

Trauma-Informed Care: Moving from Concept to Practice

2019 Bringing it Home: Ending Homelessness in NC

May 22, 2019

Logistics & Content

- ▶ Be comfortable
- ▶ Clarifying questions, time for Q&A at the end
- ▶ Topics
 - ▶ Brief trauma overview
 - ▶ Trauma-informed work at the system level
 - ▶ Trauma-informed work at the agency level
 - ▶ Next steps for your agency

Presenters

- ▶ Corey Root, Coordinator
Orange County Partnership to
End Homelessness
- ▶ Kari Thatcher, MPH, Prevention
and Evaluation Specialist
NC Coalition Against Domestic
Violence
- ▶ Megan Raymond, Community
House Program Manager
Inter-Faith Council for Social
Service (IFC)



Who's in the room?

- ▶ Service providers
 - ▶ Front line staff
 - ▶ Program managers
 - ▶ Executive Directors
- ▶ System-Level/Macro/CoC Leads
- ▶ Clinicians
- ▶ People with lived experience of homelessness

Trauma Basics

What is Trauma?

A **threat** to an individual or their loved one's **life**, or to their psychic or bodily **integrity**

1

The individual's **coping capacity** &/or ability to **integrate** their emotional experience is **overwhelmed**

2

Examples of Traumatic Events

- Warfare
- Accidents
- Violence
- Threat of violence
- Natural disasters
- Forced displacement
- Job loss
- Serious illness
- Financial problems
- Divorce or breakup
- Death of a loved one
- Forced separation from a loved one
- Acquiring a disability

Types of Trauma

Acute Trauma: Single traumatic experience

- Example: car accident, death of a loved one

Complex Trauma: Multiple traumatic experiences

- Example: Repeated acts of abuse and violence

Historical/Collective Trauma

The cumulative emotional, physical, and psychological wounding of a group of people; typically experienced based on race, creed, or ethnicity

- Example: hate crimes, chronic stressors like racism/poverty, institutional abuse/neglect, genocide

Any abuse of power by one person/group over another group/community

Historical/Collective Trauma

Adverse community experiences: an aggregate of trauma experienced by community members, or an event that impacts a few people but has **structural and social traumatic consequences.**

Collective trauma can **break social ties,** **communality,** and **undermine** previous supportive resources

Historical/Collective Trauma

A collective feeling they have been subjected to a horrendous event that **leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness**, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.

Cultural trauma not only **highlights trauma at a community level** but also the necessity of **community level intervention** to deal with trauma collectively.



Trauma and the Brain

The Way Our Brain Functions

Limbic

the “reacting” part of brain

- regulates response to threats, danger and emotion
- survival-related reactions

Frontal Cortex

the “thinking” part of brain

- used for planning, problem solving and organizing



3 Ways PTSD Affects the Brain

- Threat perception systems is enhanced
- Ability to distinguish between the relevant and the irrelevant is damaged
- Self-sensing part of brain gets blunted.

Following a trauma people often experience:

- **Re-experiencing**

- Nightmares, flashbacks, intrusive images

- **Hyper-arousal**

- Jumpiness, irritability, insomnia

- **Avoidance or denial**

- Avoiding people, places, things associated with the trauma, oversleeping, isolating oneself, minimizing the trauma

