Leading Teams and Organizations In the Midst of Crisis

Using Trauma-Informed Interventions to Manage Crisis Reactions in Organizations

PRESENTED BY

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### What Brings Us Here Today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build</th>
<th>Consider</th>
<th>Commit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build awareness of organizational trauma and how it can impact organizations, team, and individuals</td>
<td>Consider the appropriate circumstances for use of trauma-informed practices for leadership</td>
<td>Commit to investing in actions that will cultivate a trauma-informed VA</td>
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STARTING ON COMMON GROUND

terms and definitions
What is Organizational Trauma?

Organizations, like individuals, can be traumatized, and the result of the traumatic experience can be as devastating for organizations as it is for individuals.

At any level, trauma is:

• an experience for which a group is emotionally and cognitively unprepared,

• an experience that overwhelms the self-protective structures, and

• leaves the group feeling totally vulnerable and at least temporarily helpless.
Sources of Organizational Trauma

Can be a single devastating incident or the effects of multiple wounding events.
Over-adaptation to a rupture in a workgroup’s self-protective structures. Reactions manifest as emotional and organizational disturbances.
Stress Reactions to Trauma in Organizations

Reactions in Personnel

• Closed boundaries - Alliances
• Stress and anxiety contagion
• Ineffective methods of operations
• Poor decision making
• Unacceptable and unethical behaviors
• Disruption of interpersonal relationships

Reactions in Leaders

• Increased authority
• Centralized decision making
• Move from democratic and inclusive leadership styles to styles that are more controlling and transactional
• Ruptured ability to critically problem solve and engage in rational decision making

(Adapted from Organizational Trauma and Healing by Pat Vivian and Shana Hormann, 2013)
TRAUMA INFORMED ACTIONS

Learning How To Approach
TRAUMA-INFORMED ACTIONS

The Four R’s

Realizes
- Realizes widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery

Recognizes
- Recognizes signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system

Responds
- Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices

Resists
- Seeks to actively Resist re-traumatization.
SAMSHA's 6 Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach

**Safety**
Throughout the organization, the physical setting is safe & interpersonal interactions promote a sense of safety.

**Peer Support**
Peer support & mutual self-help are key vehicles for utilizing group stories & lived experiences to promote recovery & healing.

**Empowerment, Voice, & Choice**
Throughout the organization individuals’ strengths & experiences are recognized and built upon.

**Trustworthiness & Transparency**
Partnering & the leveling of power to demonstrate healing in relationships & in the meaningful sharing of power & decision-making.

**Collaboration & Mutuality**
The organization moves past cultural biases by demonstrating that healing happens in relationships despite stereotypes and biases.

**Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues**

Operations & decisions are conducted with transparency with the goal of building & maintaining trust.
The Key Principles In Action

• **SAFETY**: A doctor asks a patient what can be done during a procedure to help the patient feel more comfortable.

• **TRUSTWORTHINESS**: A hospital has a daily shift log and check-in debriefing system to ensure transparent communication and consistency between staff on different shifts.

• **CHOICE**: A nurse provides a patient with two referral options for a cardiologist and allows him to choose which he prefers.

• **COLLABORATION**: A hospital has a patient advisory board that meets monthly to discuss hospital practices, policies and feedback gathered from patients.

• **EMPOWERMENT**: A physician assistant asks about what a patient is already doing to help her succeed in reaching her goal of losing weight.
Ensuring the values and principles is a common theme that all people in an organization/system can focus on and be deliberate about by thinking:

“How am I ensuring the values and principles in what I do?”
LEADING INFORMED

Trauma Informed Leadership
Why Should You Act?

Critical in the healthcare industry:

• Employees must provide quality clinical care without impaired judgment, maintain personal meaning associated with their work and the organizational mission

  (Könincks & Teneau, 2010)

• Ignoring systemic traumatization in health organizations results in neglectful clinical performance and client care, leading to the peril and collapse of the organization.

  (Vivian & Hormann, 2015)
Trauma Informed Leadership is a way of understating or appreciating there is an emotional world of experiences rumbling around beneath the surface.

This is Servant Leadership IN ACTION!
Leaders Invested in Trauma-Informed Actions

• Have a **full understanding** of what it means to be trauma-informed

• Incorporate a trauma-informed approach into the **organization’s mission/vision**

• Integrate a trauma-informed approach into the **organization’s strategic plan**

• **Provide resources** (time, space, money) for the trauma-informed initiative

• Are involved in the trauma-informed **oversight committee**

• **Talk about** a trauma-informed approach in meetings, newsletters, supervision, etc.
Thank you!

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FOR QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 201.

SUPPLEMENTAL SLIDES
Questions to consider...

Consider your leadership style...

• When you hear the term “trauma”, what are your initial thoughts?

• Would using the term “trauma” be too strong of a term to use when discussing organizational crises here in your workplace

• How does using the term “trauma” impact how you think about leading?
Questions to Consider...

