An Intro to Trauma Informed Care
For Direct Support Professionals
The following presentation is a basic introduction to key issues related to trauma. It is designed for Direct Support Professionals who support people intellectual disabilities. This presentation is freely distributed to authorized DDA community-based providers who are responsible for delivering the content. DDA community-based providers are not authorized to distribute this presentation beyond their own agency or make alterations without permission from Georgetown University.

This presentation was produced by Georgetown University’s Center for Child & Human Development as part of the our DDA Health Initiative project. The DDA Health Initiative supports the mission of the District of Columbia’s Developmental Disabilities Administration, and focuses on improving physical, behavioral and mental health supports that can affect the quality of living for people with intellectual disabilities.

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Objectives

At the completion of this training, participants will be able to:

1. **Define** trauma and trauma informed care.
2. **Identify** how common trauma is among people with a disability.
3. **Describe** the impact of trauma.
4. **Discuss** benefits of trauma informed care.
5. **Describe** three elements of recovery from trauma.
What is Trauma?

Trauma is a **shock** that creates significant and lasting damage to a person’s **mental**, **physical** and **emotional** abilities. There are many kinds of trauma, such as:

- Being physically or sexually abused
- Being injured in an accident
- Being neglected by a parent or caregiver
- Being excluding from a peer or family
- Being forced to move, live with another family or living in an institution
- Being bullied
How Common Is Trauma?

At least 70% of all persons with a disability report being traumatized. Some of the reasons why this happens are:

• People with a disability are often isolated from their community

• People with a disability often have different language ability which can prevent them from reporting about trauma

• People with a disability often tend to be agreeable when asked if they feel okay or safe

• Others are biased about the person’s reporting based on their disability or perceived abilities.
Some people who are exposed to trauma develop **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**, which may include:

- Reliving the event through flashbacks and nightmares
- Avoiding situations or people that remind them of the traumatic event
- Changes in mood or beliefs
- Being in a state of heightened awareness (hyperaroused)
Different Responses to Trauma

Sometimes the symptoms of trauma are **masked** by people due to their Intellectual Disability:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Symptom</th>
<th>But May Look Like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Hyperarousal</td>
<td>A. Agitation or Destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Hypervigilance</td>
<td>B. Obsessive Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Mistrust</td>
<td>C. Paranoia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Dissociation</td>
<td>D. Noncompliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Fight response</td>
<td>E. Aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Freeze Response</td>
<td>F. “Shut down”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Flight Response</td>
<td>G. Escape Behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
People with an Intellectual Disability who are traumatized are **more likely** to:

- Become aggressive for no apparent reason
- Engage in self-injury
- Have changes in toileting
- Have changes in sleeping patterns
- Pace or fidget while sitting
What is Trauma Informed Care?

Trauma Informed Care uses our **knowledge** about trauma to:

1. **Change how** we deliver services.
2. **Decrease** the risk of **re-traumatization**.
3. **Help** people **recovery** from trauma.
4. **Support** staff who may be affected by trauma in the workplace.
A recovery model of trauma includes:

1. Helping the person increase their feeling of safety.

2. Increasing the person’s self-determination.

3. Creating nurturing supports with key people.
1. **Recovery** from trauma requires that the person lives and learns in environments that promote a *sense of safety*.

2. **Preventing** conditions that can trigger memories of the trauma is essential to helping people feel safe.

3. **Other conditions** can influence a person’s feeling of safety, such as sensory events, the layout of the physical environment, the “right” staff, rewarding work, and daily routines.
Self Determination

1. **Recovery** from trauma is facilitated by maximizing a person’s self-determination over activities and things that are important to them.

2. **Choice** and **control** over daily events are essential to self-determination, and lead people to feel empowered.

3. **Person-centered thinking** can increase self-determination.
Nurturing Supports

1. **Recovery** from trauma is facilitated by creating healthy, *nurturing* relationships with key supporters.

2. **Key Supporters** are often staff members. Family members, friends, peers or a loved one can also be key supporters.

3. Many **repeated, positive interactions** between key supporters and the person are needed to help the person recover from traumatic experiences.
Knowledge Check

Please complete the following

10 questions

to complete this training.

Press the green arrow to begin.
Question 1

Trauma can cause what kind of changes?

- Emotional
- Physical
- Mental
- All of the above
Question 1 - Correct

Trauma can cause what kind of changes?

- Emotional
- Physical
- Mental
- All of the above

CORRECT

Press to Continue
Trauma can cause what kind of changes?

- Emotional
- Physical
- Mental
- All of the above
Question 2

About what percent of people with a disability experience trauma?

10%

30%

70%

95%
Question 2 - Correct

About what percent of people with a disability experience trauma?

- 10%
- 30%
- 70%
- 95%

CORRECT
Question 2 - Wrong

About what percent of people with a disability experience trauma?

- 10%
- 30%
- 70%
- 95%
Question 3

People with disabilities are more likely to experience trauma because of problems related to:

- Language ability
- Mental illness
- Poor attitude
- Poverty
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People with disabilities are more likely to experience trauma because of problems related to:

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- Mental illness
- Poor attitude
- Poverty
Question 4

People who experience trauma are more likely to:

- Harm themselves
- Use drugs
- Be unemployed
- All of the above
People who experience trauma are more likely to:

- Harm themselves
- Use drugs
- Be unemployed
- All of the above
People who experience trauma are more likely to:
People with disabilities may respond to trauma differently compared to nondisabled peers.

True

False
People with disabilities may respond to trauma differently compared to nondisabled peers.

- True
- False
People with disabilities may respond to trauma differently compared to nondisabled peers.

True

False
Question 6

Which of the following is **NOT** one of the three components of recovery from trauma?

- Sense of safety
- Satisfaction with life
- Self-determination
- Supportive Connections
Question 6 - Correct

Which of the following is **NOT** one of the three components of recovery from trauma?

- Sense of safety
- Satisfaction with life
- Self-determination
- Supportive Connections

CORRECT
Question 6 - **Wrong**

Which of the following is **NOT** one of the three components of recovery from trauma?

- Sense of safety
- Satisfaction with life
- Self-determination
- Supportive Connections
Question 7

Which of the following is a key symptom of trauma:

- Hyperactivity
- Hyperarousal
- Boredom
- Obesity
Question 7 - Correct

Which of the following is a key symptom of trauma:

- Hyperactivity
- Hyperarousal
- Boredom
- Obesity
Question 7 - **Wrong**

Which of the following is a key symptom of trauma:

- Hyperactivity
- Hyperarousal
- Boredom
- Obesity
Question 8

Preventing a triggering event is an example of:

- Improving safety
- Increasing choices
- Nurturing
- Psychotherapy
Preventing a triggering event is an example of:

- Improving safety
- Increasing choices
- Nurturing
- Psychotherapy
Question 8 - Wrong

Preventing a triggering event is an example of:

- Improving safety
- Increasing choices
- Nurturing
- Psychotherapy
Question 9

Making sure that people have more choices is an example of?

- Improving safety
- Self-determination
- Human rights
- Building relationships
Question 9 - Correct

Making sure that people have more choices is an example of?

- Improving safety
- Self-determination
- Human rights
- Building relationships

CORRECT
Question 9 - **Wrong**

Making sure that people have more choices is an example of?

- Improving safety
- Self-determination
- Human rights
- Building relationships
Providing opportunities for positive interactions with a trusted caregiver is an example of:

- Improving safety
- Increasing choice
- Giving feedback
- Building relationships
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Certificate of Completion

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