



Becoming a Trauma-Informed Campus in Higher Education

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Learning Objectives

- Recognize Trauma and It's Impact on Development and Educational Attainment in Higher Educational Settings
- Apply a Trauma-Informed Paradigm to Higher Educational Systems on College and University Campuses.
- Implement Strategies to Support Self-Care for College Administrators, Faculty and Staff



Trauma

- Understanding trauma is not just about acquiring knowledge. It's about changing the way you see the world.
- Trauma-Informed Care is about changing the helping paradigm from “What’s wrong with you?” to “What happened to you?”

--Dr. Sandra Bloom, MD ,2007



What is Trauma?

- *An event(s) that overwhelms the body's, mind's, and spirit's ability to be in balance*
- Trauma is defined using eight general dimensions:
 - Threat to life or limb;
 - Severe physical harm or injury, including sexual assault;
 - Receipt of intentional harm or injury;
 - Exposure to the grotesque;
 - Violent, sudden loss of a loved one;
 - Witnessing or learning of violence to a loved one;
 - Learning of exposure to a noxious agent; and
 - Causing the death or severe harm to another (Wilson & Sigman



Types of Trauma

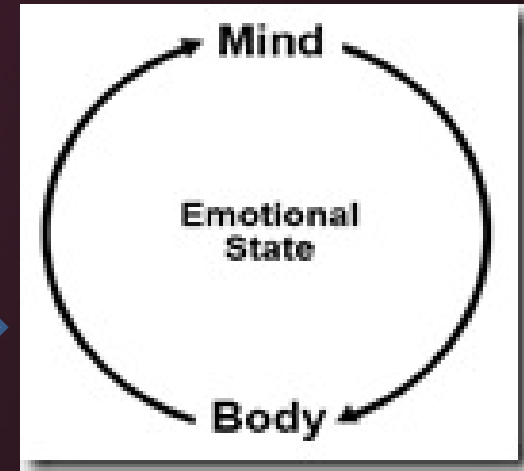
- Physical
- Medical
- Psychological
- Social or Collective
- Historical or Intergenerational
- Immigration
- Developmental
- Racial
- Environmental
- Chronic, Ongoing, and Enduring
- Vicarious, Secondary or Compassion Fatigue



Trauma

- Traumatic events are external, but they quickly become incorporated into the mind (Terr, 1990) and into the body (Van Der Kolk, 1991)

