# Why the Focus on Trauma?

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### What will we talk about?

- Understand and define what is considered a traumatic event
- Understand the prevalence of trauma as a public health issue across various populations
- 3. Recognize the potential impact of trauma

### What is Trauma?

- Traumatic event a person experiences, witnesses or is confronted with actual or threatened death or serious injury or threat to the physical integrity of <u>oneself</u> <u>or others</u>
  - Often includes a response of intense fear, helplessness or horror
  - > Private or public experiences

### Trauma is Personal

- The most "severe" violence is not necessarily that which wounds most deeply
- The meaning and specific impact of violence varies between cultures and individuals
- Only the person him/herself can judge

### Changes a person's view of the world



# Single Episode

- Acute trauma is a single traumatic event limited in time
  - Serious accidents
  - Community violence
  - Natural disasters
  - Sudden or violent loss of a loved one
  - > Physical or sexual assault



# Chronic/Complex Trauma

- Experience of multiple traumatic events which may be varied
- May refer to longstanding abuse, neglect or war
- Represents cumulative effects

### Prevalence

 Over half of the general adult population have experienced at least one major traumatic event

 1 in 4 have experienced at least two events

### Prevalence

Mentally III: 97% of homeless women with SMI have experienced severe physical and sexual abuse

Children/Youth: est.

3 million children
and adolescents in
the US are exposed
to serious traumatic
events each year.

Child Welfare: Rates among adults who were formerly placed in foster care was found to be twice as high as rates as in US War Veterans

LGBTQ: 84% of LGBTQ students were called names or had their safety threatened as a result of their sexual orientation or gender expression.

Corrections: A study of 100 men incarcerated, 59% reported some form of childhood sexual abuse prior to puberty

Juvenile Justice:
93% of children in
detention report
exposure to trauma

<u>Transgenerational</u>: Caregivers reported being exposed to an average of 7 traumatic events

Military: PTSD occurs in about 11-20% of Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

# Effects All Aspects of Life

- Actual structure and function of the brain
- Impacts:
  - Relationships
  - > Emotion Regulation
  - > Attention/Concentration
  - > Perception of the World



# ACE Study

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study
- OCDC and Kaiser Permanente

Question: Do childhood experiences affected adult health later? And how?

Individuals were predominantly white, college educated

### **Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study**

Without intervention, adverse childhood events (ACEs) may result in long-germ disease, disability, chronic social problems and early death. Importantly, intergenerational transmission that perpetuates ACEs will continue without implementation of interventions to interrupt the cycle.

### Adverse Childhood Experiences

#### Abuse of Child

- Psychological abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

#### Trauma in Child's

#### Household Environment

- Substance Abuse
- Parental separation &/or Divorce
- •Mentally ill or suicidal Household member
- Violence to mother
- •Imprisoned household member

#### **Neglect of Child**

- Abandonment
- Child's basic physical &/or Emotional needs unmet

### Impact of Trauma & Adoption of Health Risk Behaviors

#### Neurobiological Effects

- Disrupted neuro-development
- •Difficulty controlling anger
- Hallucinations
- Depression
- Panic reactions
- Anxiety
- •Multiple (6+) somatic problems
- Impaired memory
- •Flashbacks

#### **Health Risk Behaviors**

- Smoking &/or Drug abuse
- Severe obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Self Injury &/or Suicide attempts
- Alcoholism
- •50+ sex partners
- Sexually transmitted disease
- •Repetition of original trauma
- Eating Disorders
- Dissociation
- Perpetrate domestic violence

#### Long-Term Consequences Of Unaddressed Trauma

#### Disease & Disability

- •Ischemic heart disease
- Cancer
- Chronic lung disease
- Chronic emphysema
- Asthma
- Liver disease
- Skeletal fractures
- •HIV/AIDS

#### Social Problems

- Homelessness
- Prostitution
- Delinquency, violence & criminal Behavior
- •Inability to sustain employment-
- Re-victimization: rape; domestic Violence
- Inability to parent
- •Inter-generational transmission Of abuse
- Long-term use of health & social services

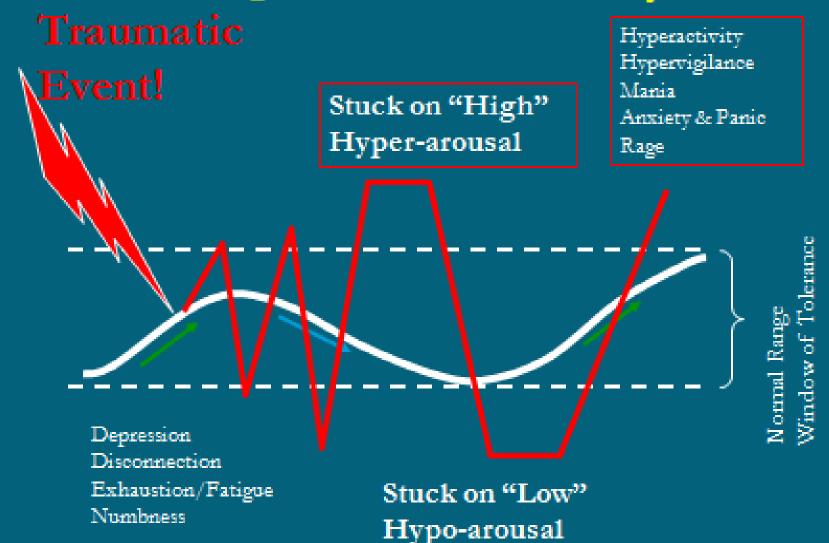
Adapted from presentation Jennings (2006). The Story of a Child's Path to Mental Illness.

# Effects on Body Chemistry

- Stimulates stress response pathways
  - > Releases adrenaline and other hormones into the blood stream
- Repeated acute stress response take a toll on the body overtime
- Makes it difficult to return to baseline
  - Hypo or hyper state of arousal



### Trauma impacts on nervous system



Slide by Elaine Miller-Karas & L. Leisch(e)2007

Key Concepts of TRM

# Brain Development



#### Brain at Birth

- 25% the size of the adult brain in weight and volume (less than 1lb)
- Nearly the same number of neurons as adult brain (100 billion)
- 50 trillion synapses (connections between neurons)
- Brain stem and lower brain well developed (reflexes), higher regions more primitive

# **Synaptic Density**

At Birth 6 Years Old 14 Years Old

## Impact on Brain Development

• More Stimulation the Better...right?

- Yes, but...
  - When stimulation comes from chronic trauma it strengthens connections to the trauma emotional response
  - > Reduces the size of the cortex
    - Memory, attention, language

### Impact on Worldview

Typical Development vs Developmental Trauma



#### • Attachments with Adults

Nurturing & stable vs mistrust & inability to depend on others

#### Belief

Senerally good things will happen to me vs World is unsafe and bad things are my fault

#### Self-worth

Positive & others will see my strengths vs Assumption others will not like me

#### Future

Optimistic vs fear & pessimism

### Impact on the World

I can have a positive impact vs Hopeless and lack of control

# Changing the Question

- What is wrong with you?
  - > I am aggressive
  - ) I am depressed
  - > I am an alcoholic

- What happened to you?
  - > I am a survivor of trauma



### What Do We Do??

- All systems and even communities can become trauma informed to the negative impact
  - Trauma Aware
  - > Trauma Responsive
  - > Trauma Informed
  - > Trauma-Specific Services and Interventions

### Resources

- National Children's Traumatic Stress Network
  - www.nctsnet.org/nccts
- National Center on PTSD
  - www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/specifics
- The Adverse Childhood Experience Study-
  - > www.acestudy.org
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
  - ➤ <a href="http://www.samhsa.gov/">http://www.samhsa.gov/</a>

# Questions

