Renegotiating the Trauma

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What are Trauma-Informed Practices?

• Understanding the individual …
• Rather than asking ‘How do I understand this problem or this symptom?

• How do I understand this [person]?’ ... This approach shifts the focus to the individual and away from some particular and limited aspect of functioning.

• Life is understandable and that behaviours make sense when they are understood as part of a whole picture (Courtois, 2012).
Facts About Trauma Treatment

• Trauma is specifically an event that overwhelms the central nervous system, altering the way we process and recall memories.
• Trauma is not the story of something that happened back then.
• It’s the current imprint of that pain, horror, and fear living inside people.
• There's also a difference, between “single incident” PTSD and the impact of disorganized attachments and abusive early environments in determining treatment approaches. van der Kolk
Spirituality & Change

• An inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of their being
• The deepest values & meanings by which people live
• The ultimate immaterial reality
• Often experienced as a source of inspiration in life
ELDERS AND HEALERS

• The wise healer talked about the importance of remembering the essence of what it means to be human, the essence of what it means to be a unique person.

• He reminded us that within each person there is a spirit, a spark of life, an essential self, so independent of the world’s biases, attacks, and influences, that nothing can ever hurt or destroy it. Jonathan H. Ellerby PhD
Spirituality & Healing

• There is more to each one of us than the things that have happened to us. When we are hurt we can identify with the pain or the trauma
• - but a healthy spiritual practice or perspective teaches us, that we are something greater.
• The essence of the spiritual life is to stay connected to the sacred place within that holds the memory of wholeness, peace and balance for us, no matter how far our hearts or minds may be pulled.
Spirituality & Healing

- The spiritual journey helps us to shift our perspective from “why me” to “what can I do about;” we learn to shift our attention from “what is wrong” to “what can I be grateful for?”
- This experience of empowerment connects us to the awareness that every one of us has the ability to help – everyone is a healer.
Spirituality & Healing

• Over time we learn that through our suffering we can learn, and learn to help others: we find the healer within, and realize that is always the person we were meant to be.

• We become grateful for the opportunity to awaken to that truth and to make the most of this fragile and amazing life.
Spirituality & Meaning

• A spiritual philosophy or practice can provide us with a bigger context for our experiences.

• Having a clear context of meaning allows us to draw strength from beyond us when we cannot feel it within us.

• A deep spirituality gives hope and a way to make sense of the unexplainable – even if it simply asks us to honor the mystery of life.
Spirituality & Hope

- As people take on a spiritual practice, it helps them to develop a sense of identity and greater purpose.
- Most spiritual practices also connect people with a sense of community and support.
- These both are essential elements in the face of trauma and loss.
- When we build community around our spirituality, we have a place to bring our hurt, where together we give each other permission to be vulnerable, and we challenge each other to learn and grow.
Spirituality

• A living spirituality is not about explaining right and wrong, or why bad things happen to good people, it is about giving us the tools to make the most of the choices we have.

• It is about connecting us consciously to peace and power.
Contemplative Spiritual Practices
Mindfulness Meditation Practices
Cultural Understanding

- Manido Meness is an Ojibway term used for “beads” but its origin comes from the understanding that our physical and spiritual life is “strung” together by the Creator with “spirit seeds”
- The spirit seeds that are strung together, physically and spiritually make up our unique identity, which is: our nation, spirit name, language, and from these comes our personality, characteristics, strengths, gifts and potential…
Limitations without Culture

- An increased focus on treating 'disease' and deficits which do not close the gap of wellness.
- Healing from an Indigenous context is much broader than treating illness and in the context of inter-generational trauma and loss, requires a different approach.
- Focus on the individual does not reflect values of Indigenous people which are central to family and community.
- A process of decolonization attends to the whole being: mind, body, emotion and spirit.
The Role of Traditional Healing

- The goal of traditional healing is to ‘improve the quality of life with an emphasis on the healing journey’ (NAHO, 2002 p.9)
- Involves a wide range of activities across all aspects
- Holistic healing addresses all components of trauma informed care
Being on the Land
Aboriginal Traditional Healing Practices

- Sweat Lodge ceremonies
- Tobacco bundle ties
- Smudging
- Drumming
- Sharing Circles
- Sacred bundle
- Traditional Healers
- Elder teachings
- Ceremony
- Seven Grandfather Teachings
- Feasts

