



BASICS OF ACES, USING TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACHES AND FOSTERING RESILIENCE

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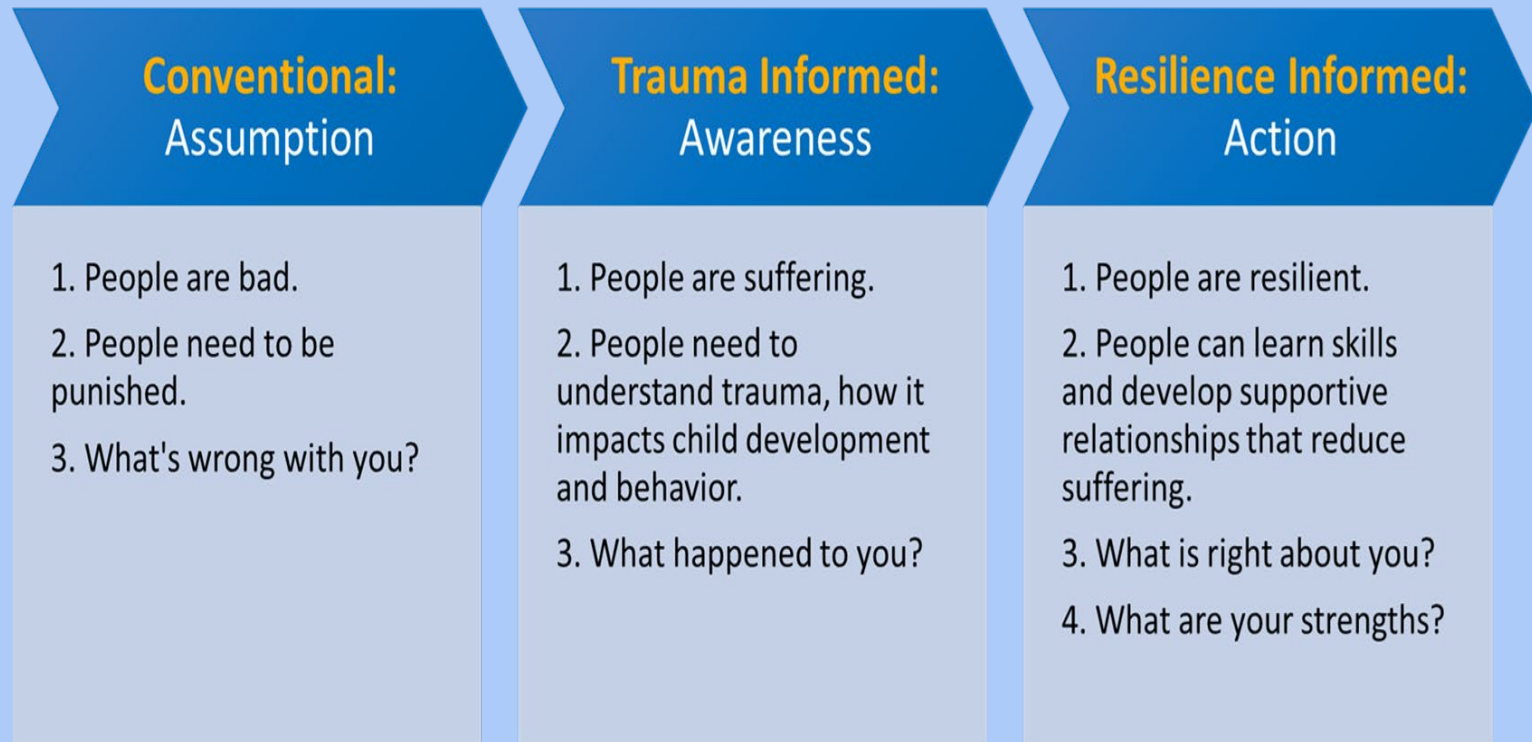


Learning Objectives

Section 1

- Shared Understanding
- Identification of Trauma
- Awareness of the Effects to Brain Development

Strength Based





What is Trauma?

The 3-E's

Individual trauma results from an event, a series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual that are physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that have lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach

Potential Traumatic Events

Abuse

- *Emotional*
- *Sexual/Physical*
- *Domestic violence*
- *Witnessing violence*
- *Bullying*
- *Cyberbullying*
- *Institutional*

Chronic Stressors

- *Poverty*
- *Racism*
- *Invasive medical procedure*
- *Community trauma*
- *Historical trauma*
- *Family member with substance use disorder*

Loss

- *Death*
- *Abandonment*
- *Neglect*
- *Separation*
- *Natural disaster*
- *Accidents*
- *Terrorism*
- *War*

Experience of Trauma Affected by :

- **How**

- **When**

- **Where**

- **How Often**

It is an individual's experience of the event, not necessarily the event itself that is traumatizing.



Effects of Trauma

The effect of trauma on an individual can be conceptualized as a **normal response** to an *abnormal situation*.

