

# Trauma Informed Care and Vicarious Trauma



Mandy Miller, MA, LPC  
Executive Director  
San Miguel Resource Center

# Objectives:

- ▶ Understand what Trauma Informed Care (TIC) is and isn't
- ▶ What are you doing already...
- ▶ Next steps



- Trauma:

- Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is

- experienced by an individual as physically and/or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse

- effects on the individual's functioning and/or physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being



- **Trauma:**
  - Is pervasive
  - Its impact is broad and diverse
  - Its impact is deep and life-shaping
  - Interpersonal violence and trans-generational transmission is self-perpetuating
  - Is insidious and differentially affects the more vulnerable
  - Affects how people approach services
  - Service systems have often been re-traumatizing

\*\*The number of times this training uses the word Trauma is traumatizing.



# Prevalence in the General Population

- ▶ The National Institute of Health estimates that 89.7% of adults are exposed to at least one traumatic event in their lifetime.

*(National Institute of Health, 2013)*

- ▶ 59% of the general population has experienced at least one adverse childhood event

*([www.ACEstoohigh.net](http://www.ACEstoohigh.net), 2012)*

## ACE SCALE SELF-ASSESSMENT



San Miguel Resource Center  
www.smrcco.org 970-728-5842

A program, organization or system that is trauma-informed:

realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;

recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;

resists re-traumatization, and

responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings.



San Miguel Resource Center  
www.smrcco.org 970-728-5842



We begin to ask, "What happened to you?"  
rather than "What is wrong with you?"

## PARADIGM SHIFT VIDEO



San Miguel Resource Center  
www.smrcco.org 970-728-5842

# Why is a Trauma-Informed Approach Important?

- ▶ Promotes a culture of healing and recovery
- ▶ Encourages an understanding that staff come to this work with their own trauma histories and work related stress
- ▶ We might unintentionally cause harm (re-traumatize) by practices, policies and activities that are insensitive to the needs of our clients





## SAMHSA Key Principles of TI Approach

- *Safety*
- *Trustworthiness and transparency*
- *Collaboration and mutuality*
- *Empowerment*
- *Voice and choice*
- *Peer support and mutual self-help*
- *Resilience and strengths based*
- *Inclusiveness and shared purpose*
- *Cultural, historical, and gender issues*
- *Change process*



# Core Values and Principles of TIC

- Safe, calm, and secure environment with supportive care
- System wide understanding of trauma prevalence, impact and trauma informed care
- Cultural competence
- Recovery, consumer-driven, and trauma specific services
- Healing, hopeful, honest, and trusting relationships



How we might unintentionally cause those we serve to relive their trauma:  
The importance of *relationships*

### WHAT HURTS?

- ▶ Interactions that are humiliating, harsh, impersonal, disrespectful, critical, demanding, judgmental

### WHAT HELPS?

- ▶ Interactions that express kindness, patience, reassurance, calm and acceptance and listening
- ▶ Frequent use of words like PLEASE and THANK YOU



# How we might unintentionally cause our clients to relive their trauma: The importance of the physical environment

## WHAT HURTS?

- ▶ Congested areas that are noisy
- ▶ Poor signage that is confusing
- ▶ Uncomfortable furniture
- ▶ Separate bathrooms
- ▶ Cold non-inviting colors and paintings/posters on the wall

## WHAT HELPS?

- ▶ Treatment and waiting rooms that are comfortable, calming and offer privacy
- ▶ Furniture is clean and comfortable
- ▶ No wrong door philosophy: we are all here to help
- ▶ Integrated bathrooms (clients and staff)
- ▶ Wall coverings, posters/pictures are pleasant and convey a hopeful positive message



How we may unintentionally cause our clients to relive their trauma:  
The importance of *policies and procedures*

## WHAT HURTS?

- ▶ Rules that always seem to be broken (time to take a second look at these rules)
- ▶ Policies and Procedures that focus on organizational needs rather than on client needs
- ▶ Documentation with minimal involvement of clients
- ▶ Many hoops to go through before a client's needs are met
- ▶ Language and cultural barriers

## WHAT HELPS?

- ▶ Sensible and fair rules that are clearly explained (focus more on what you CAN DO rather than what you CAN'T DO)
- ▶ Transparency in documentation and service planning
- ▶ Materials and communication in the person's language
- ▶ Continually seeking feedback from clients about their experience in the program



How we might unintentionally cause our clients to relive their trauma:  
The importance of our *attitudes and beliefs*