- Traumatic event



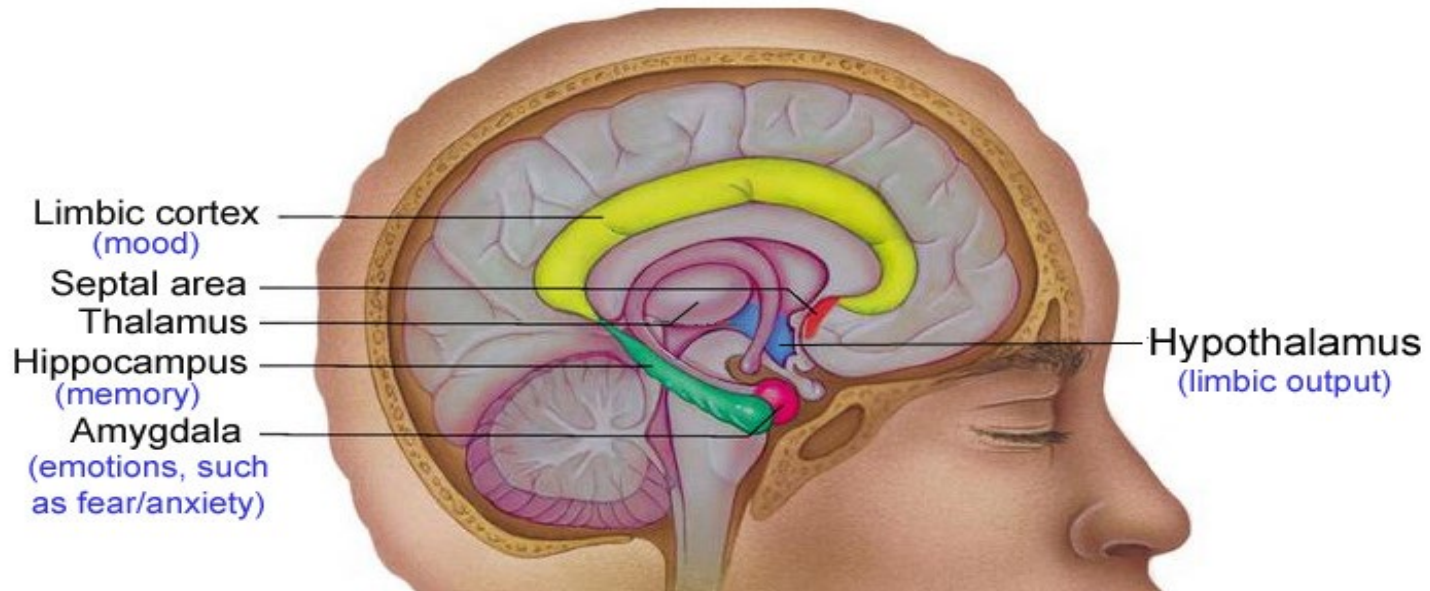


Trauma

- According to Judith Herman, MD, in her revolutionary book , *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), **psychological trauma** is characterized by:
 - Intense fear
 - Helplessness
 - Loss of control
 - Fear of annihilation(death)

Trauma and the Response in the Brain

Limbic System





Adverse Childhood Experiences = Childhood Trauma

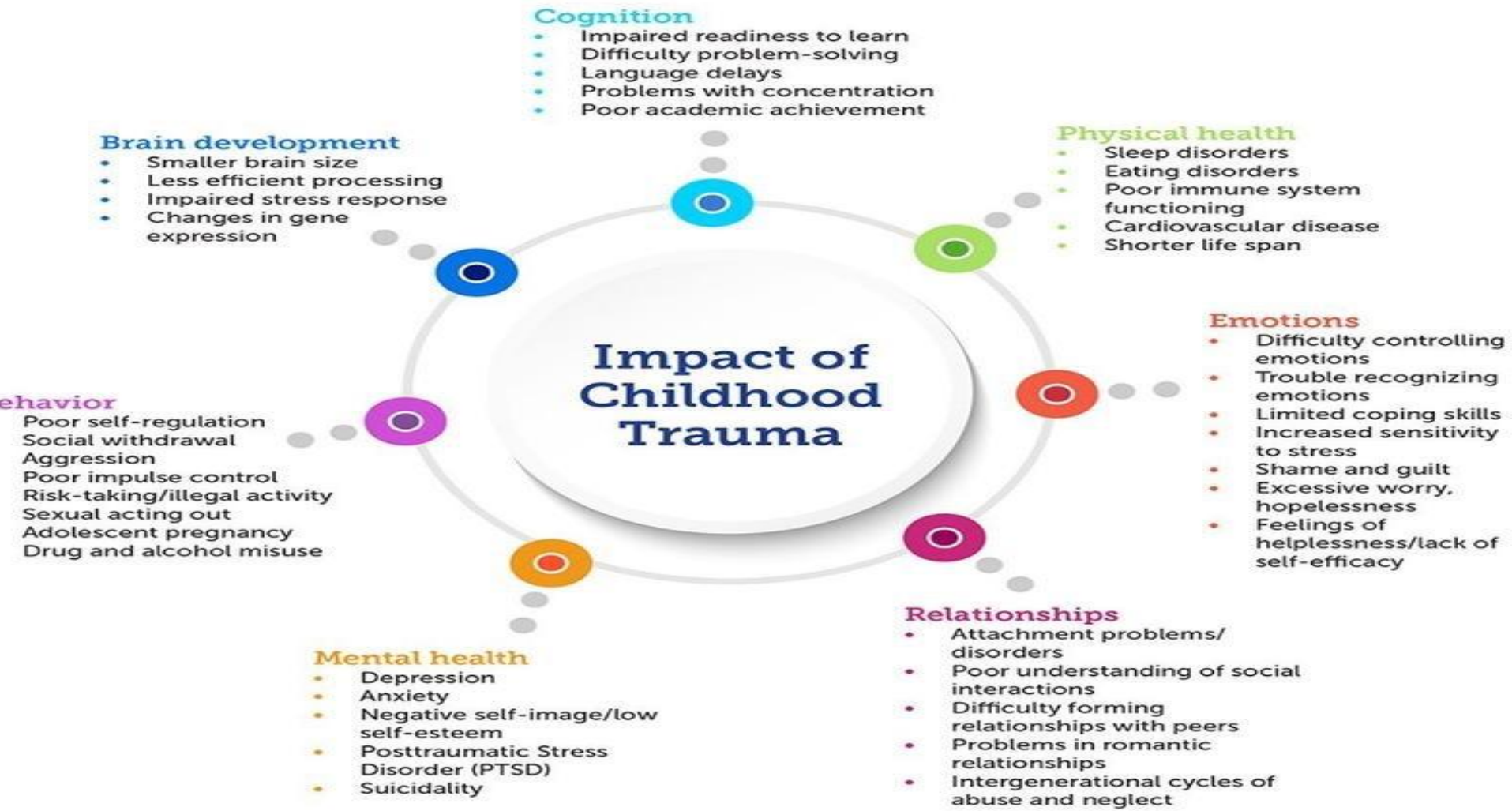
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study (1998) A pivotal retrospective study that quantified the impact of traumatic experiences.
 - 70% of Kaiser adult patients (n=17.000) reported at least one traumatic experience before the age of 18. Almost 50% report 1-3 traumatic events.
 - Philadelphia Urban ACEs included community factors, e.g., community violence, discrimination, foster care, etc.
 - Dose relationship with adult health outcomes, e.g., cancer, diabetes, lung disease, alcoholism, drug abuse, suicide, smoking, hypertension, heart disease, mental illness, etc.

