



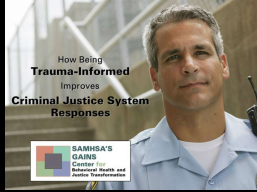
## An Introduction to Trauma-Informed Responses for Criminal Justice Professionals

Presented By:  
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Certified SAMHSA Trainer

This is an Introduction to Trauma-Informed Responses

This is an interactive presentation derived from a lengthy interactive training offered through SAMHSA GAINS Center (6 hrs.).



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**University of Wisconsin-Madison**

- Campus/University Education- *PAVE*
- Victim Advocacy- *DAIS*
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**Paralegal Work**

- Criminal
- Family
- Social Security

**WI-Department of Corrections**

- Probation & Parole Agent
- Trauma Informed Care
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### Today's Objectives

- Define trauma;
- Better understand the impact of trauma on behavior;
- Learn what it means to practice trauma-informed responses.



## Take Care of You & Be Mindful of Others

Take a break & Step Out

Ask questions

Avoid comparisons

Take notes to follow up



Be respectful

Offer input

Speak with kindness

Disagreements will happen

...This is a safe place

## What is Trauma?

*“Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”*

SAMHSA, 2014



## Experience

Events are experienced as...

- Threatening
- Terrifying
- Overwhelming

Resulting feelings might include...

- Fear, horror, helplessness, betrayal
- Anger, revenge, out of control
- Shame, guilt, feelings of responsibility for harm coming to another person

## Traumatic Events Can Be...

- Single event
- Series of events or ongoing
- Set of circumstances

## Long-term Effect

## Modern Technology

(TV, Internet, Newspapers, Magazines, etc.)

## Effects

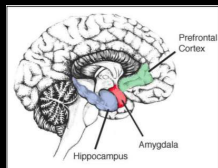
The impact of trauma can be seen in numerous aspects of a person's life and, in many instances, be long-term.

Trauma can...

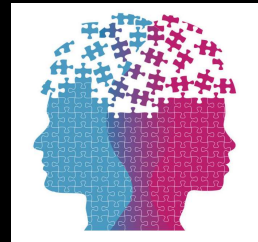
- Affect one's ability to be independent
- Affect one's ability to keep job or care for children and family
- Affect one's psychological and social development
- Affect one's health/biology

## Effects on the Brain

Clear associations have been identified between trauma and changes in brain function and structure.



## Mental Health and Trauma



## Impact of Trauma on Behavior

The effects of trauma may manifest behaviorally and they may show up in areas of functioning.

Can you name a few?



## Mental Health and Trauma

- Paranoia
- Hyper-Vigilance
- Intrusive Re-experiences/Triggers
- Dissociation or "Numbing"
- Psychosis

For some, their behavior becomes a means of survival.

**BEHAVIOR**  
=  
**SURVIVAL**

Other examples of survival behaviors:

- Expressing emotions-holding in feelings to survive;
- Truthfulness-being forced to tell lies;
- Trust-constantly having your trust violated.

## Trauma Effects on High-Risk Behaviors & Poor Relationships

Video-Trauma Effects 2

## Trauma and Behavioral Problems

### Indicators

- Fighting back
- Strong emotional outbursts
- Low self-esteem
- Hypersensitivity to potential threat
- Engagement in high-risk behaviors
- "All or nothing"



## Trauma and Substance Abuse

Why do people misuse drugs?

**They Work!**

How does this happen?

**Remember the brain?**

## Trauma and Poor Relationships

### Indicators

- Lack of trust in others
- Low self-esteem
- Problems with intimacy
  - Does not like being touched
  - Sex associated with violence
- Isolation/Withdrawal
- Substance Abuse



## Drugs and Effects Matchup

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Cocaine/Crack/Meth/Ice | A. Surface Anesthesia, dissociation                                 |
| 2. Opiates/Heroin         | B. Increased energy, euphoria, improved self-confidence, self-worth |
| 3. Marijuana              | C. Anesthetic, calm, confidence, escape                             |
| 4. PCP, Special K         | D. Increase pleasure and reduce pain                                |
| 5. Alcohol                | E. Escape, calm, surface anesthesia                                 |
| 6. MDMA/Molly/Ecstasy     | F. Increased pleasure, increased energy, escape                     |

## Trauma Effects and Substance Abuse

Video-Trauma Effects 3

## Long-term Effect



## Individualized Differences



## Risk Factor

*Something that increases risk or susceptibility.*

Merriam-Webster

Can you name some factors that could increase a persons risk of trauma?

