Trauma and Employment: Building Resilience and Empowerment in our Community

By: Sharon Gbadamosi and Carolyn Bazan
Agenda

• TRAUMA AND ACES
• PROMOTE RESILIENCE AND HOPE
• EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS
• BARRIERS AND BENEFITS OF EMPLOYMENT
• TRAUMA AND EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH
• MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING AND TRANS-THEORETICAL MODEL CHANGE TALK
• AVAILABLE RESOURCES
What is trauma?

"THE RESPONSE TO A DEEPLY DISTRESSING OR DISTURBING EVENT THAT OVERWHELM AN INDIVIDUAL’S ABILITY TO COPE, CAUSES FEELINGS OF HELPLESSNESS, DIMINISHES THEIR SENSE OF SELF AND THEIR ABILITY TO FEEL THE FULL RANGE OF EMOTIONS AND EXPERIENCES“

WWW.INTEGRATEDLISTENING.COM
Examples of Traumatic Experiences

- CAR ACCIDENT
- NATURAL DISASTER
- SEXUAL ASSAULT
- PANDEMIC
- OTHER EXAMPLES?

Common Symptoms of Trauma

- Sadness
- Fear
- Guilt
- Shame
- Nightmares
- Flashbacks
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Anger
- Difficulty trusting others or the world
Statistics

• 70% of adults in the U.S. have experienced some type of traumatic event at least once in their lives.

• Over 90% of individuals using behavioral health services have experienced trauma.

• Up to 20% of these people go on to develop PTSD. As of today, that equates to approximately 44.7 million people who were or are struggling with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- intimate partner violence
- bullying
- parental divorce
- parental substance use
- sexual abuse
- traumatic grief
Positive Childhood Experiences that can Mitigate ACE’s

Examples of Counter-ACE’s:
• Having a caregiver whom you feel safe with
• Having a predictable home routine like regular meals and bedtimes
• Having teachers who care
• Having good friends and neighbors
• Having opportunities to have fun
• Having beliefs that provide comfort
• Feeling comfortable with yourself
• Liking school
TRAUMA CAN HAVE SERIOUS EFFECTS ON HEALTH, BEHAVIORS, RELATIONSHIPS, WORK, SCHOOL, AND OTHER ASPECTS OF LIFE

• Everyone will experience at least one traumatic event during their lifetime.
  • Is screening for trauma an invasion of privacy?
  • How can unresolved trauma affect employment?
It is normal to have a reaction to an adverse or distressing event.

The goal of resiliency is to minimize the impact of traumatic events; to avoid depression, anxiety, or PTSD.

Resiliency is not a trait that we inherit. It is a combination of behaviors, thoughts, and actions...aimed at coping specifically for you.
Building Resilience

- Encouraging seek support from their support systems
- Encourage maintaining boundaries
- Encourage and model Self-Advocacy and Self Care
- Encourage utilizing of community resources (therapeutic groups, e.g. W.R.A.P., yoga, meditation)
- Identify clients strengths and supports and cultivate them
- Identify weaknesses and work on strengthening them
- Discuss traumas and how they might interfere in clients' workplace
- Look for opportunities for career growth through job trainings, workshops, retreats, etc.
- Encourage Self-Check ins regularly during the day to see how you are feeling and what you might be in need of (e.g. fresh air, coffee, stretch, brief walk, support from a colleague)
- Celebrate your successes and talk about them with Supports
- Teach/Model Coping Strategies (Breathing exercises)
- Positive Self Talk/Affirmations/Be your own Best friend
Persons with a disability are less likely to be in the labor force.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>With a disability</th>
<th>With no disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not in the labor force</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Barriers to Employment

- Stigma
- Benefit
- Motivation
- Education
- Limited Job Experience
- Skills (e.g. interview skills)
- Criminal Record
- Disability/Symptoms
- Transportation
Benefits of Employment

- Increases quality of life
- Reduces hospitalization
- Reduces symptoms
- Increases social support (Networking)
- Purpose (contributing to society)
- Financial independence
- Increased Self esteem
- Benefits (medical, life insurance, Social Security…)


TRAUMA and Employment

- Supported Employment (SE) programs have demonstrated success assisting people with psychiatric disabilities in obtaining employment.
- Data suggests roughly half of individuals enrolled are successful in retrieving a job, while the rest do not respond to SE services.
- Clinical evidence suggests that a large proportion of the non-responders struggle to benefit from SE services due to unresolved issues related to past exposure to trauma or symptoms of PTSD.
- Lack of screening of PTSD by staff
  - Lu et al. (2017)
Motivational Interviewing, an Antithesis to the Old Approach

- Nonconfrontational & collaborative
- Engages the person in identifying their own reasons for change
- Allows the person to make their own decisions and come to their own conclusions about reasons for change
- Motivation is built intrinsically, through self exploration

Motivational Interviewing, third edition, 2013
The Method of Motivational Interviewing

People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered than by those which have come from the minds of others.