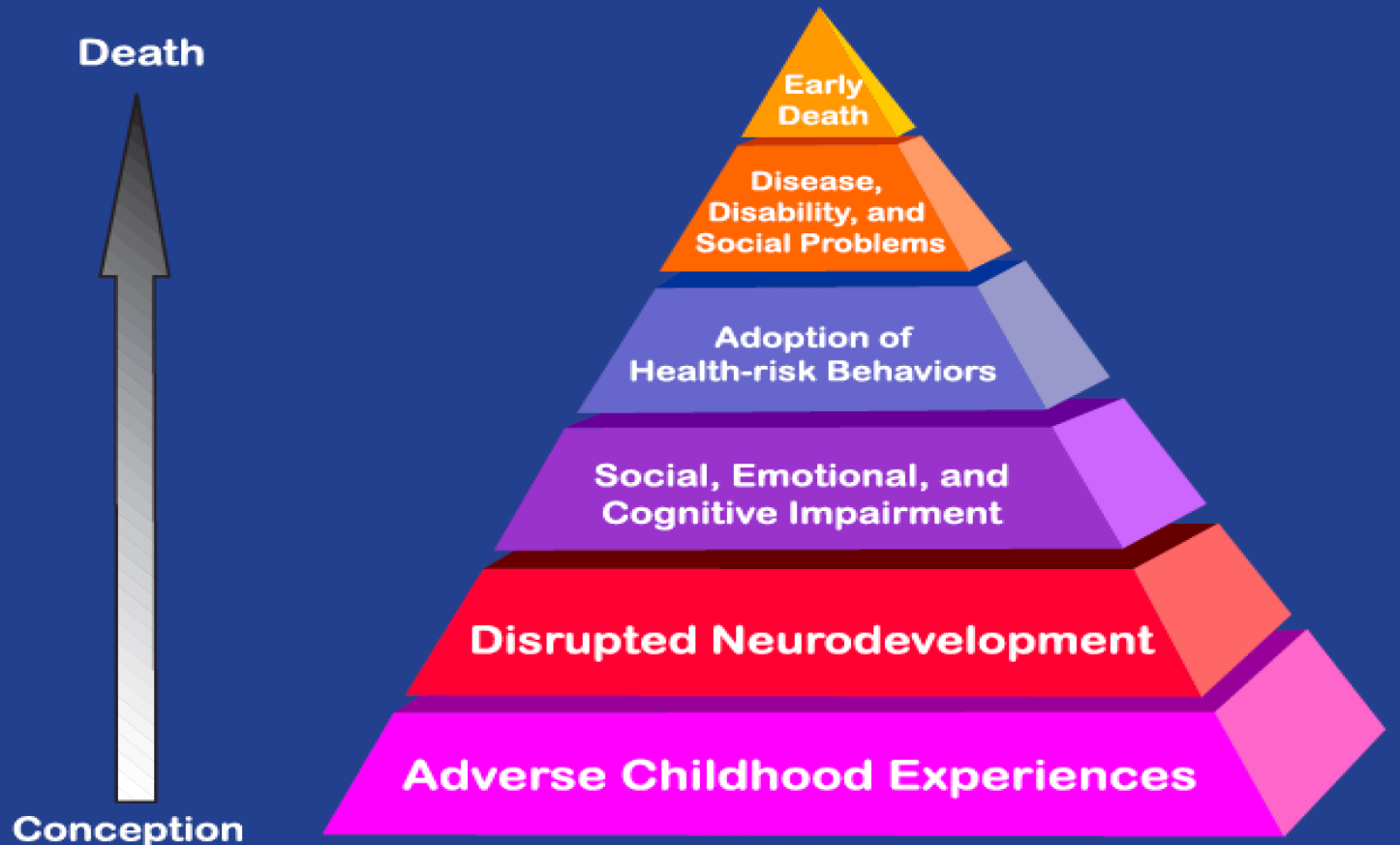
A photograph of a classroom with rows of wooden desks and black chairs, viewed from a slightly elevated angle. The image is partially obscured by a dark purple overlay at the bottom.

