Building Resilient Communities through Trauma Informed Congregations

Healing
Connecting
Restoring
Resilience the Movie
What is a Trauma-Informed Congregation (TiCong)?

• *Realizes* the widespread impact of trauma and understand and have faith in potential paths for recovery;
• *Recognizes* the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved;
• *Responds* by integrating knowledge about trauma into everyday policy, practices, and procedures; and
• *Seek to actively resist re-traumatization.*
What is Retraumatization

- A relapse into a state of trauma, triggered by some subsequent event.
How to respond to someone who is traumatized

• Ask “what happened?” instead of “what’s wrong?”
• Understand that when someone is traumatized or triggered, their responses will be more “all or nothing”; extreme; black or white; friend or foe. Nuance is difficult during times of trauma.
• Recognize substance abuse, eating disorders, violent behavior, depression, and anxiety as symptoms of trauma,
• Respect, support, inform, connect, and give hope that recovery is possible and that Traumatic Growth Syndrome is real,
• The power and necessity of partnership and relationship among community actors to create resilient/safe neighborhoods.
Types of stress responses

**POSITIVE**
- A normal and essential part of healthy development
- **EXAMPLES**
  - getting a vaccine,
  - first day of school

**TOLERABLE**
- Response to a more severe stressor, limited in duration
- **EXAMPLES**
  - loss of a loved one,
  - a broken bone

**TOXIC**
- Experiencing strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity
- **EXAMPLES**
  - physical or emotional abuse,
  - exposure to violence
Post-Traumatic Growth

• “Positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances or traumatic events”

• The Post-traumatic Growth Inventory includes factors of New Possibilities, Relating to Others, Personal Strength, Spiritual Change, and Appreciation of Life.
Guiding Growth

• Faith leaders and health ministers can help individuals find the purpose in pain
• Longsuffering is a virtue in many faith-traditions
• “Man can suffer any what, when he knows why” Viktor Frankl
• Victory demands a contest
Principles of a TiCong

• **Safety** – Everyone feels physically and psychologically safe. The congregation is a “nonjudgement” zone.

• **Trustworthiness and transparency** – Congregational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency and the goal of building/maintaining trust and compassion.

• **Peer support and mutual self-help** - Recognition that everyone is a key vehicle for building trust, establishing safety, and empowerment.

• **Collaboration and community** - There is true partnering and leveling of power differences between those serving and those being served.
Guiding Principles of TiCong (cont.)

• **Provide opportunity for voice & choice** –
  – Understand that healing happens in relationships.
  – Create opportunities to share meaningful power and decision-making
  – Members know their role and have the skills and training to perform well
  – Provide opportunities for new skills development and meaningful service.

• **Individuality & uniqueness** -- Provide an individualize approach and treat every person's experience is unique and requires an individualized approach. Provide opportunities for individuals to share their stories of resilience and recovery.

• **Cultural, historical, and gender issues** - The organization actively welcomes those on the margins of society. They offer gender responsive services, leverage the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and recognize and address historical trauma.
RECIPE FOR RESILIENCE

- **Join** the Trauma Informed Congregations Community of Practice (email: kimberly.konkel@hhs.gov)
- **Identify Local efforts** -- trauma-informed, resilience-building efforts under way locally. Engage the leaders of those efforts.
- **Identify Partners.** Gather a small group (30-50 people) of community leaders from different sectors—education, human services, juvenile justice, mental health
- **Educate Partners and Community Member** —about ACES, trauma and resilience.
- **Steering committee and Backbone organization.** The most enthusiastic partners form a steering committee that drives the initial effort, and that forms, or identifies, a backbone organization to support the effort.
RECIPE FOR RESILIENCE

• **Add your group to ACEsConnection.** Here you can connect with other communities around the county working to build trauma informed communities.

• **Make history.** Document your efforts so others can learn from your community’s experience.

• **Align Local Resources for Collective impact.** Develop a “collective impact” model in which multiple groups or agencies share a mission and develop a collaborative approach to carry out that mission.

