions of high (red) and low (blue and black) activity. At birth, only primitive structures such as the brain stem (center) are fully functional; in regions like the temporal lobes (top), early childhood experiences wire the circuits.

An Abused Brain
This PET scan of the brain of a Romanian orphan, who was institutionalized shortly after birth, shows the effect of extreme deprivation in infancy. The temporal lobes (top), which regulate emotions and receive input from the senses, are nearly quiescent. Such children suffer emotional and cognitive problems.
Trauma’s Impact on the Developing Brain

When the trauma happened determines which region(s) of the brain are most impacted.

Experiences often stored as “feelings” because so much might happen before we learn to store memories as words.

Being trauma informed is not an awareness of the actual trauma, but knowing trauma’s impact on the brain and how to handle it.
Research has proven that brains can be “rewired”

Most important factor is at least one caring adult

Also remember, not all children are impacted the same
Prefrontal cortex
P.F.C.
"THE WISE LEADER"

"Flipped Your Lid"

The big emotions, anger, fear,
anxiety etc...
The AMYGDALA - The alarm center
Acts on instinct
fight, flight or freeze

Adapted from Dr. Daniel J. Siegel's Hand Model of the Brain found in Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation
(Bantam Books, 2010)
When I am in my “Upstairs Brain” I...

- think before I act
- am in control of my body and reactions
- can focus
- can see others’ point of view
- think before I speak
- feel like I can get my work done

When I am in my “Downstairs Brain” I...

- act before I think
- am not in control of my body and reactions
- feel too tired or stressed to focus
- yell, scream, argue, or run away
- only see a problem from my point of view
We cannot effectively correct behavior when the “lid is flipped”

First we need to de-escalate and then address behavior
Ways to De-escalate

- Numbers
  - (Alpha/counting/drawing in air)
- A1
- “Peace begins with me”
- Sensory
  - (often not talking)
- Mirror
- Calm Down Corner
Easy Physical Activities

- Run it out
- Swinging
- Jumping rope
- Hopping – 3 times right, 3 times left
- Skipping
- Marching
Remember, only after de-escalated enough to use language

Avoid “Why”

Try these instead…

I noticed you seem upset…

Tell me what’s happening
Countering Adverse Childhood Experiences

SAFETY-first and foremost
Calm
Predictable
Public praise
Private correction
Build resiliency
Awareness of Our Own Stress Responses

How can we effectively manage a child's stress response when our own stress response has been activated?
Parenting: The Struggle is Real

“Parenting isn’t stressful!”

MICHELLE
AGE 32
Adults: We "flip our lid" too!

You lose access to your prefrontal cortex, your "thinking brain." Your amygdala activates the fight, flight, freeze response, and you operate from a place of fear.

Since all of the parts of your brain are working in harmony, you feel calm, balanced, and alert yet relaxed.
Planning For Challenging Incidents

- Extreme anger and aggression
- Plan ahead with child in a calm moment
- Child is unlikely to be able to “think things through” or “make a better choice”
  - Provide explicit feedback
- Understand child maybe terrified by their own lack of control
- Best way to help – adult must stay CALM and self-regulated
Consequences
• Preplanned as much as possible
• Must be natural and reasonable
• Restorative and instructive about safe behavior

Taking Responsibility
• Explore the impact on others
• Especially the impact on relationships with other students.
Video: How to Make Stress Your Friend

https://www.youtube.com/embed/RcGyVTAoXEU?modestbranding=1&autoplay=1&iv_load_policy=3&rel=0&fs=1&start=300&end=449
Self-Care

What can we do to practice self-care?

Work/life balance is so important
- Health
- Relationships
- Competence
- Gratitude
Self-Care Continued...

- **Relaxation Techniques** – e.g. deep breathing, meditation.
- **Contacts with Nature** – e.g. gardening, hiking, etc.
- **Creative Outlets** – e.g. painting, drawing, cooking, writing.
- **Limit setting** – It is okay to set boundaries and say “no.”
- **Routine/Change in Routine** – Quality time alone, take different routes to and from work, develop a way to transition from work to home.
Self-Care Continued...
I'M GOOD ENOUGH
I'M SMART ENOUGH
AND DOGGONE IT,
PEOPLE LIKE ME.
Mindfulness is (APA definition)

“...a moment-to-moment awareness of one’s experience without judgment. In this sense, mindfulness is a state and not a trait. While it might be promoted by certain practices or activities, such as meditation, it is not equivalent to or synonymous with them.”
Mind Full, or Mindful?
Mindfulness practices have many benefits.

Mindfulness practices can help with a variety of issues, including substance abuse, trauma, anxiety, and depression.
Examples of Mindfulness Activities

- **Mindfulness Activity - Adults** (Williamson)
- **Mindfulness for Adults** (Shapiro)
- **Mindfulness for Adults** (Boissiere)
- **Mindfulness Activity - Children**
Support Systems

- Medical and mental health professionals
- Family & Friends
- Coworkers
- People with shared experiences
  - Attachment Trauma Network
- Spiritual Support

Others?
Self Care Plan

TAKE THE TIME TO DEVELOP A PLAN-
YOU ARE WORTH IT
“Taking care of myself doesn’t mean ‘me first. It means ‘me too.’”

L.R. Knost

GoodTherapy.org
Questions?

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