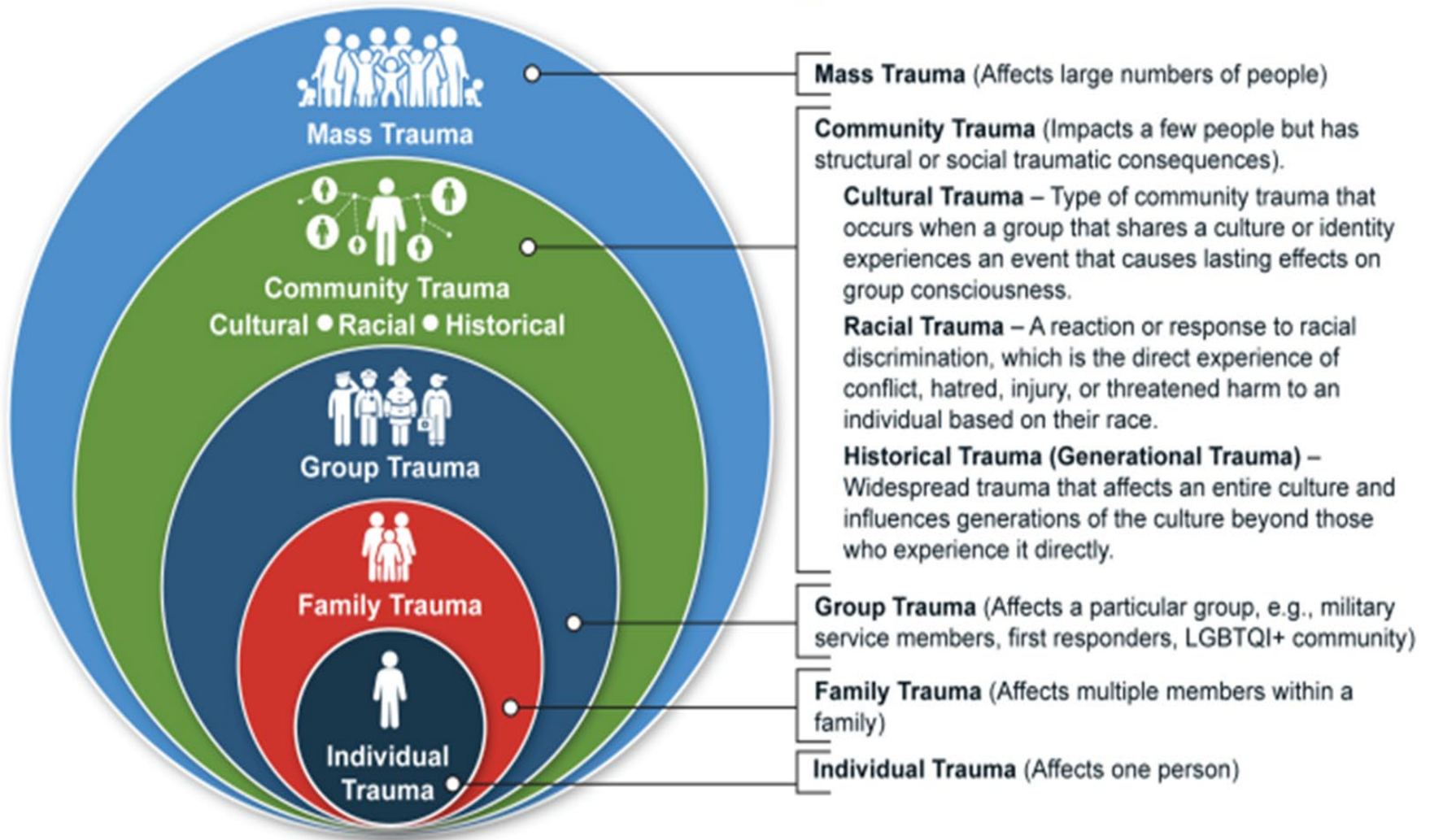
We don't see things as they are. We see things as WE are.

Survival mode is supposed to be a phase that helps save your life.

It is not meant to be how you live.

Michele Rosenthal
Author, *Your Life After Trauma*

Levels of Trauma Experience





Physical

- Low energy
- Hyperarousal
- Hypoarousal
- Paleness
- Lethargy
- Somatic complaints
- Lack of coordination or balance
- Headaches
- Digestive complaints



Emotional

- Anxiety
- Emotional numbness
- Anger
- Depression
- Guilt
- Shame
- Fear
- Avoidance



Behavioral

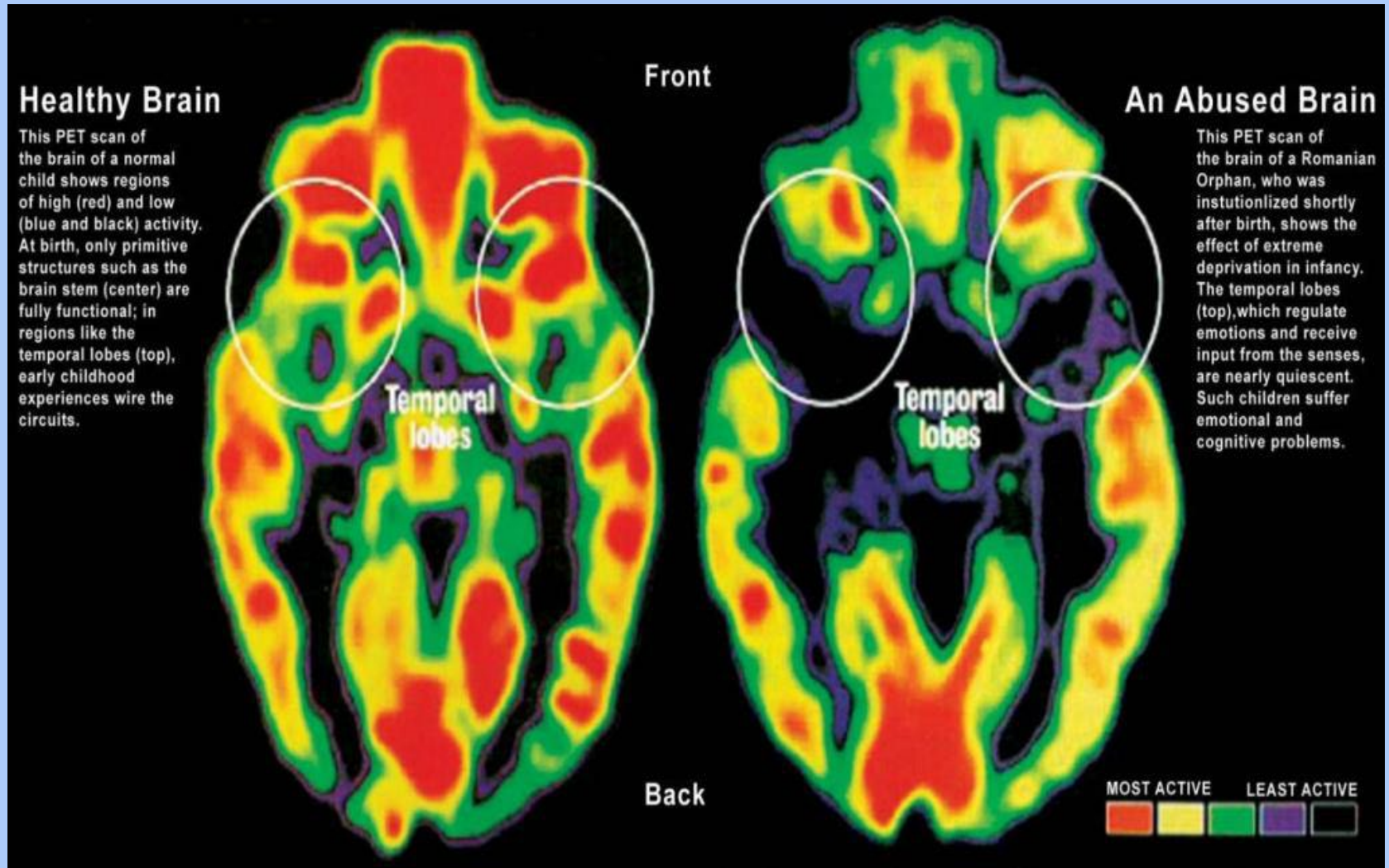
- Substance and alcohol use
- Eating disorders
- Compulsive behaviors
- Changes in interpersonal relationships
- Anger-related issues
- Isolation and detachment from others



