

Trauma and Neighbourhoods: Harnessing Community Resiliency

Trauma-Informed Care

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Where we are heading.....

- What is trauma and how common is it?
- How can trauma affect us?
- What is Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)?
- Why is TIC important?
- What have the barriers been to TIC?
- How do we provide TIC?

What is trauma?

- PTSD Criterion A (DSM-5)
 - “Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one of the following ways:”
 - Direct experience, witnessing, learning about, repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details

What is trauma?

Psychological Trauma:

“...the **unique individual experience**, associated with an event or enduring conditions, in which the individual’s ability to integrate affective experience is overwhelmed or the individual experiences a threat to life or bodily integrity...”

(Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995)

How common is trauma?

- Lifetime prevalence of exposure to traumatic event may be as high as ~90% (no lower than 50-60%)
- By age 13, 13% of children will experience sexual violence, and 25% physical violence

National Comorbidity Replication Study (2010)

- 1 in 4 women will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime (1 in 6 men) – only 6% are reported to police
- 80% of sexual assailants are known to the survivor

(sexassault.ca)

How can trauma affect us?

- Trauma can happen to Individuals, Families, Communities, Cultures, Service providers
- Factors affecting impact of trauma:
 - Family of origin issues
 - Interpersonal and/or Intentional
 - Prior trauma and/or earlier age of exposure
 - Helplessness / powerlessness
 - Peri-traumatic dissociation

How can trauma affect us?

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) affects about 1 in 10 Canadians
- PTSD Symptoms
 - Intrusion (re-experiencing) of traumatic event
 - Avoidance of internal and external trauma cues
 - Hyperarousal – body gearing up for danger
 - Negative impact on thinking and mood
- Depression, anxiety, substance use, psychosis, schizophrenia

How can trauma affect us?

- Neurobiologically –memory, brain/body systems
- Psychologically – thoughts, feelings, behaviour
- Socially – relationships / connections
- Physically – self- or other-inflicted injury
- Medically – especially with repeated or long-term exposure

“a normal response to abnormal events”

What is Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)?

A **strengths-based** framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the **impact of trauma**, that emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional **safety** for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of **control** and **empowerment**.

Hopper, E.K., Bassuk, E. L., & Olivey, J. (2010). Shelter from the storm: trauma-informed care in homelessness services settings, *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal*, 3, 80-100.

What is TIC?

Key Features:

- Create and maintain safety and calm
- Ensure respect, trust, and empathy
- Emphasize collaboration and consumer/client choice
- Use appropriate and supportive language
- Highlight resilience and strengths
- Ensure an understanding of the impact of trauma exists across an organization
- Maintain appropriate culturally-sensitive competence

Why is TIC important?

- It minimizes/prevents re-victimization of traumatized persons/families/communities
- It allows for healing via the establishment of safety
 - ‘corrective experience’
- It allows for the forging of genuine and meaningful relationship
- It provides the opportunity for true strengths and capabilities to emerge

What have the barriers been to TIC?

- Trauma exposure/experience in service providers
- Lack of sufficient education and awareness
- Stigma
- Fundamental Attribution Bias
 - Internal (and stable) vs. external (and temporary)
- Lack of resources?

How do we provide TIC?

- Educate ourselves
- Communicate new understanding within the organization in which we work
- Take a learner's stance
 - Create opportunity for dialogue and shared learning both within organization and with those being served

How do we provide TIC?

- Be mindful of how physical settings and proxemics in spaces may affect those using them
- Attend fully to those you are working with
- Observe and respond to non-verbal as well as verbal communication
- Assist those you are working with in remaining oriented to the present environment and process
- Be flexible in pacing and process
- Maintain your own well-being

Thank you for caring for and investing in your communities and the people you serve

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