• **Make a Linear Plan with Mission, goals, action.** Develop a mission statement, goals and a plan of action; review and update every two years.

• **GO!**
How about a Rat Park?
Let’s Build a Rat Park for US!

• We want to walk with you on this journey.
• HHS wants to insure maximum impact of our efforts.
• Through the TiCong, we will share grant opportunities.
• Join the TiCong Community of Practice and participate in monthly webinars
• Consider ReCast (Resiliency in Communities after Stress and Trauma Grant Program Webinar tomorrow 3:00-4:30 PM EDT!)
Thank you

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Trauma

Trauma = individual’s emotional response, shock, denial, anger and physical symptoms.

People experience trauma as a result of dramatic threat/event or prolonged-ongoing neglect or persistent low-grade threat.
Adverse Childhood Experiences
Types of stress responses

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Allostatic Load

• Our brains and bodies become overridden with stress hormones, that lead to physical, behavioral and mental health problems in later life

• Allostatic load is the "wear and tear" of the body resulting from the repeated activation of fight/flight/freeze response to chronic stress.

• Allostatic load can significantly affect the aging process and sorter lifespan, accelerated aging, and impaired health.
Adversity

• Hardship, distress or suffering.
• In the context of ACEs, adversity refers to circumstances in a child’s life including neglect, abuse and family dysfunction.
• It can also refer to hardships faced by individuals and communities due to natural disaster, violence, discrimination or poverty.
Secondary Trauma/Vicarious Trauma

• The suffering/stress that comes from witnessing, helping or trying to help a traumatized person.

• Those in helping professions, including health ministers, teachers, nurses, faith leaders may experience secondary trauma;

• Symptoms of secondary trauma can include sadness, anger, poor concentration, emotional exhaustion and shame.
Complex Trauma

• When a human being is born into an unsafe environment, where attachments are difficult or impossible to form, they may suffer complex.

• If a child feels a need and expresses that need, but doesn’t get the need met, or is punished for that need, the effects are deep and long-lasting: affecting her ability to think, learn and relate to others.

• Trauma and stress have appear to have a direct correlation with health across the lifespan.
Allostatic Load

Environmental stressors
(work, home, neighborhood)

Major life events

Trauma, abuse

Individual differences
(genes, development, experience)

Behavioral responses
(fight or flight)
(personal behavior—diet, smoking, drinking, exercise)

Physiologic responses

Adaptation

Allostasis

Allostatic load
Social Determinants of Health

http://planh.ca/sites/default/files/pictures/determinants-health-wellbeing-in-neighbourhood_0.png
Protective Factors
What does your “Rat Park” include?
What is Neuroplasticity?

- **Neuroplasticity** The ability of the brain to reorganize itself and create new circuits in response to our environment and most remarkably in response to our thoughts.

- **Life-long Plasticity** In recent decades scientists have discovered that the brain is plastic throughout our lives.

- **New Neuron Growth** Recent research has shown that stem cells in the brain can grow new neurons at any age.
Epigenetics
Collective Impact

- **Common Agenda**
  - Keeps all parties moving towards the same goal

- **Common Progress Measures**
  - Measures that get to the TRUE outcome

- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**
  - Each expertise is leveraged as part of the overall

- **Communications**
  - This allows a culture of collaboration

- **Backbone Organization**
  - Takes on the role of managing collaboration

Join the Movement

• Join the Trauma Informed Congregations Community of Practice

• Attend the United State of Women meeting May 23rd and the Muslim Health Collaborative Roundtable at HHS May 24th

• Expand coverage and access to care by joining with though Health Ministers Guides and Open enrollment!
The Top Five Regrets of the Dying

• I wish I hadn't worked so hard.
• I wish I'd stayed in touch with my friends.
• I wish I'd let myself be happier.
• I wish I'd had the courage to express my true self.
• I wish I'd lived a life true to my dreams instead of what others expected of me.