### WHAT HURTS?

- ▶ Asking questions that convey the idea that “there is something wrong with the person”
- ▶ Regarding a person’s difficulties only as *symptoms* of a mental health, substance use or medical problem

### WHAT HELPS?

- ▶ Asking questions for the purpose of understanding what harmful events may contribute to current problems
- ▶ Recognizing that *symptoms or behaviors* may be coping strategies or adaptations related to adverse experiences (trauma)



# Who Benefits?

A trauma-informed organization:

- Increases safety for all
- Improves the social environment in a way that improves relationships for all
- Cares for the caregivers
- Improves the quality of services



San Miguel Resource Center  
www.smrcco.org 970-728-5842

# Who Benefits?

## A trauma-informed organization:

- Reduces negative encounters and events
- Creates a community of hope, wellness and recovery
- Increases workforce success and satisfaction
- Promotes organizational wellness
- Improves the bottom line





**DON'T CALL ME.  
I'LL CALL YOU.**



San Miguel Resource Center  
[www.smrcco.org](http://www.smrcco.org) 970-728-5842

# Advocate Initiated Response - A Proactive Best Practice in Community Response to Domestic Violence

- Responders to domestic violence now understand that the involvement of community-based advocates at the time of a domestic violence incident can be crucial in reducing future violence and lessening barriers to cooperation with the criminal justice system while increasing the victim's overall coping and sense of well-being.



# Advocate Initiated Response

- AIR is an alternative to the standard practice of passive referral to the community-based advocacy program by encouraging the use of Advocate Initiated Response (AIR).
- A best practice in domestic violence response, AIR is a pro-active policy that supports immediate contact between the advocacy program and the victim which is actively facilitated by law enforcement and/or their victim assistance at the time of an incident.



# Vicarious Trauma

- Step 1
- *Define Vicarious Trauma*
- *Examples of Vicarious Trauma*
- *Recognizing Vicarious Trauma*
- “We are regularly exposed to the struggles and suffering the clients/consumers present, which can take a toll on our mental health and well being.” (Figley, 1995)



# Vicarious Trauma

- ❄️ Exposure to primary and secondary trauma and violence
- ❄️ Vicarious traumatization happens through empathic connection with others
- ❄️ Connecting with pain of consumers



# Vicarious Trauma

- Step 2
- *How has vicarious trauma affected your life?*



# Professional Quality of Life

- Complete the ProQOL Assessment:
- [http://www.proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL\\_5\\_English\\_Self-Score\\_3-2012.pdf](http://www.proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL_5_English_Self-Score_3-2012.pdf)



San Miguel Resource Center  
www.smrcco.org 970-728-5842

# Vicarious Trauma

- Step 3
- Turning Point
- *Acceptance*
  - ❄What does this look like?
  - ❄How in the world can I do this?
- *Intervention*
  - ❄What is an intervention?
  - ❄Who steps in?







San Miguel Resource Center  
[www.smrcco.org](http://www.smrcco.org) 970-728-5842

# Vicarious Trauma

- *Self-Care Plan*
- ✨ Three levels of intervention...
  1. what to do...
  2. what to think...
  3. what to avoid...
- **Results**
  - ✨ Peace
  - ✨ Strategies
  - ✨ Personal satisfaction
  - ✨ Continue doing the good work you do!



# *Next Steps*

- Create a shared vision



# Vision...

- All professionals understand the impact of trauma, potential triggers, and how to interact in a way that is respectful and supportive
- Community members and professionals experience less shame and more empowerment as survivors of trauma
- Policies, procedures, practices, social and physical environments reflect the core principles and values of a TIC organization



# Seven Domains of Trauma-Informed Care

1. Early Screening and Comprehensive Assessment of Trauma
2. Consumer Driven Care and Services
3. Trauma-Informed, Educated and Responsive Workforce
4. Provision of Trauma-Informed Emerging and Evidence-Based Best Practices
5. Create Safe and Secure Environments
6. Engage in Community Outreach and Partnerships
7. Performance Improvement and Monitoring



# The Commitment Needed From All Professionals

- Help “own” the change through knowledge and commitment to creating Trauma Informed Culture.
- Content of the message:
  - ✓ The change is important
  - ✓ Everyone is part of making change successful
  - ✓ Pros of success and the cons of failure





It takes all of us to inspire a culture of healing and recovery.



[www.smrcco.org](http://www.smrcco.org) 970-728-5842