ACEs in Communities of Color

- Researchers found that almost **40 percent of Philadelphians had experienced four or more of these expanded, community-level ACEs.**
- In Philadelphia, where roughly a quarter of residents live in poverty, researchers found that almost **seven in ten adults had experienced one ACE and two in five had experienced four or more.**

Impact of Childhood Trauma





Mechanisms by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan



Prevalence of ACEs in College Students

- Studies have reported 56-89% of college students have had at least one ACE, including the more severe ACEs and 22% reported symptoms consistent with PTSD (Doughty,2018)
 - Community college students report an even higher rate (Anders et al., 2012)
 - Community colleges tend to have more students of color, students from poverty, veterans, etc.
- Another study looked at the drop-out rate of freshmen who had ACEs compared to those who did not. There were significant enrollment differences in the 2nd semester of the freshmen year– 82% for ACE impacted students vs. 92% for non-ACE impacted students, the drop-out rate was even higher if the



Prevalence of Traumatic Experiences for College-Age Students

- According to the AAU Survey (2015) about 23% of undergraduate women and 5.4% of men reported being sexually assaulted by physical force, incapacitation, or coercion.
 - Some student cohorts have even higher rates of traumatic experiences, e.g., Native American, LGBTQ, African American, and Latino
- 66% of college students report experiences of sexual harassment (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2018)



Trauma Impacts on College Campuses

- Higher rates of:
 - suicidal ideation and behaviors
 - alcohol abuse and binge drinking
 - re-victimization
 - drop-out
 - engagement in health risk behaviors



Trauma Related Health Impacts for College Students

- Students who had traumatic experiences had a harder time adjusting to college
 - Within the first 12 months of college, 21% were treated for mental health issues and half reported trauma histories (American College Health Association, 2012)
- Higher rates of depression, anxiety, and substance abuse
- Students who had exposure to one ACE had more health-related complaints.



Trauma Related Academic Impacts

- Many studies have discussed the impact of trauma on academic attainment, e.g., lower IQ scores(8pts), lower test scores, higher drop out rates, disruptive behaviors, etc.
- Trauma impacts college students in many of the same ways:
 - Challenges with completing assignments or taking tests,
 - Needing more time to complete papers, making requests for special considerations
 - Dropping out within the first year of college
 - Missing classes
 - Unable to comprehend instructions or listen to lectures



Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)

- An organizational structure framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma on well-being and behavior.
- TIC emphasizes physical, psychological, social and moral safety.
- TIC helps survivors rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.
- Additionally, a trauma-informed system of care requires closely knit collaborative relationships with other service system partners who should be trauma-informed as well.



Why Are Trauma-Informed Approaches Necessary?

- Improves educational outcomes
- Supports personal development and well-being of students
- Prevents re-traumatization
- Supports staff



What Does It Mean to be Trauma-Informed?

- Acknowledgement—

- Recognizing that trauma is pervasive and impacts individual students and the university environment.
- Introducing factors that reduce negative outcomes for college students with ACEs such as the presence of supportive systems and secure attachment, flexibility, compassion, etc.
- Becoming a resource for students with traumatic exposures



Essentials of Trauma-Informed Care

- Connect – focus on relationships
- Protect – promote safety and trustworthiness
- Respect – engage in choice and collaboration
- Empower – provide opportunities to control situations
- Cultural Sensitivity/Privilege and Power
- Strengths-based
- Compassion and Support



The 4 R's of The Trauma-Informed Approach Framework

- Realizing the impact of trauma
- Recognizing the signs and symptoms
- Responding purposefully with knowledge about trauma
- Resisting re-traumatization of individuals (SAMHSA, 2014)
- This framework is applicable to all settings



Trauma-Informed College and University Departments are...

- Designed to support the academic mission of the university
- Designed to support the academic success of students
- Not designed to make you into clinicians to treat symptoms of trauma



A Trauma-Informed Student Affairs

- All departments, e.g. career services, financial aid, admissions, academic advising, housing services, etc. take into consideration that students may present with challenging behaviors linked to past traumatic experiences.
- Practice flexibility and compassion
- Build consistent and supportive relationships, esp in 1st semester



Trauma-Informed Academic Affairs

- Supports the faculty to provide the highest quality of teaching, research and scholarship
 - Assists faculty to incorporate trauma-informed pedagogy into each course
 - Teaching is multi-modal/sensory, not just lectures, use group projects, cooperative learning
 - Practical application to concepts vs concepts to practical applications
 - Recognize that “process speed” takes longer
- Faculty development and works to reduce burn-out
- Develops and revises student and faculty policies that reflects trauma-informed approaches
- Develops and revises policies on admissions, progression and retention standards that are flexible and supportive of students with trauma impacts
- Develops academic programs that reflect a trauma-informed approach for diverse student populations, e.g., academic programs for veterans, homeless students, 1st generation, international students, non-traditional, etc.



What Does This Mean for My Department and My Work?

- Think about a student you have worked with that you found difficult or challenging, does this information change your thinking about this student? If so, how?
- What is the mission of my department and how does it fit with Trauma-Informed?
- How would you change your department's processes/protocols or your work as a result of understanding trauma?
- Development of an action plan. Who are the key players? Analysis of policies and practices. Timeline. Ongoing



Self Care When Working with Students Impacted by Trauma or ACEs

- Trauma is contagious especially in working with students.
- Because these students require more attention, understanding and support, it can cause you to feel overwhelmed and overloaded.
- Some of their actions can trigger your own past trauma or grief reactions.
- Like the student you are working with, you may experience a variety of emotional reactions that manifest itself as secondary or vicarious traumatization or compassion fatigue.



Self Care When Working with Students Impacted by Trauma or ACEs

- In a work environment where personnel frequently work with students impacted by trauma:
 - The organization must anticipate and normalize reactions by directly discussing the risk of vicarious traumatization.
 - Developing an organizational plan to support staff, and providing personnel with the opportunity to discuss how work

TYPES OF SELF-CARE



PHYSICAL

- Sleep
- Stretching
- Walking
- Physical release
- Healthy food
- Yoga
- Rest



EMOTIONAL

- Stress management
- Emotional maturity
- Forgiveness
- Compassion
- Kindness



SOCIAL

- Boundaries
- Support systems
- Positive social media
- Communication
- Time together
- Ask for help



SPIRITUAL

- Time alone
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Connection
- Nature
- Journaling
- Sacred space



Self-Care Activities

- Practice deep breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Guided imagery
- Taking mini-vacations
- Mental Health or Self-care Days
- Gardening
- Exercise, yoga, dancing
- Meditation, spiritual, religious activities
- Having fun





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