


Trauma Awareness & Resilience

Training for MLK Summer Scholars Program




DEFENDING CHILDHOOD
PROTECT HEAL THRIVE

BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

MLK SUMMER SCHOLARS

1

Welcome!




Introductions

- Name and pronoun
- Organization & years working with youth

2

Background on Training Institute

- ▶ Defending Childhood Initiative
- ▶ Development of Institute
 - Focus groups
 - Community Advisory Committee
 - 2014 Pilot Institutes



3

Overview

- ▶ TI principles & defining trauma
- ▶ Adolescent brain development
- ▶ Defining trauma and impact
- ▶ How trauma affects us as providers
- ▶ Trauma Informed Supervision
- ▶ Trauma's impact on providers & self-care tool
- ▶ Closing

4

Grounding & Mindfulness

- ▶ **Grounding tools** are available throughout the training to help you practice mindfulness and self-care.
- ▶ **Mindfulness** is being fully aware of your immediate present experience and accepting yourself as you are in this moment without judgment.

5

Ice-Melter Activity

- ▶ Things in Common



6

Group Agreements

- ▶ How would I like to be during these conversations?
- ▶ How would I like others to interact with me?

7

Trauma-Informed Principles

- ▶ *Basic guidelines for everyday ways to make our work more supportive of those who have experienced trauma and to enhance resilience*
- ▶ Result of focus groups, interviews, literature review, feedback

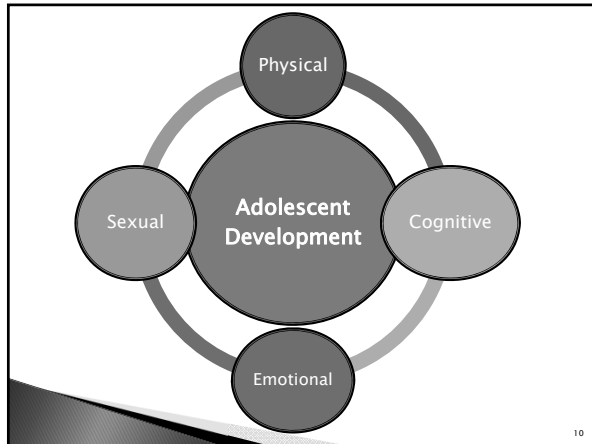
8

Teenager Brainstorm

- ▶ When you hear the word “teenager” what are the words that come to mind?



9



What's going on up there?

- ▶ Instinctual / brain stem
- ▶ Emotional / limbic
- ▶ Rational / cerebral-cortex

NEOCORTEX

LIMBIC

BRAINSTEM

11


Samuels Decision

Samuel says that his Geometry teacher “hates him” and he is in danger of failing. He recently changed high schools and hasn’t made many new friends yet. On his way to school, he gets a text from one of his old friends saying that a bunch of people are coming over to hang out. Samuel has a big Geometry test today.

What does Samuel do?

12

Identity Development



13

Identity Maps

- ▶ On the “YOU” side:
 - What parts of your identity were important to you growing up? What parts are important now?
 - What messages did you get about your identity?

- ▶ On the “YOUTH” side:
 - What parts of young people’s identities do you think are important to them?
 - What messages do they get about their identities?

14

Positive Youth Development & Resilience



15

Positive Youth Development & Resilience

- ▶ Model that focuses on strengths & assets
- ▶ Enhances resilience among youth
- ▶ *Resilience is the capacity of individuals and communities to adapt, survive, and bounce back in the midst of hardship and adversity*
- ▶ *Resilience is shaped by many factors...*

16

Factors that Influence Resilience

- ▶ Group Activity



17

What is Trauma?



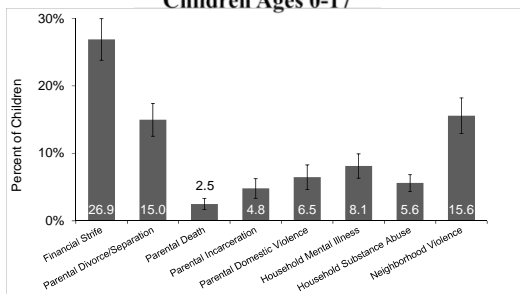
18

Defining Trauma & Brainstorm

- ▶ Experience(s) that threaten the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being of a child/adolescent or of someone critically important to the child/adolescent.
- ▶ *Frightening, chaotic, unpredictable, overwhelming, loss of power/control, helplessness*

19

**Boston 2012 ACE survey
Children Ages 0-17**



DATA SOURCE: Boston Survey of Children's Health, 2012
DATA ANALYSIS: Boston Public Health Commission Research and Evaluation Office

20

The Stress Response...