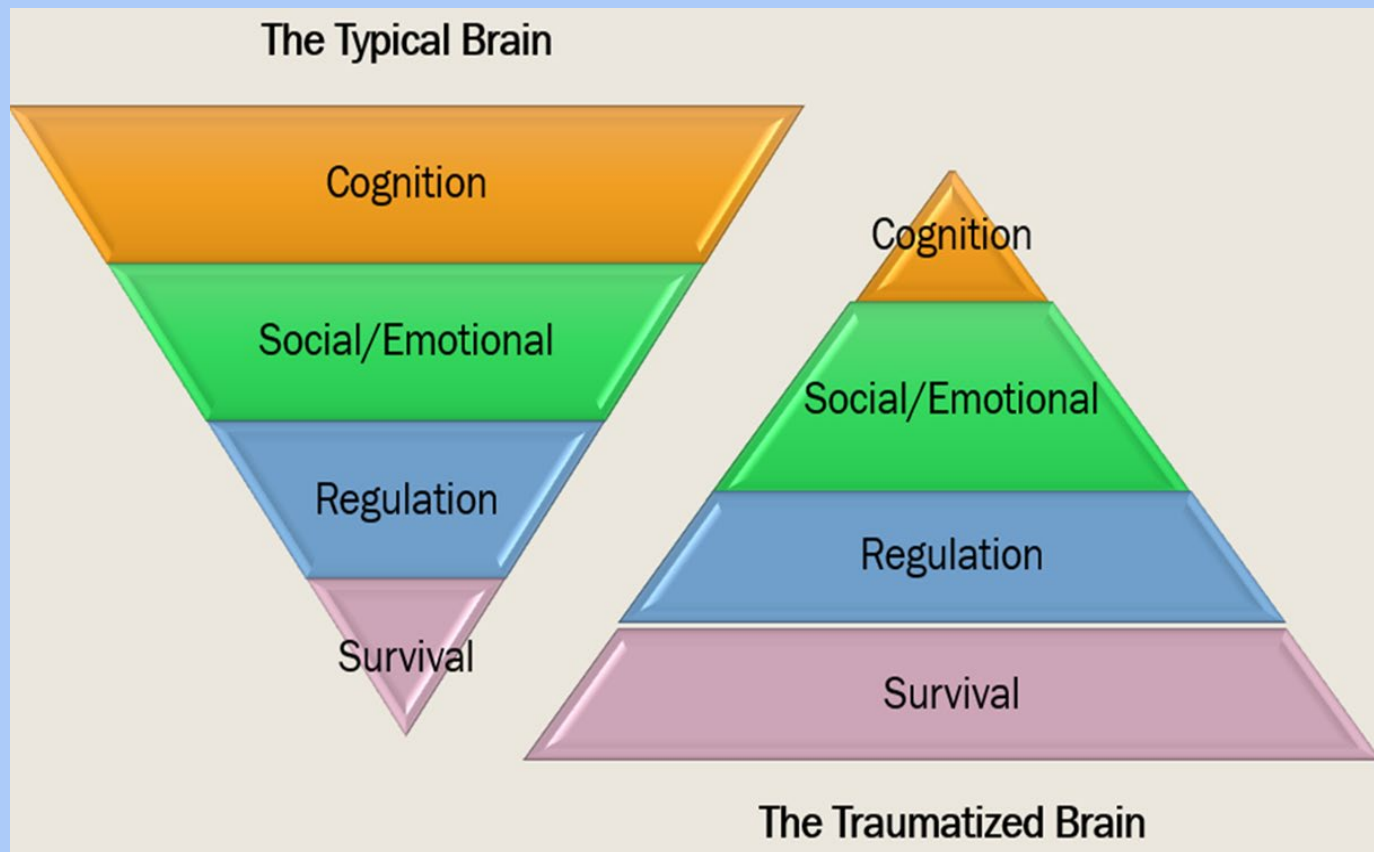
Cognitive

- Inability to concentrate
- Memory lapses
- Learned helplessness
- Increased distraction
- Intrusive thoughts
- Dissociation
- Cognitive errors
- Flashbacks

