Shifting the Paradigm: Asking “What Happened to You?” Instead of “What’s Wrong With You?”

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Today we will...

- Define stress & emotional trauma
- Discuss the intersection of trauma & poverty
- Discuss impacts on service provision
- Offer tools and opportunities for reflection
- General Q & A
WHAT IS YOUR COMFORT ZONE???

COMFORT ZONE MODEL

- Panic Zone
- Discomfort Zone
- Learning Zone
- Immobilising Zone

COMFORT ZONE

IMMOBILISING ZONE

LEARNING ZONE

DISCOMFORT ZONE

PANIC ZONE!
What?
What is stress?
Three Levels of Stress Response

Positive
Brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

Tolerable
Serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships.

Toxic
Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships.
Short Route/Long Route

The diagram illustrates the neural pathways involved in short and long routes through the brain. The pathway from sensory thalamus to amygdala is labeled as the 'short route' and is associated with emotional stimulus and response. The 'long route' involves a series of sensory and association cortices before reaching the hippocampus.
Resilience and Protective Factors

- Resilience: Positive adjustment in the face of adversity.
  - It can be developed
  - Dynamic; involves a fit between a person's individual characteristics (for example, health or talents) and supportive features of his or her environment (family, school, community) (Princeton.edu)

- Protective Factors: Protective factors are conditions or attributes in individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that, when present, mitigate or eliminate risk in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families. (Child Welfare.gov)
  - Parent Resilience
  - Knowledge of Parent and Child Development
  - Social and Emotional Competence of Children
  - Social Connections
  - Concrete Support in Times of Needs (Strengthening Families Framework)
What is trauma?
“Trauma is to mental health as smoking is to cancer!”

Dr. Steven Sharfstein, former president of the American Psychiatric Association
What do we think of when we think of the word ‘trauma’?

“A traumatic event is a scary, dangerous or violent event. An event can be traumatic if we face or witness an immediate threat to ourselves or a loved one often followed by serious injury or harm” DSM5
Some people are exposed to multiple traumatic events and have wide ranging long term impacts. These events are severe, chronic and often, interpersonal such as abuse or neglect. This is called ‘COMPLEX TRAUMA’. It is both the exposure to trauma and the impact of that exposure on development.
TRIPLE E

EVENT

EXPERIENCE

EFFECTS
What is poverty?
● POVERTY = Lack of resources
● Income gap increasing
● What does research say causes it?
  ◦ Behaviors of the Individual
  ◦ Lack of Human & Social Capital
  ◦ Human Exploitation
  ◦ Political/Economic Structures

● MANY CAUSES – MANY STRATEGIES

From Bridges Out of Poverty, Dr. Ruby Payne
What happens to families when there aren’t enough resources?

- Excellent reactive skills
- No time to spend with family
- Children take on adult roles early
- Isolation
- Strong sense of family
- More about meeting concrete crisis than creating a high quality of life
- Make choices based on agency requirements
- Other?
How does this affect families & what should front line staff know about poverty?

● Issues of lack of resources
  ◦ Unstable housing
  ◦ Transportation
  ◦ Food
  ◦ Basics

● Communication style
  ◦ Concrete Vs Abstract

● Health Issues
  ◦ Mental
  ◦ Physical
Culture of Economic Class

Hidden Rules

- The unwritten cues and habits of groups
- Come from the environment where a child is raised
- Let you know if you belong or not
- Not hidden intentionally, just unspoken
- You KNOW when you have violated a hidden rule

From Bridges Out of Poverty, Dr. Ruby Payne
POVERTY
Key question:
Did you have enough?
Quantity important

MIDDLE CLASS
Key question:
Did you like it?
Quality important

WEALTH
Key question:
Was it presented well?
Presentation important

From Bridges Out of Poverty, Dr. Ruby Payne
Living in poverty can be traumatic.
What Could Happen If You Are a Family Who Lives in Poverty?

- Daily Hassles
- Sleep Issues
- Isolation
- Uncertainty
- Discrimination & Stigma
- Fear
- Hunger
- Addictions
- Mental and Physical Health Problems
- Chaos
- Violence
Experiencing poverty...

- means focusing on survival and managing crisis
- increases exposure to high stress
- increases exposure to threats
- increases the risk of exposure to many types of trauma
- means there are fewer resources to protect people from the harmful effects of trauma
So What?
Trauma can change us.
Common Reactions to Trauma
ACEs = Adverse Childhood Experiences

The three types of ACEs include:

**ABUSE**
- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual

**NEGLECT**
- Physical
- Emotional

**HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**
- Mental Illness
- Incarcerated Relative
- Mother treated violently
- Substance Abuse
- Divorce

http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/
ACE SCORE of FOUR

Likelihood of being a smoker +161%
Likelihood of having heart disease +105%
Likelihood of having used IV drugs +3900%
Likelihood of sexual promiscuity (over 50 partners) +114%

Likelihood of contracting liver disease +94%
Likelihood of being a victim of physical violence (women) +380%
Likelihood of being a victim of sexual assault (women) +800%
Likelihood of being a binge drinker +67%
Likelihood of contracting cancer +50%
Likelihood of having a mental health condition +207%
Likelihood of being obese +46%