Consider your knowledge of your workplace:

• Is there organizational trauma?

• If so, what would you say is the source of organizational trauma in your organization?

• Are these instances past or present occurrences? Both?
Stress Reactions to Trauma in Organizations

• Causes **severe and profound wounds** – impacting the emotional and psychological health of the organization and its members.

• Overpowers the organization’s **cultural structures and processes**.

• **Overwhelms the system** and its ability to respond to internal and external challenges.

• **Distress and dysfunctional processes, ineffective methods** of operations, poor decision making, **unacceptable, and unethical** behaviors, and **disruption** of interpersonal relationships are the results of a traumatized system.

(Isik, 2017)
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<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
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<td>Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)</td>
<td>Experience of trauma-related symptoms in a worker as a result of witnessing the trauma/adversity of another; typically quick in onset.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicarious Trauma (VT)</td>
<td>Development of negative changes in work world view as a result of the cumulative impact of witnessing trauma/adversity over time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>A gradual process of a staff member experiencing feelings of hopelessness, fatigue and being overwhelmed as a result of a lack of support, excessive workloads and unrealistic expectations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compassion Fatigue (CF)</td>
<td>Experiencing the combination of STS, VT and/or burnout.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moral Injury and Moral Distress</td>
<td>An injurious experience that occurs when the worker engages in, fails to prevent or witnesses acts that conflict with their values or beliefs, which can lead to feelings of moral distress such as guilt, shame and anger.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decision Fatigue</td>
<td>Decrease in decision-making capacity after a long period of making multiple, sometimes rapid decisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicarious Resilience (VR)</td>
<td>Positive meaning-making and shift of the worker’s experience as a result of witnessing the resilience of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicarious Post-Traumatic Growth (VPTG)</td>
<td>Development of positive changes and growth in worker’s world view as a result of witnessing the post-traumatic growth of others.</td>
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*Figure 7 – The Impact of the Work, Adapted from Krause & Green (2015), Tedeschi & Calhoun (2004) and National Center for PTSD (2020)*
Cultural Reactions to Trauma

- **Organizational Miasma**: defined as a highly toxic and contagious state, manifested as moral and spiritual decay, and exploitation of respect, trust, and cooperative relationships in organizations.
  
  (Gabriel, 2012)

- **Organizational Darkness**: organizational darkness, referring to workplace violence, aggression, and insensibility to the individual struggles of the employees.
  
  (Linstead, Maréchal, & Griffin, 2014)
Creating the Trauma-Informed Action Plan

Working the Stages

1. **Pre-Implementation** – system prepares for and builds a foundation for trauma-informed organizational change.

2. **Implementation** – system implements action steps specific to trauma-informed organizational change.

3. **Sustainability** – system further integrates trauma-informed practices into its fabric by establishing mechanisms to consolidate gains, monitor progress and tweak implementation as needed.
Trauma-Informed Action Planning

Key Development Areas

1. Leading and Communicating
2. Hiring and Orientation Practices
3. Training the Workforce (Clinical & Non-Clinical)
4. Addressing the Impact of the Work
5. Establishing a Safe Environment
6. Screening for Trauma
7. Treating Trauma
8. Collaborating with Others (Partners & Referrals)
9. Reviewing Policies and Procedures
10. Evaluating and Monitoring Progress

Looking at each of these areas, what are some realistic sponsorship opportunities for starting points?
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Partnering & the leveling of power to demonstrate healing in relationships & in the meaningful sharing of power & decision-making.

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SAMSHA’s 6 Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach
Action Planning with the Key Principles

(sponsorship edition examples)

• Training staff (clinical and non-clinical) on the 6 key principles of, and evidence-based and emerging best practices relevant to, Trauma-Informed approaches and care.

• Committing to the recruitment, hiring, and retaining of trauma-informed staff.

• Developing and promoting a set of competencies, policies, and procedures specific to trauma-informed leadership and care.

• Delineating the responsibilities and addressing ethical considerations specifically relevant to promoting trauma-informed approaches and care.

• Holding each level of leadership accountable for providing trauma-informed managing and supervision.

• Committing to prevention and treatment of secondary trauma of health professionals within the organization.
Action Planning with the Key Principles

(sponsorship edition examples)

• Recognize and acknowledge trauma
• Ensure safety, contain anxiety, & normalize experience
• Act as an example – Modeling the Model
• Remember history and interrupt amnesia
• Strengthen organizational identity and esteem

• Institute facilitating structures and processes
• Making Space for Making meaning
• Open system to new energy and information
• Offer optimism, confidence, and energy
• Set priorities to move forward
Questions to Consider...

Consider your knowledge of your VA or Office:

• What are your concerns about applying the key principles and developmental areas in your workplace?

• What barriers do you see ahead?

• How can using the key principles aid in overcoming these barriers?