

Trauma Overview

Preservice

Learner Guide

October 2022

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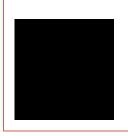






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Learning Objectives

- Define trauma and toxic stress
- Describe how the brain adapts based pm experience
- Describe how trauma impacts attachment and development

Please take care of yourself during this course.

Trauma-Informed

Certified foster caregivers are required to be **trauma-informed**. The term means:

- 1. Realize the prevalence of trauma
- 2. Recognize how trauma affects all individuals
- 3. Respond to trauma by putting this **knowledge into practice**
- 4. Resist re-traumatizing the individual

Notes:		

Trauma Defined

As you listen to the childhood experiences of Alex, write down what you think are important details.



Notes:

Adverse experiences like Alex's are called traumas. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) define trauma using the 3 E's:

- Event or series of events or a set of circumstances
- Experience an individual perceives as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening
- Lasting, adverse **effects** on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

It is the experience and how a person perceives the experience which makes it traumatic.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) are one way to categorize childhood traumas. The ten categories of ACES are:

Abuse Household Dysfunction 1. Physical 6. Mental illness 7. Mother treated violently 8. Divorce 9. Incarcerated relative

The more ACEs a person experiences, the more at risk they are for negative health and behavioral outcomes later in life, such as substance misuse, depression, heart disease, and suicide attempts.

Adverse experiences (trauma) are **risk factors**, not predictive factors. Risk can be **lowered** with interventions that build in **protective factors**.

Can you think of **other experiences** that would qualify as trauma, but are not represented in ACEs?



What are some common trauma symptoms?

Trauma Symptoms Activity

Match each of the four trauma symptoms below to one scenario below. Put the letter corresponding to your answer on the line at the start of the scenario.

Trauma Symptoms

- A. Depression
- B. Disassociation
- C. Hypervigilance
- D. Physical complaints



Notes:	

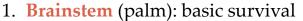
Several times this month Marco has turned	
down invitations from friends. He finds he just	Notoci
doesn't have the energy to get out of bed and	Notes:
shower. He is easily agitated by small things and	
is irritable with his friends when they encourage	
him to get out of the house	
Whenever Ana goes to dinner with friends,	
she always must sit in the chair facing the	
entrance. Throughout dinner she watches the	
door and the people at other tables in the	
restaurant.	
restaurant.	
Sam has been to see his doctor several	
times this year complaining of stomach pains. His	
doctor has run several tests and can find no cause	
for his pain.	
Sandy just received a poor six-month	
review at her new job. Her direct supervisor	
catches her "daydreaming" often and she has	
been unable to meet her quota.	
Toxic Stress	
The continual rush of hormones produced when	
our threat response system is stuck in the "on"	
position is called toxic stress.	
Toxic stress video notes:	

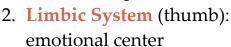
Unaddressed toxic stress can lead to:

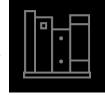
- Difficulty reasoning and problem-solving
- Chronic or recurrent physical complaints
- Sensitivity to sounds, smells, touch, or light
- Difficulty identifying and managing emotions
- Unhealthy coping mechanisms

Trauma and the Brain

Consider Dr. Siegel's hand analogy to remember three areas of the brain.







3. **Cortex** (knuckles and fingers): executive functioning

Because the cortex continues to grow and develop for a long time, it is the **most susceptible** part of the brain to change based on experiences.

Brain Architecture video notes:		

To rewatch the videos on toxic stress or brain architecture, go to the <u>Center for the Developing</u> <u>Child's website</u>.

Children with positive experiences and a nurturing caring adult build and strengthen neural pathways that help them grow and learn.

Notes:

As a foster caregiver, how will you identify toxic stress in the children placed in your home? How can you help children build neural pathways that help them grow and learn ?	Notes:
Impact on Development and Attachment	
Toxic stress keeps the brain focused on survival instead of development. Since development is cumulative, missing earlier stages of development impacts later developmental stages.	
Attachment is learned in infancy but expands beyond the primary caregiver as we grow and develop. Love and nurturing allow a child to grow a neural network that gives them the ability to love and nurture others.	
What could a child's worldview look like if they don't have a present, attentive, and responsive caregiver? How might this impact their behavior ?	

Acknowledging Your Trauma

Is there any member of the child protection team
(primary family, case worker, caregiver, child)
that would not be at risk of trauma? How might
you change the way you interact with team
members knowing they have might be impacted
by trauma?

It is important to address any **personal trauma** history **before the placement** of a child in your home. This allows you to provide more effective care.

Complete the ACE questionnaire on page 10 then consider:

How have my childhood traumas affected me as an adult? Do I have any trauma-related issues that I need to address before becoming a foster caregiver or adoptive parent?

Notes:	

ACE Questionnaire

It is important to address any personal trauma histories prior to the placement of children in your home

Take a few minutes to complete the ACE questionnaire on the next page to identify your adverse childhood experiences.

Instructions: Below is a list of 10 categories of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). From the list below, please place a checkmark next to each ACE category that you experienced prior to your 18th birthday. Then, please add up the number of categories of ACEs you experienced and put the *total number* at the bottom.

read year emperienced and part and testing and the section.	
Did you feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, or had no one to protect or take care of you?	
Did you lose a parent through divorce, abandonment, death, or other	
reason?	
Did you live with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or attempted suicide?	
Did you live with anyone who had a problem with drinking or	
using drugs, including prescription drugs?	
Did your parents or adults in your home ever hit, punch, beat, or threaten to harm	
each other?	
Did you live with anyone who went to jail or prison?	
Did a parent or adult in your home ever swear at you, insult you, or put you	
down?	
Did a parent or adult in your home ever hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt you in	
any way?	
Did you feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were	
special?	
Did you experience unwanted sexual contact (such as fondling or	
oral/anal/vaginal intercourse/penetration)?	
Your ACE score is the total number of checked responses	

Adverse Childhood Experiences Revised Questionnaire, California Surgeon General's Clinical Advisory Committee

Resources

Dr. Nadine Burke Harris' Teds Talk, How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime

https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine burke harris how childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime

Building Adult Capabilities to Improve Child Outcomes (Center for the Developing Child): https://youtu.be/urU-a FsS5Y