Likelihood of contracting an STD +191%
## TIME, COGNITION, AND MENTAL STATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Time</th>
<th>Extended Future</th>
<th>Days/Hrs</th>
<th>Hours/Minutes</th>
<th>Minutes/Seconds</th>
<th>Loss of Sense of Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognition</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Reflexive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental State</td>
<td>CALM</td>
<td>AROUSAL</td>
<td>ALARM</td>
<td>FEAR</td>
<td>TERROR</td>
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<td>Adaptive Response</td>
<td>Rest (Adult Male)</td>
<td>Vigilance</td>
<td>Freeze</td>
<td>Flight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hyperarousal Continuum</td>
<td>Rest (Male Child)</td>
<td>Vigilance</td>
<td>Resistance</td>
<td>Defiance</td>
<td>Aggression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissociative Continuum</td>
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<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Compliance</td>
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<td>FEAR</td>
<td>Terror</td>
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</table>
You can inherit trauma

- Epigenetics
People learn “survival tools” to cope with trauma.
What do we mean by “survival tools”?

Survival tools usually help us to:
- escape or deter perceived threats
- alleviate pain or distress caused by a perceived inescapable threat

We can think of these survival tools as ways any reasonable person would act in order to escape a threat or alleviate pain.
• Trauma & traumatic context affects:
  ◦ My body
  ◦ My thoughts
  ◦ My feelings
  ◦ My actions

www.coleva.net

• Trauma & traumatic context can result in:
  ◦ Particular brain wiring
  ◦ Illness
  ◦ Coping strategies that allow continued function during stress but are not helpful in settings that are not traumatic
Cause & Effect

- If an individual depends upon a random, episodic story structure for memory patterns, lives in an unpredictable environment, and has not developed the ability to plan, THEN ...

- If an individual cannot plan, he/she cannot predict.
- If an individual cannot predict, then he/she cannot identify cause and effect.
- If an individual cannot identify cause and effect, he/she cannot identify consequence.
- If an individual cannot identify consequence, he/she cannot control impulsivity.
- If an individual cannot control impulsivity, he/she has an inclination toward criminal behavior.
I see....
It might be.....

- Pair & Share

- What have you seen your CAP families do that might be explained by trauma?
  - I see someone who points their finger and swears.
  - It might be that the person feels powerless.
Mirror neurons

- Our brains react to our *perceived* intentions of people around us
  - empathy
  - imitation
- we are able to experience what we think others are experiencing within ourselves–
  - if perceptions are off, our brain is off
  - After dealing with people who are highly stressed, we become highly stressed
  - Emotions are contagious
Compassion Fatigue

- It has been called "a disorder that affects those who do their work well" (Figley 1995)
- Vicarious trauma
- Empathy
People can learn “thriving tools.”
What do we mean by “Thriving Tools”?

Thriving Tools can help us:

- Practice using the slow route/path in our brain rather than the fast path required for survival
- Limit the amount of stress-hormones released in our bodies, which reduces the chance of trauma-related illness
- Respond to stressors in ways that are more commonly used in safe and stable environments
- Rewire our brain
Now What?
Shifting the Paradigm: Asking “What Happened to You?” Instead of “What’s Wrong With You?”
Paradigm Shift

**REALIZE** the impact of trauma

**RECOGNIZE** the signs of trauma

**RESPOND** by integrating knowledge about trauma into practices, policies, procedures

**RESIST** re-traumatizing people

Source: SAMHSA
Practice good self care!
Remember...

- If during an interaction with a client they are constantly arguing, disagreeing or ignoring you, then what you are doing is not working.
- It’s a signal to SHIFT methods
Let go of outcome!?!
How can I help people learn new tools? Inspire to ReWire!

- Rhythm
- Routine/Ritual
- Relationships

Bruce D. Perry
Rewire Through Relationship
Pick up a different tool!

- Motivational Interviewing—competing motivations
- Affirmations
- Reflections
- Summaries
- Use strategic humor
- Ask open ended questions
  - What has your experience been?
  - What happened the last time....
  - Tell me...
  - How did your last meeting with a case manager go?
- Ask – Tell – Ask
  (Elicit–Provide–Elicit)
  - Ask for permission
  - Make an observation
  - Elicit feedback
Role play

● Front line staff
  ◦ Reception
  ◦ Family Development
  ◦ Family Advocates
  ◦ EAP
  ◦ Weatherization
  ◦ Housing
  ◦ other
How might our background, survival tools, and stressors be barriers to our personal growth?

Meet Melissa

Melissa’s background:
- At age 9, child protective services became involved with the family and Melissa was removed from the home for 6 months before being reunited with her parents.
- Melissa’s parents often blamed their caseworker at the housing authority for making the report to CPS.
- Has stolen food when hungry to avoid dealing with agencies.

Melissa’s survival tools:
- Mistrusts and fears agencies and institutions.
- Refuses to comply with rules or structures that seem unfair or punitive.
- Keeps most people at a distance.

Melissa’s current stressors:
- Melissa was recently laid off from her job at a local manufacturing plant.
- Melissa has asthma and relied on the health insurance from her employer to pay for her medications and doctor’s visits.

