

Trauma Informed Care

Lapeer County
Community Mental Health



Trauma is Defined as...

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances which is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being.



Key Principles of Trauma Informed Services

- ▶ Safety
 - ▶ Ensure physical, emotional, and psychological safety for everyone.
- ▶ Trustworthiness and Transparency
 - ▶ Foster trust through clear communication and consistent, honest behavior.
- ▶ Peer Support and Mutual Self-Help
 - ▶ Involve people with lived experience of trauma as part of healing and service delivery.

Key Principles of Trauma Informed Services

- ▶ Collaboration and Mutuality
 - ▶ Everyone has a role in a trauma-informed approach.
- ▶ Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
 - ▶ Prioritize the individual's strengths and autonomy.
- ▶ Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues
 - ▶ Recognize and respect cultural, racial, and gender identities, and the impact of systemic trauma.

[Video - What Are The 6 Principles Of Trauma Informed Care?](#)
[- Psychological Clarity](#)

Key Principles of Trauma Informed Services

What Are The 6 Principles Of Trauma Informed Care? -
Psychological Clarity

How Prevalent is Trauma?



- ▶ It is estimated that approximately **70%** of people living in the United States are exposed to one or more traumatic events during their lifetime. (*How to Manage Trauma, 2022, <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Trauma-infographic.pdf>*)
- ▶ An average of **6%** of Americans have/will have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) at some point in their lives. (*Va.gov: Veterans Affairs. How Common is PTSD in Adults, 2025, March 26, https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_adults.asp*)
- ▶ In the substance use population, up to **67%** of men and women in treatment report childhood abuse and neglect. (*Child Maltreatment Statistics, 2025, <https://americanspcc.org/child-maltreatment-statistics/#:~:text=Two%2Dthirds%20of%20the%20people%20in%20treatment%20for,have%20a%20parent/caregiver%20alcohol%20abuse%20risk%20factor.>*)

How Prevalent is Trauma?



- ▶ **Up to 50%** of women in substance use treatment have a history of sexual assault or incest. (*Impact of Sexual and Domestic Violence on Substance Abuse and Addiction*, 2024, July 26, https://recovery.org/addiction/domestic-violence/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- ▶ **65%-86%** of individuals with developmental disabilities have experienced trauma. (*Trauma-Informed Climate Scale-10 and Attitudes Related to TIC-10: An Examination of Scale Psychometrics Using Data from Disability Service Providers*, 2024, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1936657424000050>)
- ▶ It is estimated that the economic costs of untreated trauma-related alcohol and drug abuse alone were at **\$700 billion**. (*Drugs, Brains, and Behavior: The Science of Addiction*, July 2020, https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/introduction?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

The Silver Lining

- ▶ There are many models and programs designed to treat trauma
- ▶ With better collective understanding of trauma, more survivors will find their path to healing and wellness
- ▶ With a better understanding of trauma and how it affects the person we can lessen and prevent a wide range of physical health, behavior health and social problems for generations to come

Understanding Trauma

Trauma is used to describe experiences or situations which are emotionally painful and distressing, and overwhelm people's ability to cope, leaving them with a feeling of powerlessness. Trauma is a perception of the person experiencing it; as caregivers we must **not** project our perceptions, feeling, bias, or judgments.



Understanding Trauma

Complex trauma is exposure to multiple traumatic events, often of an invasive, interpersonal nature, and the wide-ranging, long-term impact of this exposure can disrupt many aspects of the person's development and the formation of 'self'.

TRAUMA

Understanding Trauma

Complex Trauma Signs & Symptoms

- ▶ Chronic sadness, depression, or emotional dysregulation
- ▶ Persistent anxiety, fear, or hopelessness
- ▶ Difficulty managing emotions
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Dissociation
- ▶ Memory gaps
- ▶ Fear of abandonment
- ▶ Sleep disturbances
- ▶ Eating disorders
- ▶ Self-sabotage
- ▶ Compulsive behaviors
- ▶ Difficulty managing responsibilities or daily tasks

Understanding Trauma

Acute trauma is defined as a trauma which occurs at a particular time and place and is usually short-lived. But can cause overwhelming feelings of terror, horror, and/or helplessness.

TRAUMA

Understanding Trauma

Acute Trauma Signs & Symptoms

- ▶ Intense fear or helplessness
- ▶ Anxiety or panic attacks
- ▶ Mood swings or irritability
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Nausea
- ▶ Headaches
- ▶ Intrusive thoughts
- ▶ Confusion
- ▶ Difficulty focusing
- ▶ Social withdrawal
- ▶ Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- ▶ Agitation or aggressive behavior

Triggers



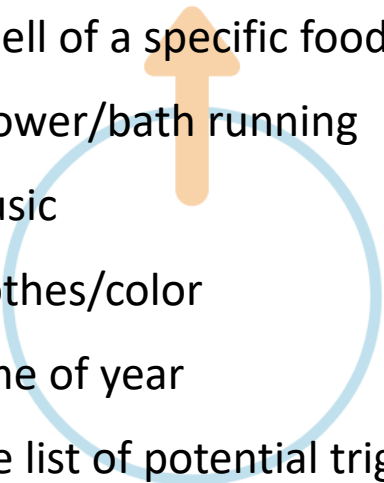
Traumatic triggers come in two forms; external and internal. A trigger is a reminder of past traumatizing events. A person's triggers are activated through one or more of the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste.

A trigger is something that sets off a memory or flashback transporting the person back to the event of his/her original trauma.