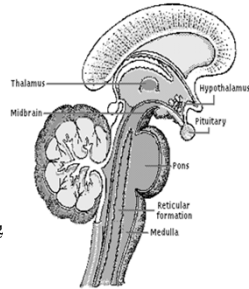


- Fight
- Flight
- Freeze

21

Instinctual brain: brain stem

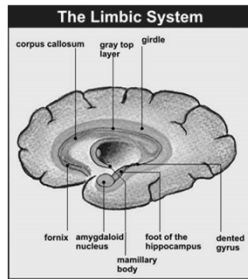
- ▶ Everything is NOW!
- ▶ Keeps us safe and alive
- ▶ Automatic reactions
 - Blood circulation
 - Muscle contractions
 - Temperature regulation
 - Breathing, sleeping, eating



22

Emotional Brain: Limbic System

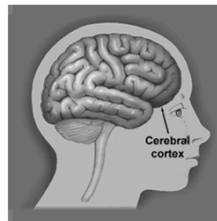
- ▶ Site of emotions
- ▶ Site of memory storage
- ▶ Automatic reactions:
“first alert” alarm system
in times of stress and
crisis



23

Rational or Thinking Brain: Cerebral Cortex

- ▶ Has a sense of linear time
- ▶ Is conscious and alert
 - Observes, anticipates, plans, responds
 - Makes logical decisions
- ▶ Integrates other parts of brain



Trauma is thought to *disorder* the normal functioning of the orbital frontal cortex

24

Understanding Trauma: Not all “stress” is the same!

Positive:
Mild, temporary response to normal challenges

Tolerable:
Serious but temporary, buffered by support


Toxic:
Constant, serious, insufficient or absent support

Positive stress helps us grow, toxic stress = trauma

25

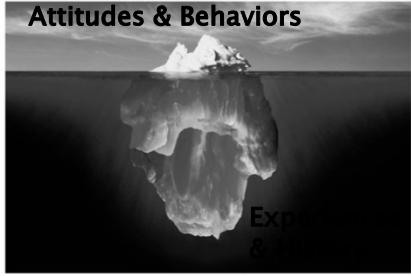
Trauma reminders or “triggers”

- ▶ Reminders of trauma “trigger” the survival brain response to *fight, flight, or freeze*
- ▶ Common triggers:
 - Unpredictability/sudden change, transitions
 - Loss of power/control
 - Feelings of vulnerability/rejection
 - Confrontation, authority, limit setting
 - Sensory overload, loud noises
- ▶ Triggers specific to individual: smell, place, time of year, sounds, specific people



26

Iceberg



27

Resilience & Neuroplasticity

Resilience is the capacity of individuals and communities to adapt, survive, and bounce back in the midst of hardship and adversity. Rather than being permanent or innate, resilience is dynamic and fluid; it can be shaped by many factors, and expressed in multiple ways.



Common Trauma Responses Among Youth

- ▶ How do you think trauma impacts youth?
 - “On edge”
 - Numb
 - Difficult trusting
 - Anger
 - Sadness
 - Shame
 - Trouble sleeping
 - Eating

29

Stories

- ▶ Identify the traumatic experiences
- ▶ What are the trauma responses?



30

Exposure to trauma at work: How may this impact youth workers?

- ▶ Hopelessness, helplessness
- ▶ Intrusive thoughts
- ▶ Always on alert
- ▶ Chronic exhaustion/physical ailments
- ▶ Anger and cynicism
- ▶ Guilt, worry
- ▶ Inability to empathize/numbing/detachment
- ▶ A sense one can never do enough
- ▶ Avoidance
- ▶ Sadness
- ▶ Overeating, sleeping, using substances to cope

31

Secondary Trauma & Vicarious Trauma

▶ Vicarious Trauma

The cumulative transformative effect on those working with survivors of traumatic life events as a result of empathic engagement with their trauma experience. The symptoms can appear much like those of post traumatic stress, but may also encompass changes in beliefs and sense of identity and safety.

▶ Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

The emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another. Secondary trauma is similar to the clinical definition of PTSD. The term "secondary" refers to the nature of exposure, and does not mean that there is less of an impact.

32

Elements of TIC

- ▶ Use **open ended questions**. Do not open with "Why?" because it implies judgment.
- ▶ **Reflective listening** and reflective responses are core youth worker skills, creating experiences of deeper connection, understanding and empathy.
- ▶ Self-awareness and non-judgmental
- ▶ Autonomy and freedom of choice
- ▶ Collaboratively and friendly
- ▶ Reminders of consequences and outcomes

33

Trauma Informed Supervision

- ▶ Roles & Expectations
- ▶ Consistent & Ongoing
- ▶ Goal Setting & Professional Development

34

Decisional Balance Sheet



35

Restorative Justice



36

Self-Care



37

Closing



38

THANK YOU

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39