How Trauma Affects the Brain

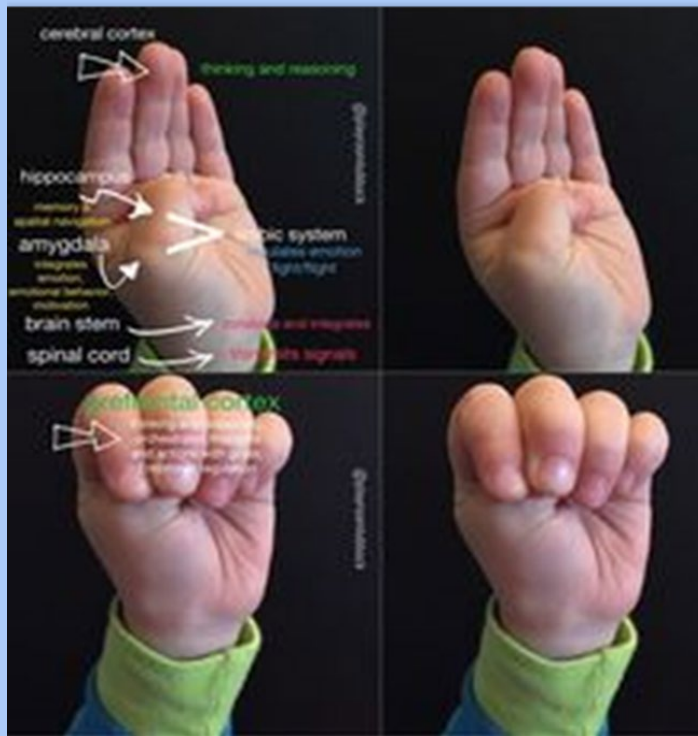


Trauma and Brain Development



Understanding the “Whole Brain” Whole-Brain Child

Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.



- Simple illustration to understand how the brain works by using your fist
- Upstairs brain – where you make decisions and do the right thing, even when you feel upset
- Downstairs brain – where **STRONG** emotions come from. (i.e. fear, panic, etc.)

Regulate

Calm the survival response

Examples:

Deep Breathing

Count backwards 10-1

Movement

Distraction

Quiet safe spaces

Food and rest

Relate

Connection through relationships

Empathy

Compassion

Listening

Voice tone

Body language

Positive Communication

Reason

Problem Solving

Reflect, learn, and engage

Reframing

Positive Stress



Short, stressful events like meeting new people or starting the first day of school are healthy for brain development. They prepare the brain and body for stressful situations later in life.

Tolerable Stress



Tragic, unavoidable events like a natural disaster or losing a loved one aren't good for us. But if supportive caregivers are around to buffer the stress response, these events won't do lasting damage to the brain and body.

Toxic Stress



Ongoing, repeated exposure to abuse or neglect is bad for brain development. If no supportive adults are present to help buffer the stress response, stress hormones will damage developing structures in the child's brain. The result is an increased vulnerability to lifelong physical and mental health problems, including addiction.



Types of stress responses

POSITIVE



A normal and essential part of healthy development

EXAMPLES

getting a vaccine,
first day of school

TOLERABLE

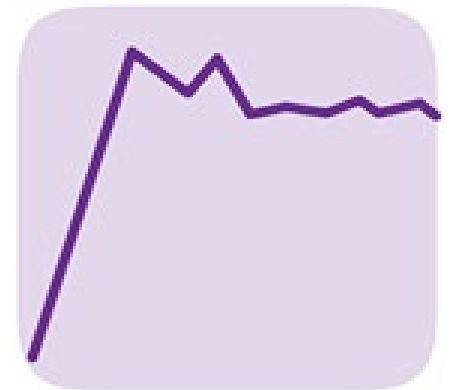


Response to a more severe stressor, limited in duration

EXAMPLES

loss of a loved one,
a broken bone

TOXIC



Experiencing strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity

EXAMPLES

physical or emotional abuse,
exposure to violence



Factors Increasing Impact



- Early occurrence
- Blaming or shaming
- Being silenced or not believed
- Perpetrator is a trusted caregiver





- Behavior is like an iceberg
→ we only see the small portion above the surface.
- Below the surface are the feelings and emotions driving the behavior.
- The misbehavior we see is often a child's attempt to solve another problem of which we are unaware.

What Does Trauma Look Like?



Avoidant



Disconnected



Angry



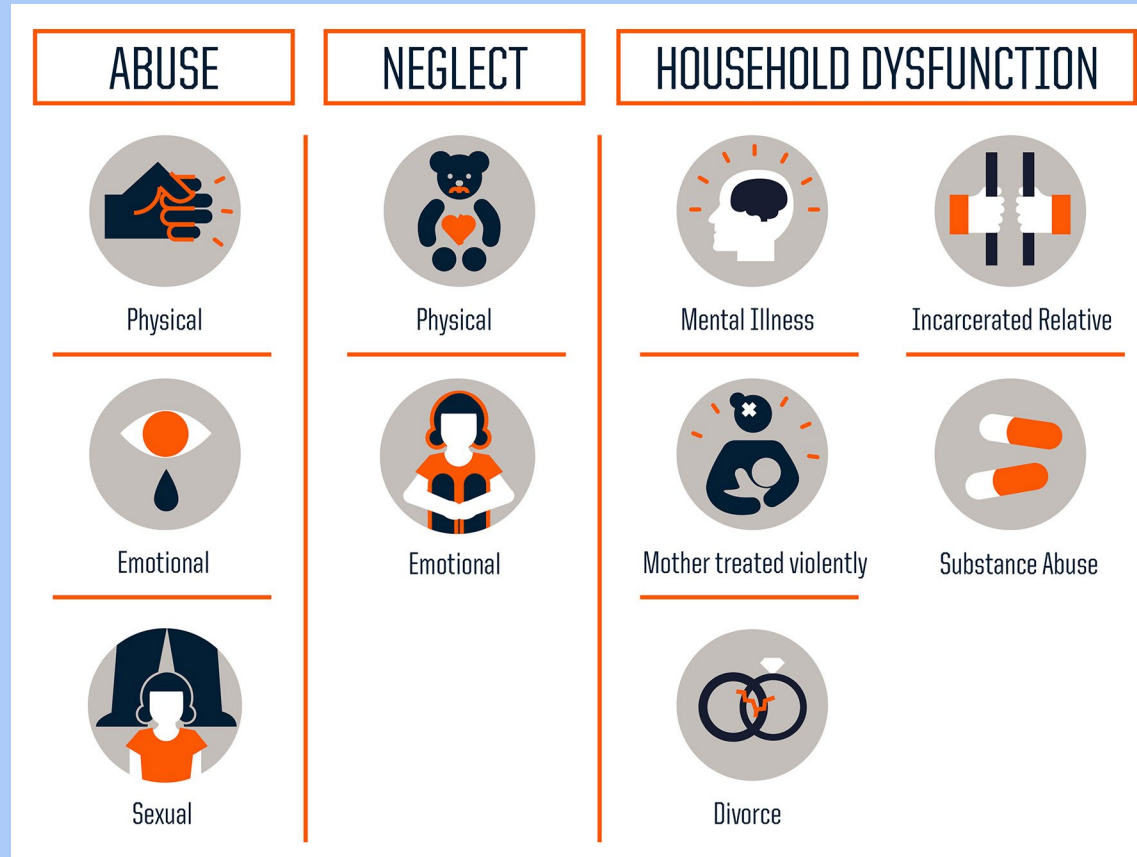
Hypervigilant

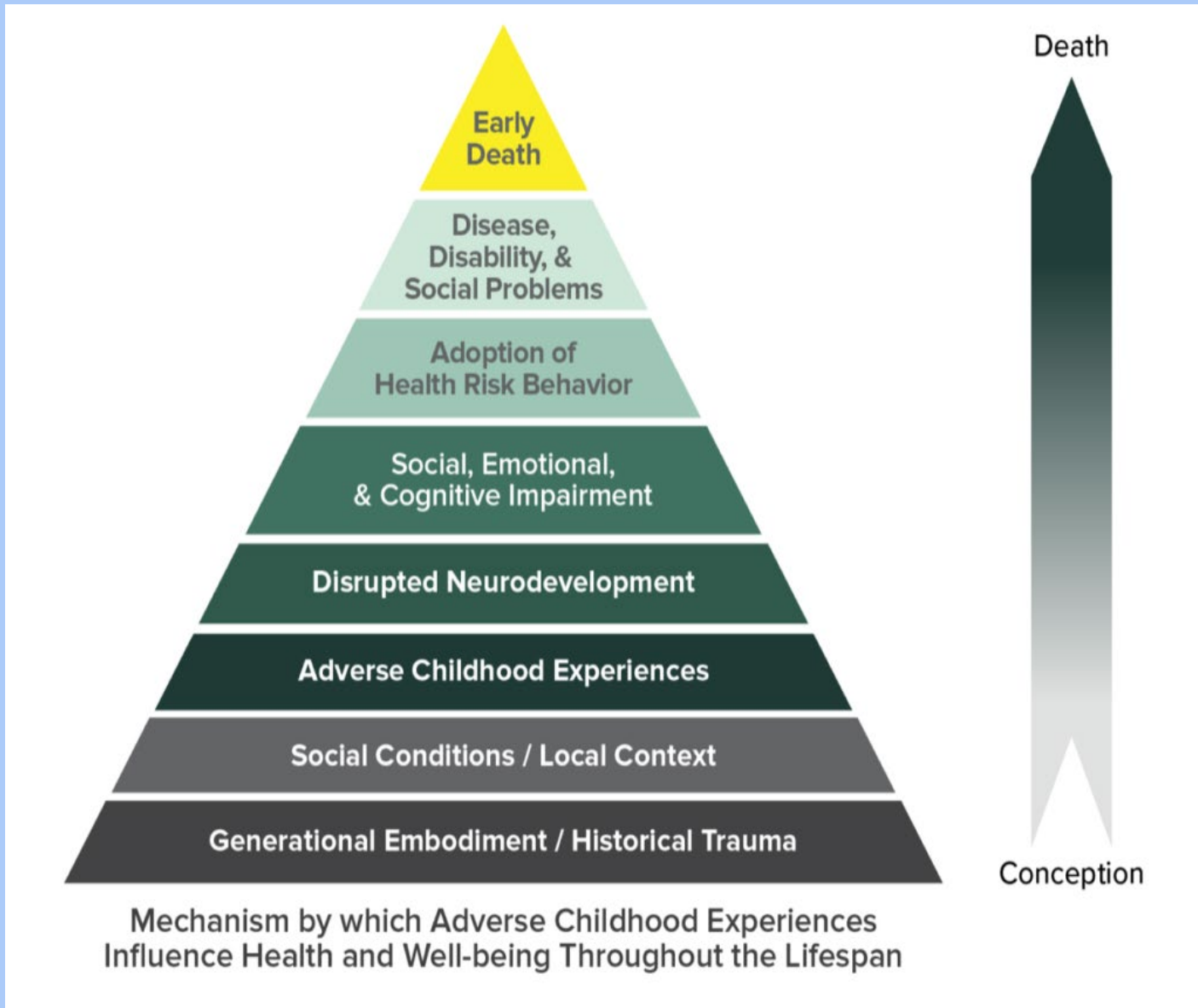
Learning Objectives – Section 2

- Understanding ACEs
- The Prevalence of Trauma



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)





Scoring 1 or 2 ACEs



2 times more likely to have serious financial problems



2.5 times more likely to smoke



2.6 times more likely to develop pulmonary disease



3 times more likely to have serious job problems



3 times more likely to use anti depressants



4 times more likely to develop STD's

Scoring 4 or More ACEs

3.7 times more likely to experience anxiety

4.4 times more likely to have chronic depression

5.6 times more likely to be involved in illicit drug use

5.8 times more likely to have problematic alcohol use

7 times more likely to go to prison

7.5 times more likely to experience violence victimization in adulthood

15 times more likely to attempt suicide

1,350 times more likely to face opiate abuse

ACEs can have lasting effects on...