How one
was raised

Individual
perception

The amount
of affection
one received

Whether or not
one felt
overwhelmed
in previous
situations

The support system
someone has or
doesn't have

What one
fears

Brain
Chemistry

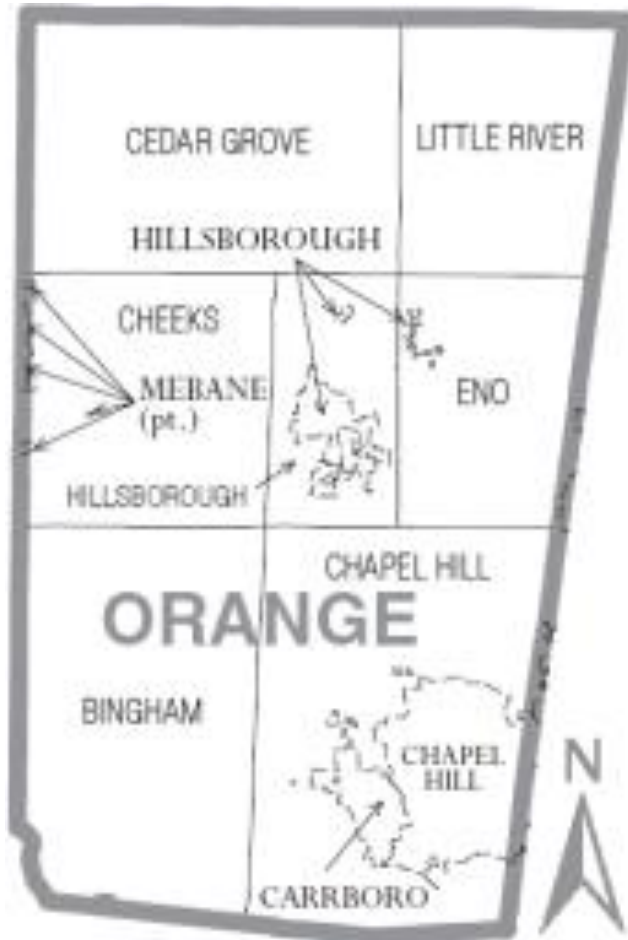
**No two people's
experiences are the
same**

Internal
coping
mechanisms

**Why is it important
for homeless
services agencies
to be trauma
informed?**

Trauma-Informed Work at the System Level

Orange County context



- Home of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough & UNC Chapel Hill
- Smallest CoC in North Carolina
- 152 people experiencing homelessness on one night in 2018
- 2 key homeless service providers + many other services + glorious collaboration
- Many innovative initiatives
- Many homeless system gaps

Work within the homeless service system

- ▶ Identified as a system-need in 2016-2017
- ▶ Conflict resolution training half-day training October-November 2017
- ▶ Trauma-informed care full-day training in November 2017, 90 people trained
 - ▶ So successful!
- ▶ Follow up session January 2018 to frame system-level work
 - ▶ Less so!
- ▶ Work identifying specific issues continued at the agency-level (more on this in just a bit...)

Work across systems in Orange County

- ▶ Joined Orange Resilience Initiative (ORI) in January 2018
- ▶ ORI goals
 - ▶ Increasing community connectedness
 - ▶ Decreasing siloes
 - ▶ Increasing self care for service providers
- ▶ ORI activities
 - ▶ Service provider “community cafe”
 - ▶ Screenings of the documentary “Resilience”
 - ▶ Speakers bureau
- ▶ Self care sessions sponsored by the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness

Successes & challenges

- ▶ Increasing base-level understanding about trauma, ACEs, why thinking about trauma is important
- ▶ Timing of self-care sessions & attendance
- ▶ Introducing ONE MORE THING to crisis-response work
- ▶ Giving service providers self-care skills, providing time, place, & snacks
- ▶ Forging connections across systems within Orange County increases connectedness

Trauma-Informed Work at the Agency Level

Inter-Faith Council for Social Service (IFC)

- ▶ Shelter Services (Community House and HomeStart)
- ▶ Community Based Assistance
- ▶ Community Kitchen (meals for everyone)

Trauma-informed work at IFC

- ▶ Trainings related to best practice around maintaining a trauma-informed environment
- ▶ Integrating Trauma-informed language into our agency policies
- ▶ Individual and group supervision for staff where trauma-informed practices are emphasized

SUCCESSSES

Resident
involvement
in decision
making

Being more
mindful of
language

Modeling vs.
enforcing

CHALLENGES

External
regulations

Shifting
societal
mindsets

BOTH

Internal
guidelines

Training
staff



**Next steps to become more
trauma-informed**

Q&A

Thank you! Contact us anytime

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