Becoming Trauma Informed

Exploring a New Dimension of Injury Prevention

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Something to Ponder

- "One doesn't need to be a specialist …. One just needs to gather some special knowledge and add it to the important basics without which no special knowledge is particularly useful. Besides, it's all about the relationship, in the first place and all the way through."

- Richard A. Chefetz, MD,

Fundamental Elements of Trauma

- Powerless

- Disconnected

- Devalued

- Out of Control

Anita Mandley, LCPC, Center for Contextual Change

Judith Hermann , MD.
Trauma and Recovery

- "Psychological trauma is an affliction of the powerless. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force. When the force is that of nature, we speak of disasters. When the force is that of other human beings, we speak of atrocities. Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people control, connection, and meaning."

THE ECOLOGY OF TRAUMA

Individual Factors

Temperament, culture, SES, gender, coping skills, health, vulnerabilities, resiliencies, developmental stage, age, history of trauma

Event Factors

Frequency, severity, duration, degree of violence, extent of terror or humiliation, witnesses or bystanders

TRAUMA

RETRAUMATIZATION

Traumatic events and triggers, victimization, lack of control and power, lack of a safe environment, contact with the offender, response to the disclosure

TRAUMA REACTIVITY

Psychological and physical reactions

Environmental Factors

Context of the trauma, lack or presence of a support system

Events That Create Traumatic Stress

- Microaggressions and Invalidation

- Bullying

- Sexual Harassment

- Structural Violence

- Direct Attacks

- Task Related Attacks

What Happens with Traumatic Stress?

- Decreased capacity for executive functioning, instead, operating on instincts
- Decreased problem solving capacity
- Decreased capacity to use words
- Decreased connection between thoughts and motor activity
- Decreased capacity for risk assessment
- Memory function and capacity for new learning decreased
- States of hyper-arousal and dissociation

Impact of Traumatic Stress

- Physical injuries

- Malnutrition, metabolic and digestive vulnerability

- High rates of infectious and chronic disease.

- Unremitting grief and depression

- PTSD, depression, self-destructive behaviors, anxiety, guilt, hostility, and chronic grieving

Who Are the Marginalized?

- Women

- LGBTQ Workers

- Workers of Color

- The Disabled

- Immigrant and Refugee Workers

- Workers of Particular Religious Minorities

- Workers of Lower Socio-Economic Status (SES)

Vulnerability Factors

- Providers of care who are not attuned or appropriately responsive

- Temperament and Nervous System

- Age, Race, Gender

- Dissociation

- Poverty

- Family Dysfunction

- Lack of adequate support and resources

Factors that Contribute
to
Safety Concerns

- High levels of stress

- Long working hours

- Not enough vacation time and sick leave

- Lack of employment security

- Physical conditions and level of exposure to workplace hazards

- Lack of safety, power and control within the workplace

Microaggression

- Microaggressions are current events involving discrimination, racism, and daily hassles that are targeted at individuals from diverse racial and ethnic groups. They are chronic and often covert in nature. People could be susceptible to both historical trauma and microaggressions, and the Microaggression can perpetuate the trauma.

Types of Microaggression

Micro-insult

- Rudeness and insensitivity
- Demeaning racial heritage or identity

Micro-invalidations

- Negating the experiential reality of a person's color or heritage

Micro-assault

- Explicit verbal or non-verbal attack
- Conscious and deliberate

Structural Violence

- Institutions and social practices can cause physical and psychological harm

  - Heavy workloads

  - Low levels of decision-making power and autonomy

  - Directly harming worker's health

  - Rigid work routines

  - Preventing workers from getting care and services they need

Workplace Bullying

- Repeated behavior is persistent and pervasive
- Victimizing, humiliating, intimidating or threatening a person
- Harassment and discrimination
- Can be direct and personal
- Can be indirect and task related

Direct Personal Attacks

- Belittling comments- undermining integrity, lies, questioning judgment, opinions marginalized

- Ignoring- exclusion, silent treatment, isolating

- Attacking beliefs, attitudes, lifestyle or appearance

- Questioning psychological competence or character

Task-related Attacks

- Giving unachievable tasks, impossible deadlines, unmanageable workloads

- Meaningless tasks, unpleasant jobs, belittling a person's ability

- Withholding or concealing information, failing to return calls or pass on messages

Consequences of Marginalization

- Low self esteem

- Depression, anxiety, stress, fatigue, burnout

- Sense of helplessness

- PTSD

- Deterioration in health

- Increase in problematic behaviors

Primary Resources

- **Enlightened Witness**
  - **Well informed, open and broad minded, educated, wise**
  - **Able to give greater understanding about a subject**
  - **See, observe, notice, spot**
- **Competent Protector**
  - **Capable, acceptable, reasonable, fair, decent**
  - **Guard, champion, watchdog**
- **Compassionate and Warm Comforter**
  - **Understanding, caring, sensitive, warm with a strong desire to alleviate suffering**
  - **Providing consolation**

THE ROAD TO SELF-MASTERY

Ancient Ethics by Gerard Blanchard

- As adapted from *Beyond Fear* by Don Miquel Ruiz

  - Mastery of Awareness

  - Mastery of Transformation

  - Mastery of Intention

Mastery of Awareness

- Being fully awake to our own realities, knowing who we are, where we are, how we arrived at this spot in life, and the freedom we seek.

Mastery of Transformation

- Creating and sustaining safety, do no harm
- Education
- Collaboration
- Sharing decision making and power
- Making tasks clear, maintain appropriate power
- Safe ways to disclose abuses of power
- Systemic mechanisms for self-care

Mastery of Intention

- Reaching for a greater degree of personal commitment and energy in every transformative effort to decrease vulnerability to workplace abuse and inequity, and increase resiliency, healing and growth.