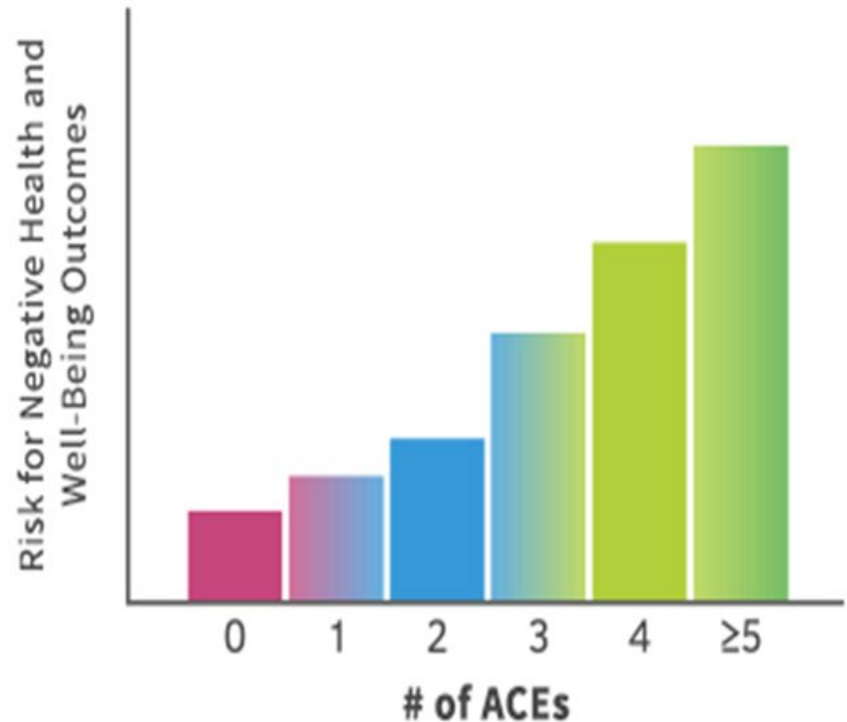
Health (obesity, diabetes, depression, suicide attempts, STDs, heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, broken bones)



Behaviors (smoking, alcoholism, drug use)



Life Potential (graduation rates, academic achievement, lost time from work)



Trauma and Mental Health

- In the Mental Health area – a history of childhood trauma predicts:
 - *Earlier first admissions*
 - *More frequent and longer hospital stays*
 - *More time in seclusion or restraint*
 - *Greater likelihood of self-injury or suicide attempt*
 - *More medication use*
 - *Increased symptom severity*





Trauma and Substance Abuse

- Around 65% of all substance abuse treatment clients report experiencing childhood abuse
- Around 75% of women in substance abuse treatment report a history of trauma
- Around 92% of homeless mothers have severe trauma histories

Trauma Prevalence In Children

- 60% of American children are exposed to violence, crime or abuse in their homes, schools and communities
- 40% of children are direct victims of two or more violent acts
- One in ten children are victims of violence five or more times before 18
- In 2017, suicide was the second leading cause of death among children ages 10-17 (National Institute of Mental Health, 2017)
- 3.5-10 million children witness violence against their mother or stepmother
- In a study of juvenile justice settings, 94% of children had experienced trauma



Why Focus on Trauma In Children?

Eradicating child maltreatment in America could potentially reduce many things predicted by ACEs:

Depression

Alcoholism
and drug use

Suicide

Domestic
violence

The need for
incarceration





What Would Happen if We Prevent ACEs?

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/communicationresources/infographics/preventchildhoodadversity>

- 15% reduction in the number of adults who are unemployed
- 16% reduction in the number of adults with kidney disease
- 24-27% reduction in the number of adults with respiratory problems such as asthma and COPD
- 33% reduction in the number of adults who smoke
- 44% reduction in the number of adults with depression
- ACEs related illness accounts for an estimated \$748 billion financial costs in North America each year.
- A 10% reduction in ACEs could equate to an annual savings of \$56 billion



Learning Objectives

Section 3

- Resilience Case Study
- Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)
- Protective Factors
- Elements of trauma informed organizations/communities

Resilience Case Study

Chad's Story



Increasing Positive Childhood Experiences

- In 2019 Johns Hopkins published the “Positive Childhood Experiences” Study showing how positive experiences acted to counter traumatic childhood experiences
- Of 6,188 adults surveyed they identified 7 categories of childhood experiences that are connected to improved mental health and social connectedness in adults

https://positiveexperience.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/jamapediatrics_bethell_2019_oi_190057.pdf



What Was Learned

- ACEs may be fact but are not fate
- Kids who experience many positive childhood experiences during childhood become adults who can seek support, get care – and adults who can seek support and get care have improved symptoms even if mental health is present.
- The relationship between positive experiences and good mental health is dose-responsive; that means the more PCE's a child has the better their adult mental health is likely to be.

7 Positive Childhood Experiences

Ability to talk with
family about
feelings

Felt experience
that family is
supportive in
difficult times

Enjoyment in
participation in
community
traditions

Feeling of
belonging in high
school

Feeling of being
supported by
friends

Having at least two
non-parent adults
who genuinely
care

Feeling safe and
protected by an
adult at home



Connectedness is Key

“Your history of connectedness is a better predictor of your health than your history of adversity.”

Bruce Perry, MD PhD

Moving Forward



Family Protective Factors

- For Families

- *Concrete support in time of need*
- *Social connections*
- *Parenting skills*
- *Personal resilience*
- *Ability to help children develop social/emotional competence*
- *Ability to foster nurturing attachment with children*

