Building Trust: Engaging Communities of Color

Trauma 101: Men of Color and the Anatomy of Healing
Workshop objective

• To understand trauma and its affects
• To understand how trauma affects people of color today
• To identify ways to address trauma in our service delivery
The ACE’s effect

- The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study:
  Epidemiological study involving more than 17,000 individuals. Analyzed the long-term effects of childhood and adolescent traumatic experiences on adult health risks, mental health, healthcare costs, and life expectancy. (CDC, 2013)
10 question quiz

Abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

Household Challenges
- Domestic violence
- Substance abuse
- Mental illness
- Parental separation / divorce
- Incarcerated parent

Neglect
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect
Prior to your 18th birthday:

• Did a parent often or very often swear, insult, made you afraid that you’ll be hurt?

• Did a parent often or very often push, grab, slap, or hit you?

• Did an adult or person older than you ever touch or fondle you or have you touch them, or have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?

• Did you often or very often feel that no one in your family loved you or your family didn’t look out for or support each other?

• Did you often or very often feel that your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you?
Prior to your 18th birthday: (continued)

• Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
• Was your mother often or very often physically abused or battered?
• Did you live with a someone who was chemically dependent?
• Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
• Did a household member go to prison?

Now add up your “Yes” answers: ____ This is your ACE Score
Almost 2/3 adults surveyed reported at least 1 Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and the majority of respondents who reported at least one ACE reported more than one.
ACEs and Gender

14% have 4+ ACEs
60% have ACEs

18% have 4+ ACEs
63% have ACEs
Who participated in the ACE Study?

*Participants in this study reflected a cross-section of middle-class American adults.*
So what does that mean for Communities of Color?

• What does the ACE survey tell us about our communities?
• How are our communities handling this trauma?
• What concerns does this bring up for you around boys and men of color?
• What additional actions can we take?
What is trauma?

• American Psychological Association defines trauma as an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster.

• An intense and overwhelming experience that involve serious loss, threat or harm to a person’s physical and/or emotional wellbeing.
Effects of trauma

• Overwhelms a person’s coping resources. Leads the person to find a way of coping that may work in the short term but may cause serious harm in the long term.

• Can lead to a sense of vulnerability and/or fear.
Symptoms of trauma

- Reliving the experience
- Avoidance and emotional numbing
- Hyper vigilance
Reliving the experience

• Intrusive thoughts, images, perceptions
• Recurring nightmares/ lack of sleep
• Dissociative experiences
• Exaggerated physical and emotional reactions
Avoidance & emotional numbing

• Detachment- people, things, etc.

• Lack of emotions, flat affect
Hypervigilance

• Exaggerated startle response
• Being on guard at all times
• Distrustful of certain environments
ACE’s Pyramid

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Social, Emotional, & Cognitive Impairment
- Adoption of Health-risk Behaviors
- Disease, Disability and social problems
- Early Death
- Death

Birth
Philadelphia ACE study questions

Conventional ACEs

• Physical, Emotional, and Sexual abuse
• Emotional & Physical neglect
• Domestic violence
• Household substance abuse
• Incarcerated care provider
• Mental illness in the home

Expanded ACEs

• Witnessing violence
• Living in unsafe neighborhoods
• Experiencing racism
• Living in foster care
• Experiencing bullying
Boys and men of color & trauma

• Most recognize trauma as involving violence, abuse, or a disaster.

• Often factors such as poverty, racial discrimination, and incarceration are not recognized as potentially being equally traumatic.

• Many fail to accurately respond to the trauma boys and men of color experience.
Social Determinants of Health

- Neighborhood & Built Environment
- Health & Health Care
- Social & Community Context
- Education
- Economic Stability

SDOH
Factors that impact health

Childhood experiences

Housing

Education

Social support

Family income

Employment

Our communities

Access to health services

Each of these factors impact on our health and wellbeing
What makes people sick?

Social Determinants of Health: What makes people sick? infographic
Culture: Cross-Cutting Factors

• **Language & Styles of Communication:** verbal and nonverbal

• **Geographic Location:** rural, urban, region

• **Worldview, Values, & Traditions:** ceremonies, subsistence way of life, collective vs. individualistic

• **Family & Kinship:** hierarchy, roles, rules, traditions, definition of family

• **Gender Roles & Sexuality:** Gender norms, attitudes toward sexuality, and sexual identity.
Culture: Cross Cutting Factors (2)

- **Socioeconomic Status & Education**: Access and ability to use resources and opportunities, such as healthcare, schools, neighborhood, employment

- **Immigration & Migration History & Patterns**: seasonal, refugees, legal status, current generation in country

- **Cultural Identity & Degree of Acculturation**

- **Heritage & History**: Cultural strengths, traditions, generational wisdom, historical trauma

- **Perspectives on Health, Illness, and Healing Practices**
What is racial trauma?