(Lavallée, 2009; Marsh et al., 2015; Menzies, 2010; Robbins & Dewar, 2011).
The Sacred Bundle
The Sacred Drum
The Sacred Sweat Lodge Ceremony
The Research Process Illustrated Through The Medicine Wheel

NORTH
- Old Age
- Purity & Wisdom
- Great Place for Healing
- Dreamtime
- Growing and Looking Deep
- Understand the Wisdom that was given

END

SINGING

Seeking Safety (SS)
- Ceremonies
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Writing
- Focus Groups
- Sharing Circles
- Elders Teaching
- Grandfathers Teachings
- Elders
- Winter
- Elders
- Elder Community
- Elders Teachings

WEST
- Later Adulthood
- Sunset - Twilight
- Day Fades - New Awareness
- Time to Prepare - Finish Things
- Family & Responsibility

SWEATS

SOUTH
- Time to Accept Change and Learn
- Transformation & Negotiation
- We Rise From The Flames
- We Rise From The Flames
- Malting and Growing into Adult
- Time of Change
- New Ideas
- New Light

EAST
- Beginnings
- Sunrise - New Dawn
- Time of New Birth
- Wendon - New Beginning

Drumming

Seeking Safety (SS)

SACRED ITEMS
- Language
- Traditional Teachings
- Feasts
- Ceremonies
- Sweats
- Modern Teachings

Spring

Summer

Winter
WHAT WE NEED

✓ Creating safety
✓ We Lend out nervous system to our client
✓ Feeling grounded
✓ Feeling empowered
✓ Strategies to deal with the anxiety
✓ Strategies to regulate emotions
✓ Breaking down harmful beliefs and thoughts about self
• Somatic experiencing therapy aims to release those buried emotions, providing healing from the inside out.
• Trauma is captured at a physical and emotional level. SE combines all elements to produce a sensory focused treatment, which works with the nervous system and responses.
Somatic Experiencing

• A person gradually eradicates trauma energy from the body, resulting in healing.
• SE differs from cognitive therapies in that its major interventional strategy involves bottom-up processing by directing the client’s attention to internal sensations, both visceral (interoception) and musculo-skeletal
Somatic Experiencing

- The client will focus their **memory** on the images and feelings that arise.
- With closed eyes, the therapist leads the patient through the body-oriented approach. The experience helps the patient become aware of how they react to their trauma or their lack of control or fear in the session.
Somatic Experiencing

- Help the patient recognize the fight or flight reactions.
- Dr. Levine suggests that the fight or flight response has multiple stages and that trauma does not allow a person to complete all stages.
- Somatic experiencing helps the patient complete that process.
Somatic Experiencing

- SE fixes inner trauma by completing, and thus, restoring regular stress responses.
- This is crucial because trauma can overpower regular responses.
- Therapy engages slowly so the patient will not be overwhelmed.
- With a focus on the nervous system, the aim of SE is to prompt the inner system to move back to a normal pattern of response.
- Sensations are monitored through the body through a collaborative effort between the therapist and patient.
Somatic Experiencing

• This holistic approach is an integrated program, which focuses on all aspects of the individual.
• Sensations like pain, constricted breathing, sweating, or shaking are characteristic of trauma.
• Becoming aware of these experiences can help people stay fully present.
• Somatic experiencing forces the person to be present, to not think about the past, but to track every sensation.
Somatic Experiencing

- SE engages a person’s ability to stay present to understand images, emotions, and behaviors.
- The therapist then promotes changes in the system.
- This method focuses on the ways an individual gets trapped in irregular system patterns because of a lack of closure and incomplete action.
- SE therapy helps a patient restore their nervous system and essentially, their life.
Somatic Experiencing

- SE helps people become aware of everything that they are feeling course through their body.
- These signals can be reminders to people that they must focus on the physical feeling, whether it is pain or general unease.
- When people become attuned to internal cues they can heal deeper parts of themselves, which they otherwise would have continued to avoid, to their detriment.
- This therapy helps resolve the past, release stored emotions, and move forward in life.
NEUROCEPTION

When our brain senses danger, it puts us into a threat response - fast, before we even think about it. We do not get a conscious choice. Our neuroception of threat may or may not agree with our slower, conscious perception of threat.

Understanding Neuroception helps cut through the shame and self-blame so common in smart people with debilitating trauma symptoms. (See p. 6 and Book 2)
Somatic Experiencing Trauma work

**RESOURCE**
To Resource someone means to put them in touch with something that calms them down. Knowing how to resource someone makes it safe to begin to access past trauma so they can discharge, integrate, and heal, without getting overwhelmed all over again.

