Trauma Informed Care Across the Lifespan

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Introduction

Trauma informed care (TIC) consists of a multi-layered process in which clinicians build relationships with their clients/patients. This is an area for growth for many practitioners, no matter what setting or population you work with. How many times have you witnessed a physician or other practitioner come into a patient’s room or treatment space and not introduce themselves? Have you ever seen a colleague come in and touch a patient without establishing rapport and boundaries? Universal precautions, the triad of consent and simple ways we make our patients feel safe while respecting their boundaries provides the spark we need as clinicians to learn more.

This course will explore ways to implement these practices throughout the lifespan to best support your patients and the therapeutic alliance that is imperative for growth and success within our goals. Diving into this philosophy can seem daunting at first, but when we recognize the importance of viewing patients holistically and as humans rather than deficits, we are already engaging in trauma informed care.

Defining Trauma

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) defines as “an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being.”

Parameters of Trauma

* Exposed directly
* Witnessed the event
* Continued exposure to detrimental details of the event (first responders; other professionals involved in cases of trauma)

Two types of indirect:

* Media exposure: repeated/prolonged such as in Covid-19
* Learning that a person close to you experienced trauma

SAMSHA’s four R’s

* Realization: how it affects people
* Recognizing: signs of trauma
* Respond: response system
* Resisting re-traumatization

SAMSHA’s Guiding Principles for TIC

Triad of Consent

Adversity: screening

Distress: assessment of connections between triggering events and current conditions (health and/or psychological)

Strengths: : resources (intrinsic and extrinsic)

High risk populations

* Community members of low SES areas/marginalized communities
* LGBTQ+ community
* Women/girls
* Ethnic and racial minorities
* Disabled individuals
* Generational trauma
* Houseless veterans and other houseless people

Statistics

70% of adults have experienced 1-3 trauma events

Overall: males 60% and females 50%

Females: increased sexual trauma (abuse/assault), physical punishment and psychological distress compared to males

Pre-existing conditions

Trauma’s impact across the lifespan

* Physical
* Increased risk of lifelong health problems
* Autoimmune diseases
* Sexually transmitted infections
* Mental health conditions
* Viral hepatitis, which increases risk of liver disease and liver cancer
* Chronic cardiovascular diseases
* Shortened life span
* #1 cause of death ages 1-46
* Emotional
* Poor attachment to caregivers
* Emotional lability
* Poor emotional regulation
* Mood swings
* Poor self-esteem
* Withdrawal
* Difficulty concentrating

Psychological

“at risk” behaviors:

* Tobacco use/abuse
* Alcohol use disorder/abuse disorder
* Drug use/abuse/addiction
* Eating disorders
* Sexual dysfunction

Universal Precautions

For more information

https://irm.ahs.uic.edu/about-irm/

Barriers to care for all ages/populations

* Distrust of others
* Disbelief that anyone can help them
* Poor follow through with referrals
* Discussing the event might make things worse
* Emotional pain
* Self loathing

Case example 1

Case example 2

27 year old male s/p TBI

Active-duty vet

GCS 6 (indicative of SEVERE injury)/intubated and sedated in the ED

Impulsive/combative

PTSD

Experienced two pretty significant blast injuries in field prior to the accident

What can you do?

Interestingly…..

Professions that do NOT require TIC training for licensure or for renewal (at least not in my locale):

* Chiropractors
* Massage therapists
* Skin estheticians
* Cosmetic/plastic surgeons
* Physical therapists
* Mental health state hospital workers

How to get training:

Resources for immediate help:

* Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQ+ youth
* Text “START” to 678-678
* Call 1-866-488-7386
* National Suicide Prevention hotline now the “988 Lifeline”
* Spanish speaking: “AYUDA” to 988
* Call 988 and press “2”
* Deaf and hard of hearing: access videophone
* Veteran’s crisis hotline
* Text 838-255
* Call 988 and press “1”
* Call 1-800-273-8255
* Crisis text line
* Text 988
* Trans lifeline
* Call 1-877-565-8860

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