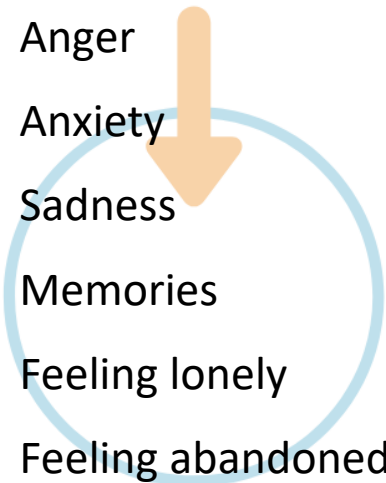
Triggers are very personal and unique to each person.

Triggers

External Triggers

- 
- ▶ Smell of a specific food
 - ▶ Shower/bath running
 - ▶ Music
 - ▶ Clothes/color
 - ▶ Time of year
 - ▶ The list of potential triggers is endless ~ specific to the individual

Internal Triggers

- 
- ▶ Anger
 - ▶ Anxiety
 - ▶ Sadness
 - ▶ Memories
 - ▶ Feeling lonely
 - ▶ Feeling abandoned

Understanding Trauma

Preventing Re-traumatization

Refers to actively preventing situations, practices, or environments that could trigger or re-expose a person to the psychological and emotional distress of past trauma. It is a key principle in **trauma-informed care** and involves designing interactions and systems that **reduce the risk of reactivating trauma responses**.

- ▶ Example: A caseworker asks an individual if they'd prefer the door open or closed during their meeting and explains what the session will involve – giving the individual a sense of choice, control, and transparency to avoid triggering past trauma.

Understanding Trauma

Preventing Re-traumatization

What can trigger re-traumatization?

- ▶ Power Imbalances
 - ▶ When someone feels controlled or not listened to.
- ▶ Lack of Choice or Control
 - ▶ An individual is not given options or can't say no.
- ▶ Boundary Violations
 - ▶ An individual's comfort or personal space is ignored.
- ▶ Unclear Communication or Sudden Changes
 - ▶ When things happen without warning or explanation.

Understanding Trauma

Preventing Re-traumatization

- ▶ Triggering Environments
 - ▶ When sights, sounds, or settings bring back traumatic memories.
- ▶ Dismissive Responses
 - ▶ When feelings or experiences are not taken seriously.
- ▶ Lack of Cultural Sensitivity
 - ▶ When an individual's identity, background, or values are overlooked.

How Do We Help as Caregivers?

- ▶ Understand that every behavior is a communication
- ▶ Educate yourself, communicate, and collaborate with the individual and team
- ▶ Be observant of the environment before, during, and after the behavior



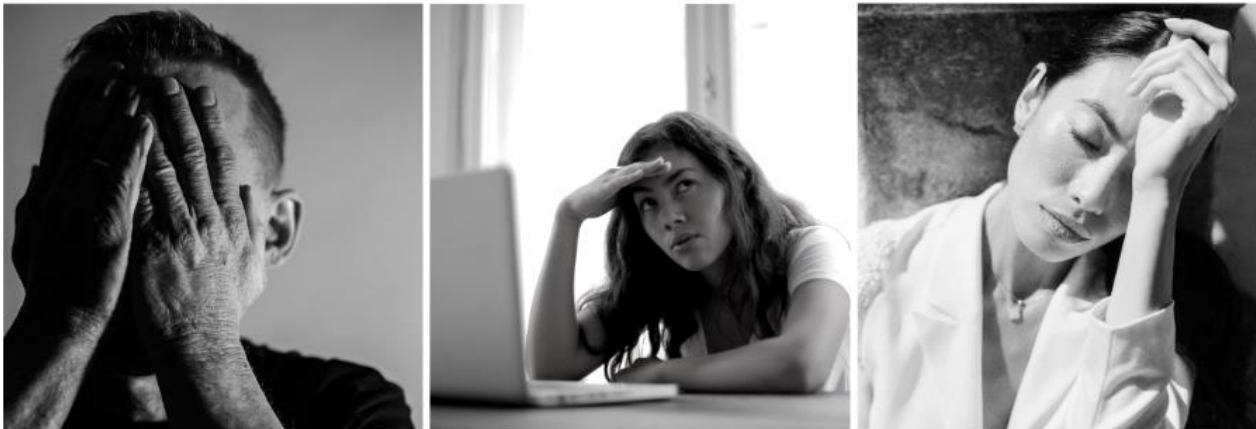
How Do We Help as Caregivers?

- ▶ Have a plan to keep everyone safe
- ▶ Be patient with what seems to be irrational behaviors, fear, and outbursts
- ▶ Understand that the person's responses are **normal** reactions to **abnormal** events



Compassion Fatigue

It is the physical, emotional, and psychological exhaustion that comes from prolonged exposure to other people's suffering.



Compassion Fatigue

Recognizing Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- ▶ Irritability or anger
- ▶ Heightened anxiety or sadness
- ▶ Decreased sense of empathy
- ▶ Chronic fatigue or exhaustion
- ▶ Trouble sleeping
- ▶ Weakened immune response
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Forgetfulness
- ▶ Withdrawing from social life
- ▶ Increased use of substances, food, or screen time to cope
- ▶ Loss of interest in things that used to bring joy

Compassion Fatigue

Take steps to prevent compassion fatigue/burnout by:

- ▶ Being observant of the environment before, during and after the behavior
- ▶ Staff debriefing meetings
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Personal therapy
- ▶ Emotional regulation
- ▶ Optimism & positive thinking
- ▶ Problem solving & decision making
- ▶ Self care & well being
- ▶ Social support & connection
- ▶ Appropriate amount of sleep
- ▶ Hobbies
- ▶ Proper staffing
- ▶ Continued learning and training
- ▶ **Working together**



[Video - Build Your Resilience - Trauma Coping Skills](#)



Questions?

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