-Blaise Pascal
# Transtheoretical Model (Stages of Change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Change</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Precontemplative</td>
<td>Doesn’t see it. No! Unaware Defensiveness Resistance</td>
<td>Help them think about it Engagement Trust building Get a reaction, either cognitive or emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemplative</td>
<td>Maybe, but . . . Ambivalence, unsure Problem awareness Openness to information</td>
<td>Explore pros and cons Help explore ambivalence Explore barriers Pass information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready for Action (Preparation)</td>
<td>Decided, Yes! Ready to do Experimentation Coaching; teach skills</td>
<td>Solve it! Encourage, empower, support Emphasize options Focus on developing a step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage of Change</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Interventions</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Doing it!</td>
<td>Help them do it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice new behaviors</td>
<td>Support, praise, recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoiding old behaviors</td>
<td>Focus on rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follow-up, reach out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Problem-solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>Living it!</td>
<td>Live it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustaining behavior</td>
<td>Reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support, praise, recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Find other supports</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Become a role model to others</td>
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Guiding the process of change

Planning
Evoking
Focusing
Engaging

Change Talk

• When people are ambivalent they express both pro change arguments and counter change arguments

• Any expression or speech that favors change is **Change Talk**
Preparatory Change Talk

• **Desire** - An expression of wanting to change.
  • “I would love to get a job.”

• **Ability** – The person’s self perceived ability to achieve it. Signals the change that seems possible.
  • “My family and I both think I could do well in college.”

• **Reasons** – Statements of why they want to make a change. Does not imply ability or desire,
  people may have good reasons to change but don’t.
  • “I would get a better job if I finished my BS in nursing.” (If... then)

• **Need** - Imperative language that stresses the importance/urgency of change.
  • “Something has to change, I can’t keep on like this.”
Mobilizing Change Talk

• Signals movement toward resolution of the ambivalence in favor of change

• Best expressed through commitment language

• **Commitment language**
  • signals the likelihood of action
    • “I will…”, “I promise…”, “I swear…”, “I guarantee…”

• **Action** (current movement)

• **Taking steps toward change**
Available Supports for Employment
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, State and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. It also applies to the United States Congress.
- Employers may be required under the ADA to provide reasonable accommodations, when requested, to an employee with a disability as long as it does not cause undue hardship on the employer.
- https://www.ada.gov/
Supported Employment Programs

• Supported Employment – Individual Placement and Support (IPS): IPS programs seek to help people with mental illness quickly choose, secure and keep competitive employment while providing ongoing individualized long-term support.

• Assertive Community Treatment (ACT): ACT provides intensive support services to people with serious mental illness in the community.

• Clubhouses: community-based centers open to individuals living with mental illness, offer supported employment programs.
Other Supports

- Job Accommodation Network (J.A.N.)
- Career One Stops
- NJWINS
- Disability Rights New Jersey
- Human Resources
- Wellness Centers
- Library (Fresh Start Programs)
The Mental Health Association in New Jersey in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Human Services’ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Disaster and Terrorism Branch, is offering a Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) through a (FEMA) grant.
Resources

• National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
  • 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

• NJ Suicide Prevention Hopeline
  • 1-855-654-6735

• Crisis Text Line
  • Text: 741-741 “Help”

• Mental Health Cares: For Free, confidential Mental Health Information & Referral
  • 1-866-202-HELP (4357)

• Peer Recovery Warmline: Offering mutual telephone support with a peer
  • 1-877-292-5588
**References**

- NJ WINS - www.NJWINS.org 1-866-946-7465
- Social Security Administration - www.SSA.gov
- NJWINS - www.njwins.org or call 866-946-7465
- Disability Rights New Jersey - https://www.drnj.org/
- Americans with Disability Act - https://www.ada.gov/
- Job Accommodation Network - https://askjan.org/