HEALING HEARTS: OVERCOMING TRAUMA AND FOSTERING RESILIENCE:

About Your Presenter...

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Goals for Today

- What is Trauma? Toxic Stress?
- Impact of ACES/Trauma on the Brain, Body & Child Development
- What is Resilience? Factors that impact resilience
- Strategies to promote resilience
Let's all be part of the discussion!

Let’s Talk Toxic Stress & Trauma

Spheres of traumatic experiences

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The Developing child

Experiences within home and school

Events within community and society

National and global events like war, terrorism,
Toxic Stress & Trauma

- Stress can be positive, tolerable or toxic

- Positive or tolerable stress:
  - enhances development, and tolerable stress does not harm development.

- Toxic Stress
  - is the extreme, frequent, or extended activation of the stress response, without the buffering presence of a supportive adult.

Types of Trauma

- Acute trauma and/or
  - One time, short duration, effects generally lessen with time and support

- Complex/Developmental Trauma:
  - Result of toxic stress.
  - Exposure to simultaneous or sequential occurrences of child maltreatment, abuse and neglect, or chronic experiencing of stressors within the community
  - Can impact developmental stages and tasks

Adverse Childhood Experiences

ACES = Adverse Childhood Experiences

The three types of ACES include:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Household Dysfunction
ACE impact children NOW

- Children with 3 or more ACEs are nearly 4 times as likely to have a developmental delay (Marie-Mitchell and Connor, 2013)
- Children with 4 or more ACEs are 32 times more likely to have behavioral problems in school (Burke et al, 2011)

Trauma CHANGES the BRAIN

Developmental Areas Impacted

Think of the Brain
- Problem solving
- Self Management
- Moral reasoning
- Logic
- Emotional Regulation
- Affect Regulation
- Concentration/Impulsivity
- Effective communication
Developmental areas impacted

And then there is the …
Brain – Gut connection

Poor appetite, loss of weight, digestive problems, headaches, ….

Part II
Resilience: A Moderator of the impact of trauma?

The Science of Resilience
Defining Resilience: an interdisciplinary perspective

“A stable trajectory of healthy functioning after a highly adverse event”
Dr. George Bonanno, professor of clinical psychology

“The capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the viability, the function, or the development of that system”
Dr. Ann Masten, Professor of Child Development

“A process to harness resources in order to sustain well-being”
Dr. Catherine Panter-Brick, Professor of Anthropology

Understanding Resilience

- As a variable
- As a desirable outcome impacted by various factors
- As a skill that can be promoted and protected

Resilience as a variable: Patterns of Recovery

Resilience as an outcome: Factors that impact

- Absence of Risk Factors
- Presence of Protective Factors
- Biological resistance
- Dosage of the traumatic experience
  - Proximity
  - Frequency
  - Intensity
- Perception of the trauma
  - Age
  - Developmental Level

Short List of Resilience Factors (with Implicated Human Adaptive Systems)

- Positive attachment bonds with caregivers (attachment; family)
- Positive relationships with other nurturing and competent adults (attachment)
- Intellectual skills (integrated cognitive systems of a human brain in good working order)
- Self-regulation skills (self-control systems and related executive functions of the human brain)
- Positive self-perceptions, self-efficacy (mastery motivation system)
- Faith, hope, and a sense of meaning in life (meaning-making systems of belief)
- Friends or romantic partners who are supportive and prosocial (attachment)
- Bonds to effective schools and other prosocial organizations (sociocultural systems)
- Communities with positive services and supports for families and children (sociocultural)
- Cultures that provide positive standards, rituals, relationships, and supports (sociocultural)

Resilience: Factors that impact

"The single most common factor for children who develop resilience is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult."

Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University
Resilience: A Skill to be promoted and protected
Strategic action to promote and protect factors favoring resilience and eliminate factors that hinder resilience at 3 levels

- Individual
- Family
- Community

Part III
Framework and Strategies for Action

A Framework for fostering Resilience

- Define priority
- Identify short and long term goals
- Define approach
- Develop skills and competence
- Measure impact and modify
Strategies – Family oriented

Risk Reduction
- Alleviate situation
- Provide timely intervention
- Modify behavior

Resource building
- Think Protective factors and prevention !!

Family Oriented: Concrete actions
- Acknowledge families as the experts of their own situation
- Build upon family strengths and create a recovery plan with their input
- Provide culturally relevant service
  - power dynamics within family members
  - faith / religion based practices
  - beliefs pertaining to health, wellness and treatments

*Mutual relationship based on trust and respect*

Strategies for Children....
Strategies: Child centered

• Understand child development and what happens at each stage of life to better support adaptation
• Promote caring nurturing relationships with adults to instill a sense of safety and trust
• Create an environment for learning through play
• Provide opportunity to socialize and develop meaningful relationships with peers
• Encourage a positive sense of self and create opportunities to develop self-efficacy
• Respect diversity and honor family practices

Child Centered: concrete actions

- Cozy furnishings
- Comfort items like a toy, blanket
- Preferred peer, sibling or adult
- Sensory friendly environment

- Consistent routines
- Provide food, sleep, shelter
- Limit change

- Non judgmental
- Shared language
- Responsive and respectful
- Relationship and strength based

Supportive interactions

Safe place, things, people

Stability

Strategies: Addressing Behaviors

3 STEP PROCESS
1. WATCH (observe)
2. WONDER (Learn)
3. ACT (Respond)
   - Acknowledge the child's feeling
   - Communicate the limit
   - Target Alternatives

AKA (OBSERVE. LEARN. RESPOND.)
Strategies: Community Oriented

- Advocacy and Inclusion
- Community Resilience
- Education and Awareness
- Infrastructure and Resources
- Inter Collaboration

Community oriented: concrete actions

**Infrastructure and resources**
- Create safe public places
- Improve access to jobs and healthcare
- Affordable housing and education

**Advocacy and Awareness**
- Educate the public, policy makers, media
- Get onto action committees, petition lawmakers
- Speak up for inclusion and equal opportunity

**Collaboration**
- Use a holistic approach
- Share information and resources
- Strengthen social networks and relationships

Tools to explore...

- Parent – Child Interaction Therapy
- Teacher – Child Interaction training
- Trust Based Relational Intervention
- Trauma focused – CBT
  [https://tfcbt.org/](https://tfcbt.org/)
- Trauma Screening tools
Universally Applicable Strategies

• Restore normalcy ASAP (basic needs, routines)
• Provide opportunities for communication and social interactions, especially fun interactions
• Set aside time for activities centered around self-care such as mindful meditation, journaling, creative expression and play
• Identify leaders (within children and adults) that can take on the role of mentors and equip them with skills
• Create coping kits for children and adults with input from families

Do not undermine the inherent sense of competence and mastery!!

Self-care: Starting with you

Vicarious trauma is real!!

Strategies: Identify your own coping kit!

What do you do to calm yourself?

Deep breathing is FREE & proven to help!

Ignite your senses!
Putting yourself first doesn’t mean you don’t care about others. It means you’re smart enough to know you can’t help others if you don’t help yourself first.

DelightfulQuotes.com

Thank you!

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