## Resilience

*The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.*

Merriam-Webster

Can you name some individual factors that can make a person resilient?

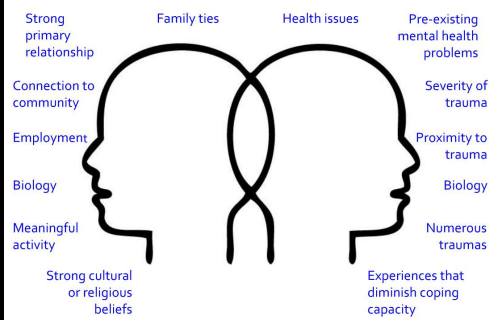
## Risk Factors

- Health issues
- Mental health problems
- Severity of Trauma
- Proximity to Trauma
- Biology
- Previous Trauma
- Diminished coping

## Resilience Factors

- Family ties
- Strong primary relationships
- Connection to community
- Employment
- Biology
- Meaningful activity
- Strong cultural/religious beliefs

## Individualized Experiences





## Remember... BEHAVIOR

- Behavior that stems from traumatic experiences can be challenging to others, including us.
- Behavior can be frustrating, annoying, and even dangerous.
- Keep in mind that behavior is often how a person copes.

## Trauma Informed Responses

Criminal justice professionals should use a trauma-informed approach in our interactions with people to:

- Ease Management;
- Keep Everyone Safe;
- Avoid re-traumatizing.

## BUT

Trauma does NOT excuse behavior.

## R.I.S.C.

- RESPECT
- INFORMATION
- SAFETY
- CHOICE

## Being Trauma-Informed Means

We recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in an individual and we take into consideration this possibility when responding to the individual.

## SAMHSA's Universal Response

- **Avoid** overreacting, triggering behavior, getting into a power struggle, touching, faking interest or concern, and avoid aggressive language.
- **Approach** with caution and allow safe space. This provides an opportunity for fear to subside.

Trustworthiness  
Respect  
Choice  
**INTERACT**  
Collaboration  
Empowerment

## SAMHSA's Universal Response

- **Communicate** and tell them what “happens next” and include them in the process, if possible. Speak clearly, calmly and slowly. This includes body language.
- **Respond** to the behavior by being sensitive to fear, being patient, being supportive and not taking the situation personally.

## Trauma Informed Responses

Video-Trauma Informed Responses

## Safe Space

One's perception of “how close is close enough” depends on a number of factors.

### Factors include:

- How well the person knows you.
- The person's current state of stress.
- Whether the close space is face on, from behind, or side-by-side.
- The person's history of trauma.
- Cultural factors- for example, some cultures are known for communicating in very close proximity, whereas people from other cultures may differ.

## Trauma-Informed Responses

- **Respond** with flexibility, sensitivity, and patience.
- **Interact** with respect, information, and choice.
- **Safety** is the primary goal.

## Universal Assumption of Trauma

Rates of trauma are high within the criminal justice system and it is safest to assume that the person you are working with has a trauma background.

## Interventions for Vicarious Trauma ABC's: Awareness, Balance, and Connection

### Organizational/Social Level

- Reduce system causes of vicarious trauma, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout such as workload and exposure to challenging cases.
- Provide critical incidents debriefing.
- Work with area Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) to identify areas of improvement such as in-service trainings on self-care or counseling.
- Provide sabbaticals, professional education, community service, and public speaking opportunities.
- Provide a Psychologist Peer Advocate- a specially-trained therapist to assist with cognitive changes resulting from vicarious trauma.

## Secondary/Vicarious Trauma

*The lingering effects of working with and helping those experiencing firsthand trauma.*

Signs include:

- Re-experiencing of personal trauma;
- Increase in arousal and avoidance reactions;
- Changes in memory and perception;
- Altered perceptions of safety, trust, and independence;
- Physical health issues increase;
- Hopelessness, fear, anger, guilt.

**Thank you for your service and  
commitment to your  
communities!**

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## Interventions for Vicarious Trauma ABC's: Awareness, Balance, and Connection

### Individual Level

- Monitor yourself- eat well, rest, and exercise.
- Self-care - seek balance, engage in outside activities.
- Set Professional and personal boundaries.
- Take advantage of professional development opportunities.
- Utilize viable, evidence-based treatments for vicarious trauma/secondary traumatic stress that focus on changes in cognitive processes.