- Physical and psychological symptoms POC experience after exposure to particularly stressful experiences of racism
- A cumulative experience, where every personal or vicarious encounter with racism contributes to chronic stress
“Racial oppression is a traumatic form of interpersonal violence which can lacerate the spirit, scar the soul, and puncture the psyche.”

Kenneth V. Hardy
Racism is trauma

• Negative, rejecting, and/or demeaning societal messages that undermine self-esteem

• Internalized racism is where people accept the negative messages about themselves and to reflect that negativity in their behavior

• Links to hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and infant mortalities
What is historical and generational trauma?

• Multicultural trauma experienced by a specific cultural group cumulative and collective and can manifest itself emotionally and psychologically

• The expanded ACEs pyramid accounts for oppression and historical trauma where the cumulative impact is fundamentally life-altering
For many people of Color, early racial socialization experiences often include listening to their parents’ and grandparents’ stories of living through different periods of racial tension in the U.S., including the Civil Rights movement, Jim Crow laws, and for some slavery.
Carrying Trauma

Educating and socializing the younger generation about race and racism is essential, yet racial trauma is often carried across multiple generations and Intergenerational trauma can lead to higher rates of mental health and physical health issues.
Symptoms of Historical Trauma

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Violence & Suicide
- Isolation
- Loss of Sleep
- Substance Abuse
- Loss of Concentration
- Anger
- Shame
- Discomfort around white people
- Fear & Distrust
Organizational and Institutional Trauma
Institutional trauma

• We live in the world where human frailty and pathology is viewed in individual terms. When we see sickness we imagine that the person must have some weakness in biology, faith, or behavior.

• Research suggests environmental response to an individual’s trauma experiences may be a determining factor in whether PTSD or chronic traumatic reactions form.
“Institutional action and inaction that exacerbate the impact of traumatic experiences...”
Trauma informed care systems

Systems without Trauma Sensitivity

• Misuse or overuse displays of power – keys, security, etc.
• Higher rates of staff turnover and low morale
• Disempowering and devaluing consumers
• Consumers are labeled and pathologized
• Focused on what’s wrong with the victim
I decide for you

Paternalistic model

Deliberative model

Informative model

Interpretative model

In addition, I tell you my preferences

I give you facts and help you to find your preferences
**Effects of Trauma**

- Hyperarousal: Nervousness, jumpiness, quickness to startle
- Re-experiencing: Intrusive thoughts, images, sensations, dreams, or memories
- Avoidance or withdrawal: Feeling numb, shut down, or separated from normal life
- Pulling away from relationships and/or activities

**Faulty Systems**

- Misusing or overusing displays of power - keys, security, etc.
- Higher rates of staff turnover and low morale
- Disempowering and devaluing survivors
- Survivors are labeled and pathologized
- Focusing on what's wrong with the victim

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**Trauma Informed Care Within Systems**

**The Helper Prevents Further Harm By:**

- Recognizing that coercive interventions cause trauma and re-traumatization
- Maintaining awareness/undergoing training with regard to re-traumatization and vicarious trauma
- Valuing survivor's voice in all aspects of care
- Staying all-inclusive when it comes to a survivor's perspective and recognition of person as a whole
- Focusing on what has happened to victim

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Poster created by the Sacred Hoop Coalition, Minnesota
Institutional advocacy: polices and practices

Trauma-informed practice and policy are relevant at all of these levels.

NS TIC Practice Brief, 2015
What do Trauma Informed Policies look like in:

- Advocacy Programs
- Shelters
- Law Enforcement
- Jails
- Prosecution
- Courts
- Probation
Impact of trauma on boys and men of color

• On average have fewer sessions and terminate services earlier than European Americans

• Safety and coping
  - Often times self-medicate to cope with their traumatic experiences.
  - Can reinforcement stigma that they are drug seeking.
  - Validating resilience is important even when past coping behaviors are now causing problems
Masculinity and trauma

• Ideas about masculinity have an effect on how and when boys and men of color access health care. Mostly seen as a weakness

• When men do seek trauma support services they often find providers who are unsympathetic or unfamiliar with the issues they face
Supporting boys and men of color in their healing journey

• As with other forms of trauma, we ask the wrong question about struggling youth of color. Instead of asking “What is wrong with them?” we need to ask the trauma-informed question, “What has happened to them?”

• Building trust is the first step to creating healthy relationships and can significantly impact treatment outcomes.
Provide culturally relevant services

• To understand how trauma affects an individual, family, or community, you must first understand that individual’s life experiences and cultural background.

• Staff should receive appropriate training to ensure that they are providing culturally relevant interventions.
Issues that impact participation in therapy

• Racial similarity

• Perception of provider competence

• Perceptions of the quality of the services
Conclusion

• Comments

• Questions