

# The Trauma Response

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## Introductions!



## Welcome!!! Sticky Note Activity

- What do you hope to get out of the training today?

- On a scale of 1-10 (1 low and 10 high), how often do you think you work using a trauma sensitive/reponsive lens?



## Emily's Dragon



Emily's Dragon...

Video will let you share videos on YouTube easily, without distracting third-party content or advertisements.

[Watch on YouTube](#)

## ADULT SEXUAL ASSAULT CRIMES

# The Prevalence

About 1.2 MILLION Wisconsin adults have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup>



About 1 out of 3 adult women



Almost 1 out of 5 adult men

Approximately 50% of survivors indicated the perpetrator was a current or former intimate partner.<sup>2</sup>



### Domestic Violence:

- 2021
- 80 people died due to DV in WI

## Child Abuse

There were 3,985 unique child victims of maltreatment in 2020. A child is a victim if he/she had at least one substantiated maltreatment finding at the conclusion of a CPS initial assessment. This represents 3.2 children per 1,000 children in Wisconsin.



WI Dept of Children and Families



## Trauma

Any experience that leaves you feeling helpless, hopeless, fearing for your life or safety.

The experience can be REAL or PERCEIVED.

## We Can Experience Trauma in Many Ways



- The causes of trauma are less important than how the trauma manifests in a person's life.
- Important to understand, it can be experienced in many different ways.

# Trauma Exposure



## Victim

Ex: Abuse, neglect, accident, etc

## Witness

Personal witness-DV, police, teachers, counselors, nurses, other medical staff, etc



## Related To

Siblings, other family, etc



## Listening to Details

Therapists, counselors, medical staff, media exposure, video gam

# Types of Trauma

## Type 1

Single Exposure



## Type 2

One type of exposure that is repeated or more than one type of trauma

## Type 3

Toxic Stress/Developmental Trauma Disorder/PTSD



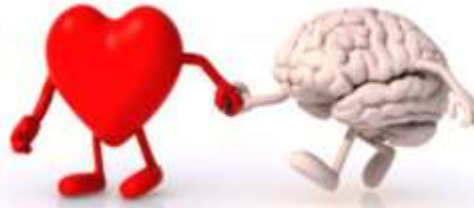
# Brain Science of Trauma

# The Stress Response



# Deep Brain Functions

Sensation  
Stress Regulation  
Memory



## What was the Dance?



- Thinks
- Learns
- Recalls information
- Pays attention
- Solves problems
- Makes decisions
- Learns

## Outer Brain Functions



## Trauma's Impact on the Brain

### Outer Brain (Thinking)

- Language
- Reasoning
- Understanding
- Processing

### Deep Brain (Sensory)

- Senses
- Affect
- Emotional Regulation
- Memory



# Can Develop Into Disorders

## Common Reactions

- Loss of appetite
- Feeling numb
- Trouble sleeping
- Trouble focusing
- Hiding
- Trying to get away
- senses are heightened
- Irritability

## PTSD

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event – either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event

## Developmental Trauma

DTD is a more multifaceted diagnosis specific to children, encompassing 15 possible symptoms across several domains, including emotion, cognition, behavior, and relationships. Symptoms include behaviors such as habitual self-harm, extreme distrust, and verbal or physical aggression toward others.

## What Happens?

**Flight**

**Fawn**

**Fight**

**Freeze**

## FIGHT Response

### Healthy Fight Response

- Create boundaries
- Be assertive
- Find courage
- Become a strong leader
- Protect yourself (and loved ones) when necessary



### Unhealthy Fight Response

- Controlling behaviors
- Narcissistic tendencies
- Bullying
- Conduct disorder
- Demanding perfection from others
- Feelings of entitlement
- Fleeing the situation

## FLIGHT Response

### Healthy Flight Response

- Disengage from harmful conversations
- Leave unhealthy relationships
- Remove yourself from physically dangerous situations
- Properly assess danger



### Unhealthy Flight Response

- Obsessive or compulsive tendencies
- Needing to stay busy at all times
- Panic and constant fear
- Perfectionism
- Workaholic tendencies
- An inability to sit still

# FREEZE Response

## Healthy Freeze Response

**Mindfulness  
Awareness  
Full presence in the moment**

## Unhealthy Freeze Response

- Dissociation
- Isolation
- Frequent "zoning out"
- Brain fog
- Difficulty making decisions or taking action
- Perceived laziness
- Fear of achieving or trying new things



# Fawn Response

## Healthy Fawn Response

**Compassion for others  
Compromise  
Active listening  
Fairness**

## Unhealthy Fawn Response

- Codependent relationships
- Someone to stay in a violent relationship
- Loss of self
- People-pleasing to the point of destruction
- Little or no boundaries



## Implications for People Who Work With Victims

- Need to understand possible effects to be a better helper
- The best screening tool is your own curiosity...
  - \* "I wonder what has happened...what is happening?"
- Need some strategies to help quickly



## Try to Understand Private Logic

The way a person views him/herself, others and the world around them

Behavior is the beginning, not the end.  
**Behavior is a CLUE, as it is a traumatized person's way of communicating.**  
It is highly unlikely that they will talk, reason, or use logic.

Behavior can also be a **SYMBOL** for what the person has experienced or is experiencing (e.g., terror, lack of safety, worry, insecurity, anger, fear, guilt, shame, low self-worth, etc.)



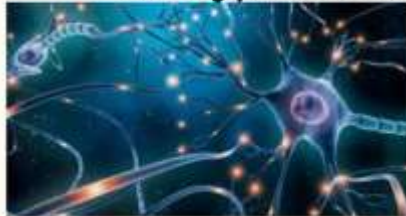
## Be a Role Model



- Co-regulation
- Remaining Calm
- Sensory support
- Being Mindful

## Vagal Nerves

The vagus nerve, also known as the vagal nerves, are the main nerves of your parasympathetic nervous system. This system controls specific body functions such as your digestion, heart rate and immune system. These functions are involuntary, meaning you can't consciously control them.



## Strategies to Stimulate the Vagus Nerve

"Breathing Deeply, immediately relaxes the body because it stimulates the vagus nerve, which runs from the neck to the abdomen and is in charge of turning off the fight or flight reflex"

"The vagus nerve listens to the way we breathe and it sends the brain and the heart whatever message our breath indicates"



## Breathing Techniques



- Tracing Hand Breathing
- Five Finger Breathing
- On Purpose Breathing

# Grounding Technique

				
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 THINGS YOU CAN SEE			
	<input type="checkbox"/>			
4 THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH				
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 THINGS YOU CAN HEAR			
	<input type="checkbox"/>			
2 THINGS YOU CAN SMELL				
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 THINGS YOU CAN TASTE			
				

## What Can You Do For YOU?

Examples:

- The Morning Miracle:
  - Silence.
  - Affirmations.
  - Visualization.
  - Exercise.
  - Reading.
  - Scribing.
- Exercise
- Remembering the "Why."  
Post it!
- Put up Boundaries
- What fills your "Tank"
- Locus of Control



WHY

Larissa

## Vicarious Trauma



The emotional residue of exposure to traumatic stories and experiences of others through work; witnessing fear, pain, and terror that others have experienced; a pre-occupation with horrific stories told to the professional (American Counseling Association, 2016)

# Thank you!

Questions?