SCENARIO: Melissa asks for help

Melissa reluctantly called a service agency to see about getting assistance temporarily. She received an automated message that explained all the documentation she would need in order to apply. A few days later, she went to the service agency with the necessary documentation. Melissa stood in line for about 25 minutes before being helped. When it was Melissa’s turn, the receptionist did not look up from the computer and simply took the paperwork from Melissa. When the caseworker came out to the waiting room, she told Melissa, “I’m sorry, but I cannot process your application today because I need written documentation from your employer stating that your position was eliminated.” Melissa responded, “I don’t have anything like that and the automated message did not list that as something I needed to bring.” The caseworker shrugged her shoulders and said, “I don’t really know what the message says, but there is nothing I can do about it. I have to follow protocol. Once you get all the necessary paperwork, you can come back and try again.”

Melissa reacts...
- Leaves the office and does not come back.
- Decides she will have to find other ways to get her needs met.

Getting your needs met is difficult when you don’t trust anyone. Sometimes systems don’t work very well and can be traumatizing.
Understand Resilience Factors

- The capacity to make realistic plans and steps to carry them out
- A positive view of yourself and confidence in your strength and abilities
- Skills in communication and problem solving
- The capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses
REINFORCE RESILIENCY BUILDING

- Make connections
- Avoid Seeing Crisis as insurmountable problems
- Accept that change is part of life
- Move toward your goals
- Take decisive actions
- Look for opportunities for self-discovery
- Nurture a positive view of yourself
- Keep things in perspective
- Maintain a hopeful outlook
- Take care of yourself
What can you do?

- Continue being awesome!
- Be aware of your own lens
- Learn about poverty
- Learn about trauma
- Understand cultures
- Understand that behaviors arise because they are useful
- Leave off judgment
- Help people use different tools by creating respectful relationships
- Learn about community resources
A Few More R’s...

- Rewire
- Rhythm
- Routine/Ritual
- Relationships
- Remember resilience
- Resources
- Reserve judgment
- Reasonable reactions
- Role model
- RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE
Self Care Strategies

- Handout
- Brainstorm

WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?
RESTFULNESS JAR

- some kind of empty and clean glass jar with a lid
- sparkles or glitter in at least one color—you can get glitter at a stationery or craft store, glitter glue also works.
- a bottle of glycerin—you can get this inexpensively at a craft store or a health food store, and also at most drug stores. (Glycerin thickens the water and helps the sparkles fall more slowly.)
- some liquid dish soap or hand soap—clear and colorless soap works best. (Soap helps lower the surface tension of the water so the sparkles don’t just stay on the top.)
My Community Action Staff gives me:

- New information
- New Skills
- Increased Competence
- Friendship
- Role models
- Networking
- Access to resources
- Opportunities to give back
- Community connection
- Someone to trust
- Ways to deal with stress
- Decrease in shame/guilt and blame
Recap

● What?
  ◦ Stress, Brain, Trauma, Poverty

● So What?
  ◦ Trauma can change us.
  ◦ Survival Tools and Thriving Tools

● Now What?
  ◦ Shifting the Paradigm
  ◦ A Lot of R’s!
Poverty is not just a social issue

● It is important for you to understand poverty and be able to apply your understanding to personal and professional life.
● A traumatic event is a scary, dangerous, or violent event. Multiple traumatic events are called complex trauma.
● When you have been traumatized, you are psychologically overwhelmed—fight, flight freeze etc
● Living in poverty can be traumatic.
● Trauma changes us.
● Changes in our bodies, feelings, thoughts and actions can lead to illness.
● We learn 'survival tools' to cope with trauma.
● We can learn new tools.
Brainstorm

- What have I learned today that I can use with the children and families I serve at my CAP agency?
- What surprised me?
- What am I not sure about?

Q & A

THANK YOU
Brain–Stress Video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVwFkcOZHJw

ACES Too High video:
https://acestoohigh.com/2016/04/05/five-minute-video-primer-about-adverse-childhood-experiences-study/
● ACE Study: http://www.acestudy.org/index.html
● ACES study video connected with Resilience movie http://kpjrfilms.co/resilience/bonus-content/
● ACES study info from science writer https://acestoohigh.com/2016/08/10/childhood-trauma-leads-to-lifelong-chronic-illness-so-why-isnt-the-medical-community-helping-patients/#more-5797
● ACES Too High video: https://acestoohigh.com/2016/04/05/five-minute-video-primer-about-adverse-childhood-experiences-study/
● Academy on Violence & Abuse ACE Video: https://vimeo.com/41156294
● CDC info re ACES  http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/
● Child Trauma Academy, Dr. Bruce Perry: http://www.nctsn.org/, Neurosequential Model http://childtrauma.org/nmt-model/
● Childhood Trauma translated to health care costs: http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2012/p0201_child_abuse.html
Harvard University’s Center on the Developing Child: Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVwFkcOZHJw


Peace for Tarpon, creating a trauma informed community
http://www.peace4tarpon.org/


TED Talk Dr. Nadine Burke Harris

WHO on international ACEs work: