

A Grantmaker's Guide to Understanding & Addressing Trauma

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Defining Our Terms

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence/types

- **Trauma Informed Care** is an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of **trauma**.
- **Individual trauma** results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.
- Substance use (such as smoking, excessive alcohol use, and taking drugs), **mental health** problems (such as depression, anxiety, or PTSD), and other risky behaviors (such as self-injury and risky sexual encounters) have been linked with **traumatic** experiences.

Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA)

www.mncasa.org/trauma-informed/INFORMED

- **Trauma** is understood as “the emotional disruption in the aftermath of what is perceived by a survivor as a life-threatening event.” In cases of interpersonal violence there is often a pattern or series of events rather than a single, defining event. The mention of “emotional disruption” that occurs is best identified as a *normal response* to the traumatic event(s).
- **Trauma-informed** is how one *thinks about* and *responds to* those who have experienced or may be at

risk for experiencing trauma.

- Practitioners agreed that the understanding and application of the concepts are currently uneven and inconsistent. *Culturally relevant responses are often outside the “evidence based practice” framework.*

The Center for the Developing Child at Harvard

www.developingchild.harvard.edu

- **Toxic stress** response can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity—such as physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship—without adequate adult support.
- **What is tolerable stress?** Stress response depends on healthy brain development. In response to: **good stress**, we rise to a challenge; **tolerable stress**, we can cope and recover; **toxic stress**, the brain cannot develop in a healthy way.
- **How does stress affect children's growth and development?** Prolonged stress in young children can slow brain development and physical growth. Prolonged exposure to cortisol released during the stress response can cause long-term damage to the developing brain and can negatively affect the immune system.

Minnesota Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy

www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ace

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are more common among Minnesotans who did not graduate from high school, who rented rather than owned their own home, who were unemployed, or who worried about paying their mortgage/rent or about buying nutritious food. **ACEs frequently occur together and have a strong and cumulative impact on the health and functioning of adults.**
- Minnesotans with more ACEs were more likely to rate their health as fair or poor, to have been diagnosed with depression or anxiety, to report smoking and chronic drinking, to have been diagnosed with asthma, and to be obese.
- Minnesotans with five or more ACEs are five times more likely to have depression, six times more likely to suffer from anxiety, and twice as likely to be a heavy drinker or drug user.

Other Terms

Trans-generational trauma is trauma that is transferred from the first generation of trauma survivors to the second and further generations of survivors' offspring via complex post-traumatic stress disorder mechanisms.

Collective Trauma happens to large groups of individuals and can be transmitted trans-generationally and across communities. War, genocide, slavery, terrorism and natural disasters can cause collective trauma.

Historical trauma (HT) refers to the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding of an individual or generation caused by a traumatic experience or event.

Other Useful Links

The Center for Spirituality and Healing, University of Minnesota: www.csh.umn.edu

The Center for Mind-Body Medicine: cmbm.org

Partners in Resilience: www.partnersinresilience.com

Penny George Institute for Health and Healing: wellness.allinahealth.org/servicelines/802

Center for Integrative Medicine, University of Arizona: integrativemedicine.arizona.edu

Bravewell Collaborative: www.bravewell.org

The Trauma Center: www.traumacenter.org

Child Trauma Academy: childtrauma.org

Minnesota Trauma Project: www.mntraumaproject.org/mission