

Trauma Informed Practice

HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRAINING

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Why Learn about Trauma Informed Practice?

Key Elements of a Trauma Informed Practice



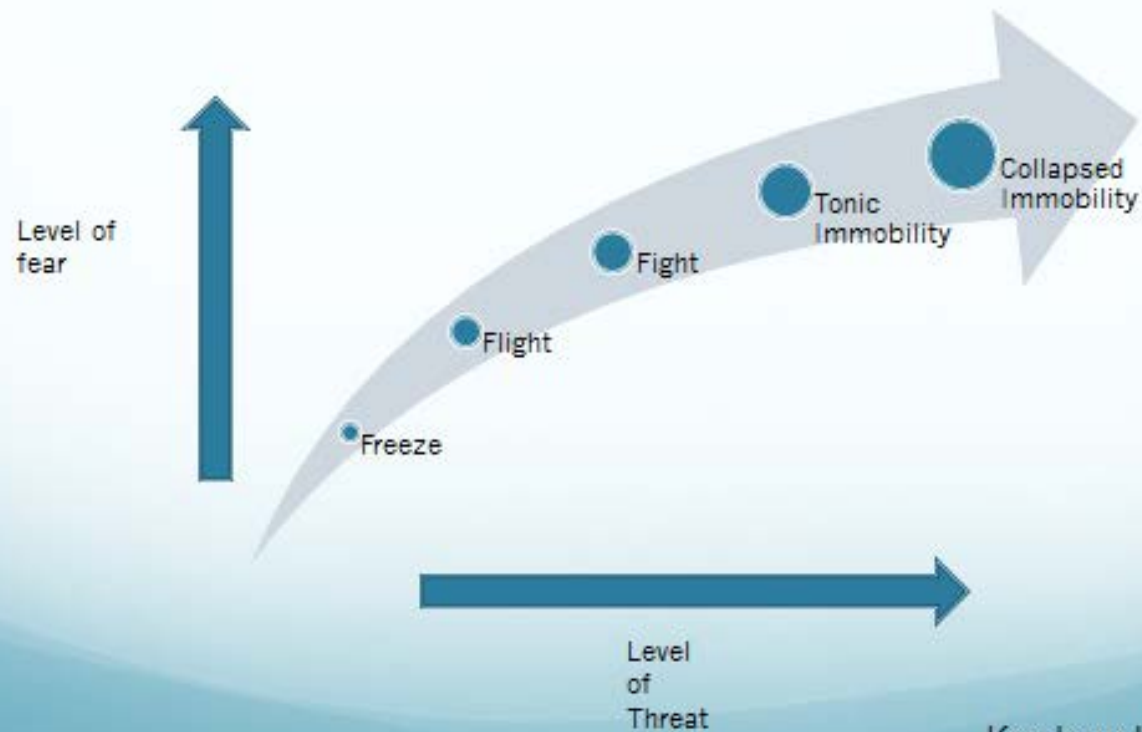
- ▶ Being aware of the presence of trauma
- ▶ Understanding how traumatic experience can affect a person's physical, emotional, social and cognitive functioning
- ▶ Working with a client's trauma symptoms, not against them
- ▶ Developing a strong repertoire of trauma informed practices

What is trauma?

A person is confronted with the death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence, as follows:

1. Direct exposure
2. Witnessing, in person
3. Indirectly, by learning that a close relative or close friend was exposed to trauma.
4. Repeated or extreme indirect exposure to aversive details of the event(s), usually in the course of professional duties (e.g., first responders).

Defense Cascade



Kozłowska, 2015

The Neurobiology of Trauma and *Behavior*



HUMANS ARE PREY WHO DEVELOPED A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE BIOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO FEAR TO INCREASE CHANCES OF SURVIVAL.



FEAR TRIGGERS THE PRIMITIVE BRAIN TO SIGNAL A CASCADE OF NEUROCHEMICALS AND HORMONES THAT INSTANTLY ALTER HEART RATE, BREATHING, BLOOD DISTRIBUTION, AND PUPIL DILATION



THIS RESPONSE IS UNCONSCIOUS, BYPASSING THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX AND WIRED DIRECTLY TO THE AMYGDALA, LOCATED IN THE PRIMITIVE BRAIN.

The Neurobiology of Trauma and *Memory*

- ▶ Neurochemical environment of trauma affects how memory of the trauma is encoded, and thus how it is latter accessed
- ▶ Traumatized person cannot generate the same kind of narrative memory
- ▶ Memory typically fragmented, out of sequence, with gaps
- ▶ Intense detailed memory of some things, fuzzy or no memory of other things
- ▶ Memories may rise to surface over time





Memories



Post-Trauma Memories

Post-Trauma Brain



Seeing

Overwhelmed
with Images of
the Trauma



Feeling

Flooded by Emotions
Experienced During
Trauma



Not Speaking

No Language
to Describe the Events

Behavior and Affect

Some may express
a lot of distress,
others may
have flat affect

Some may be
combative or
angry, others
very passive and
fearful

May appear
secretive or
paranoid, overly
dramatic or zombie
like

Trauma Indicators in Interviews



A STORY THAT
DOESN'T FIT
TOGETHER OR HAS
GAPS



STORY THAT DOESN'T
UNFOLD IN A
COHERENT
WAY/CLIENT IS
JUMPING AROUND
IN THE STORY.



CLIENT EXHIBITS FLAT
AFFECT/NO
EMOTION/ODD
RESPONSE



CLIENT SEEMS
OVERLY DISTRAUGHT



CLIENT LOOKS
"SPACED OUT" OR
UNDER THE
INFLUENCE OF
DRUGS OR
ALCOHOL.

Work with the Trauma

Allow client to control
the flow of the
narrative

Do not insist on a
chronological
account

Use gentle prompts:
What's the next thing
you remember? How
did you respond to
that?

Use non-verbal
communication to
indicate you are
listening

Allow for breaks or
more than one
session

Unreliable Client

Traumatized clients may not

- ▶ Respond to your calls
- ▶ Show up for appointments, meetings, or court hearings
- ▶ Provide necessary documents or information you need to respond to court, opposing party

Communication Tools

Neurobiologic response to trauma may impact:
memory, retention of information, focus and
concentration.



Provide information in multiple ways and multiple times.

verbal and written

summaries and reminders.

Unrealistic Expectations of the Justice System



Client believes you are
on other party's side



Client fears you don't
understand how tricky
other side can be



Client demands
unreasonable outcomes
or tactics

Compassionate Truth

Set Realistic
Expectations

Understand this
might be far off
from what client
expects or wants

Crossing Boundaries

Client asks you for advice on personal issues outside of legal process

Client calls multiple times per day or week

Client repeatedly asks about your personal life

Healthy Boundaries

Create a framework within which empowering and respectful interactions can occur.



Unhealthy Boundaries

“Rescuing” is when we act outside of the scope of our professional responsibilities, and perhaps outside of our expertise, in a misguided attempt to rescue the client from her circumstances.

Judgment (minimizing or evaluating the merits of your client’s experience and choices) a way in which we distance ourselves from another’s pain or vulnerability.

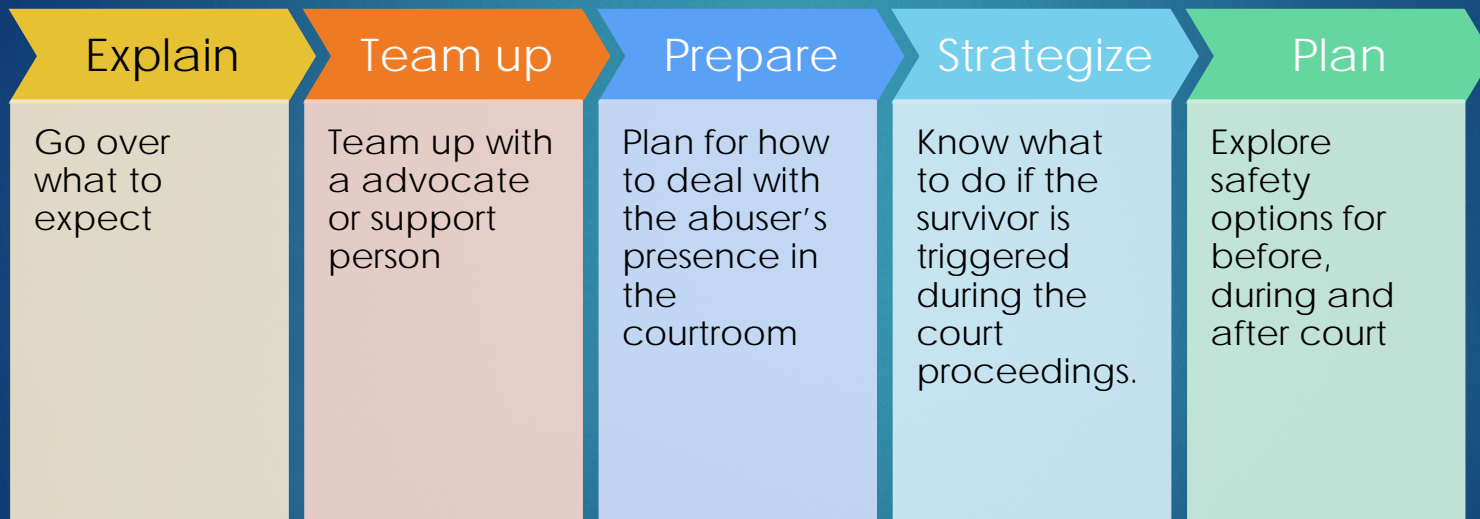
Client-Centered Advocacy

Don't be the next controlling person in the client's life.

Provide options and implications, not answers

Non-judgmental statements about client behavior that might damage her case

Preparing for Court



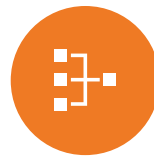
Working with Advocates

- ▶ Provide added emotional support for your client
- ▶ Ensure that your client has access to someone with expertise in exploring safety options
- ▶ Assist your client in self-organization, helping you get the information and materials you need from the client to support your case
- ▶ Keep you and/or your client informed about any pending criminal matters that may impact the divorce or custody case or personal protection order matter

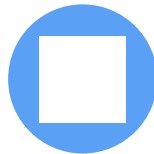
Mental Health Professionals



Identify and communicate her needs



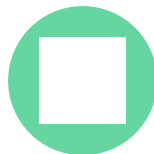
Sift through and process information



Assist in making decisions that are best for her



Flag when her emotional expectations may be unrealistic



Discuss when she is either looking for her lawyer to rescue her, or vilifying her attorney because the attorney can't get her what she wants



Help her prepare for and manage trauma reactions to highly intense or difficult situations



Questions?