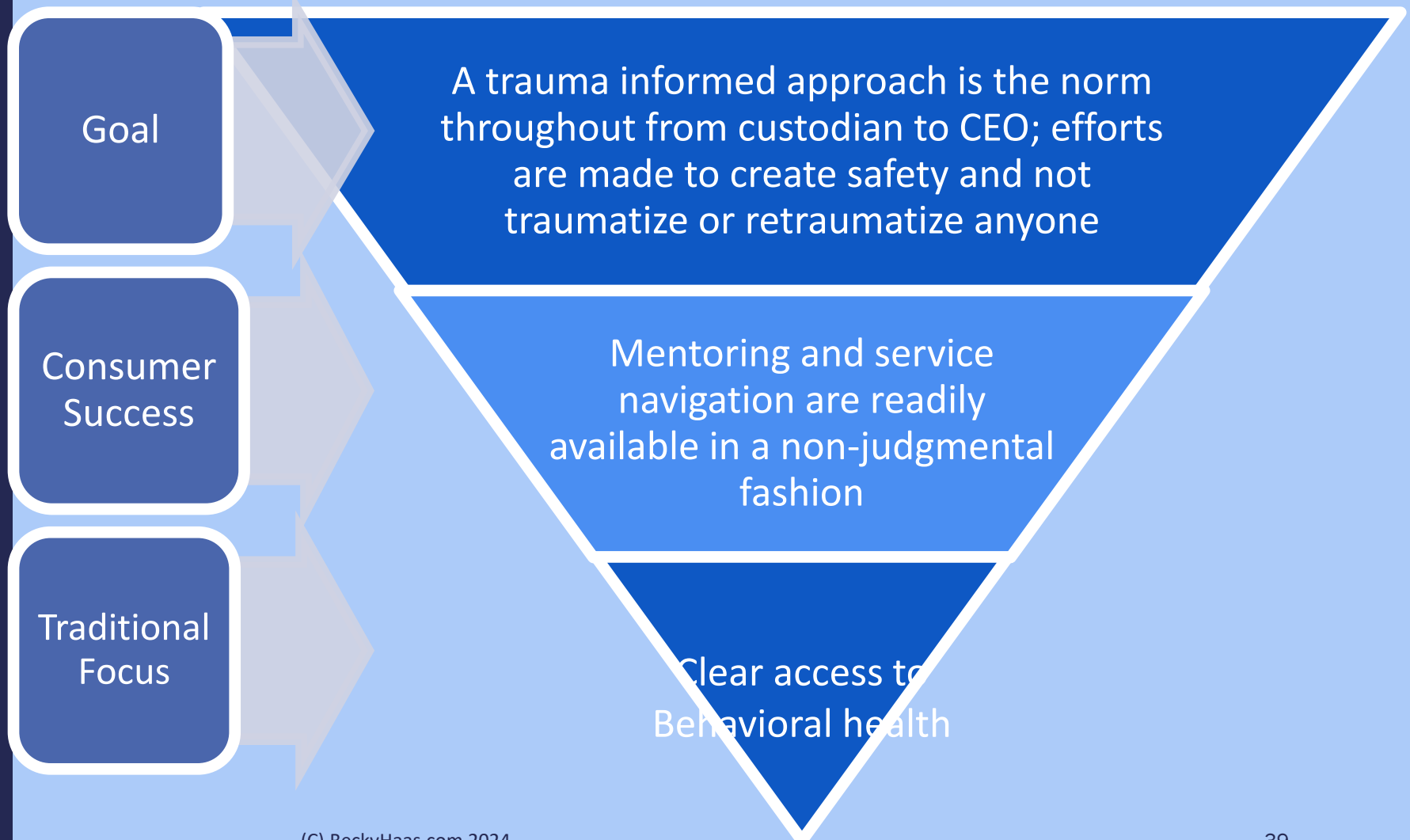
- *Strengthening Families: A Protective Factors Framework. Center for the Study of Social Policy. <https://www.cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies/about#protective-factors-framework>. Accessed July 26, 2018*



Community Protective Factors

- Safe neighborhoods
- Safe schools
- Stable and safe housing
- Access to nutritious food
- Access to employment
- Access to medical care including behavioral health and mental wellness
- Transportation
- Access to safe, high quality and affordable child care
- Inclusion and equity related to race, ethnicity and disability

Resilient Organizations and Communities





Learning Objectives

Section 4

- The 4 “R’s” of a Trauma Informed Program, Organization, or System
- Understanding SAMHSA’s principles and why each is important
- Provide positive examples of each principle

A Trauma Informed Program's 4 R's

Realizes widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery.

Recognizes signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system.

Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices.

Seeks to actively **Resist** re-traumatization.



Trauma informed should not feel like another program to implement, but rather a fundamental shift in HOW programs are implemented.

~ Missouri Model

SAMHSA's Key Principles of a Trauma Informed Approach

- Principles that guide a trauma informed change process
- Developed by national experts, including trauma survivors
- Goal: Establish a common language/framework
- Values based
- Not a checklist, but a **way** of being

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice and Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

SAMHSA's Key Principles of a Trauma Informed Approach

#1 - Safety

Physical Safety

Psychological Safety

- **Inclusion Safety**
- **Learner Safety**
- **Collaborator Safety**
- **Challenger Safety**
- “Safety” generally means maximizing control over their own lives
- “Safety” generally means maximizing control over the service environment and minimizing risk

#1 - Safety



What might safety look like?

- Welcoming people and environment
- Consistent and predictable
- Non-shaming, non-blaming, non-violent
- Respectful of privacy and confidentiality
- Clearly explanations of what is happening and why

#2 - Trustworthiness & Transparency

- Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency with a goal of building and maintaining trust among clients, family members, staff and other involved with this organization
- Ensuring people really understand their options
- **Being authentic**
- Directly addressing limits to confidentiality – letting clients know if/when confidentiality can and cannot be promised

Trustworthiness & Transparency



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- Dignity
- Respect
- Validation
- Listening – be present in the moment
- Build safety and trust → the foundations of healing

#3 Peer Support

Peer support = a flexible approach to building mutual, healing relationships among equals, based on core values and principles:


Voluntary

Non-Judgmental

Respectful

Reciprocal

Empathetic

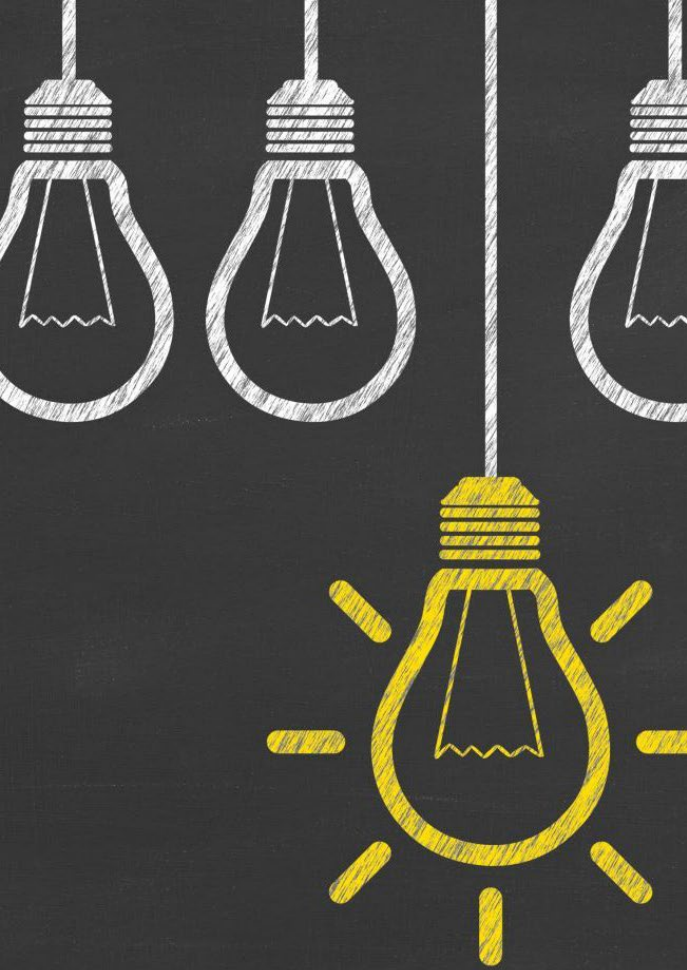


#4 - Collaboration and Mutuality

Partnering and leveling power differences between staff and clients (even kids) demonstrates that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision making.

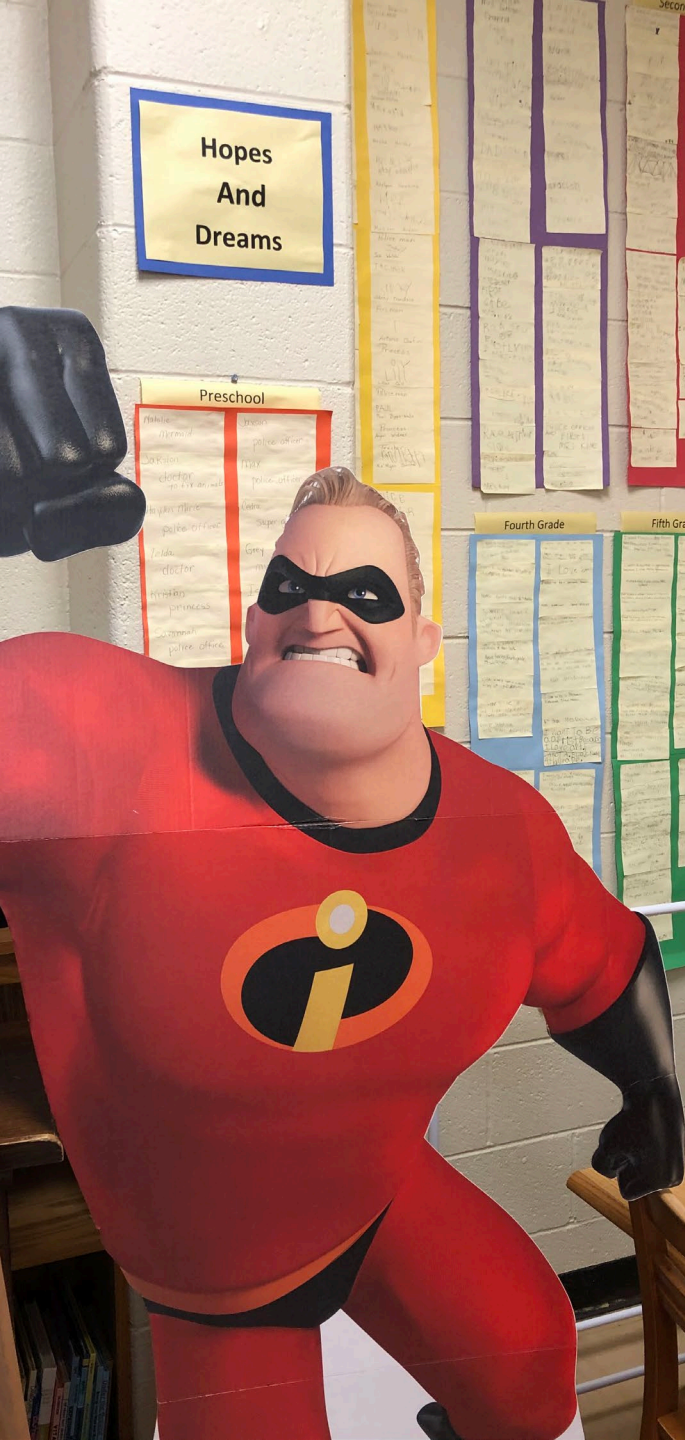
Everyone has a role to play; one does not have to be a therapist to be therapeutic.

Mindful of power differentials.



#5 – Empowerment, Voice and Choice

- Individuals' strengths and experiences are recognized and built upon; the experience of having a voice and choice is validated and new skills are developed.
- **The organization fosters a belief in resilience.**



Wall of Hopes and Dreams

Washington Lee Elementary School

Bristol, Virginia

School population – K-5 grade who
live in public housing

#6 Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues

- The organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases.

Treats all people as equally valuable human regardless of cultural, historical, or cultural differences.

Recognizes and addresses historical trauma of racism. Ensure racial equity.

Makes use of traditions, proactively strengthen cultural connections, existing supports such as faith communities and social organizations, all voices are at the table



Cultural Example: Hawaii Women's Prison

- Used their island custom of refuge to modify the environment
- Gardens and outdoor spaces
- Floral painting on the walls

Trauma Informed Services are...

Focused on understanding the whole individual and context of his or her life experience.

Infused with knowledge about the roles that violence and victimization play in the lives of survivors.

Non shaming and non blaming

- Designed to minimize the possibilities of victimization and re-victimization.
- Hospitable and engaging for survivors.
- Designed to facilitate recovery, growth, resilience, and healing.

You don't have to be brilliant,
rich or perfect to make a
difference in someone's life.
You just have to show you care.





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