**TITRATE**
To Titrater trauma means to break it down in small enough pieces that it becomes manageable instead of overwhelming. Intentionally looping between the past trauma and present time resource is a way to titrate trauma so we can heal without getting retraumatized.

**DISCHARGE**
To Discharge means to let trapped energy move out of the nervous system. Tingling, trembling, laughing, crying, deeper breaths, yawning, fight or flight gestures, chills and flushing are all examples of discharge. Without some discharge, we do not heal.
Pendulation

- Pendulation takes the autonomic nervous system from sympathetic nervous system response (flight or fight) to parasympathetic nervous system response (rest, relaxation, rejuvenation, digestion).
- The rhythms of pendulation create a norepinephrine flush of the adrenal system, decoupling the physiologic trigger of post-traumatic stress injury.”
Pendulation

• An exercise to develop a relationship between the “unresourced” and the “resourced” parts of our consciousness or inner universe.
• Between the lost and the found
• The fragment and the whole
• The healthy nervous system is constantly in a state of expansion and contraction
• We want clients to have this kind of flexibility and fluidity.
• One of the tools SE therapists use is looping between resources or conflict free states and small titrations of traumatic material.
• This process of looping kick starts the natural self-regulation of the nervous system and a natural rhythm of pendulation.
Pendulation is Soothing & Healing

- When a child hurts themselves or becomes frightened and runs to their parent.
- The child will be highly activated, maybe screaming and crying.
- Usually the parent holds the child, rocks the child, strokes the child, and talks in calm, soothing tones.
- Gradually the child’s attention becomes aware of the sensation of being held and rocked and the feeling of the parent’s hand stroking them.
- The child gradually tunes into the soothing sounds and words, and calms down.
- The linking of resources to someone needing them happens all the time between parents and children, and between family members, couples and friends as well.
A resource is ..........

- Stability, support, peace, calm, sense of home, goodness, wellness, safety, sustenance, solace, grace, fullness, wholeness, richness, generousness, overflowing, bounty, intactness, natural order, natural spot, connected, “oasis spot.”

- That which can give help and resolution to the **unresourced** parts. Unresourced: Parts of the self that are “unresourced” are afraid or hurting and have no access to help or any way to find resolution.
13 Benefits of Pendulation
(Somatic Experiencing Therapy)

1. Embodiment - Being In The Body
2. Becoming an Observer of Self
3. Making the Unconscious Conscious
4. Learning that We are a Multitude
5. Self-Connection
6. Finding Goodness in Self and World
7. Learning to See Resources
8. Learning to Receive Resources
9. Learning Self-regulation
10. Becoming Empowered to Manage
    Our Own Symptoms
11. Building a Flexible Nervous System
12. Stopping The Overwhelm
13. Bringing Safety and Security to our
    Inner Child Helps Activate Exploratory
    Behavioral System
Dr Judith Herman’s model of care

- Safety
- Remembrance
- Mourning
- Reconnecting
- Others (3 R’s)

- Recognizing
- Realizing
- Restructuring or rebuilding (grief work)
- Transformation and integration
Basic Considerations

- Clients rarely proceed in a linear fashion through these phases
- There is no typical trauma survivor client
- Dependent on the type of trauma
- Ego Strengths & predisposition
Safety and Stabilization

• Some aspects of safety are basic and resemble the bottom layers of Maslow’s famous pyramid of needs: safe food, safe water, safe air to breathe, and safe housing.

• For many trauma survivors, these basics cannot be taken for granted.

• Chronic challenges to basic needs
Five Crucial Areas

- Self Care
- Acknowledgement
- Functioning
- Expression
- Relationships

Improve the Quality of life
Stabilization

- The role of teacher and guide
- "safe" or "stable"
- Structure
- Guidance
- Wisdom
- Information
- Empathy
- Compassion
- The therapist adopt an attitude that nothing is more important than that of the STABILITY of the client
THE WITNESS

The second pair of eyes!

• Symptoms: how to recognize them, how to anticipate them, what they mean, how to manage them;
• It decreases the patient's shame, confusion, and sense of being crazy, especially if we offer the psycho educational input in empathic and empowering language.
• The importance of decreasing shame at this stage of therapy cannot be emphasized
• Teach the patient HOW
Discourage shame and self blame and

Hypervigilance becomes "you learned to stand guard over yourself because no one was there to protect you"

Sexual acting out becomes "you learned how to have power over men as they previously had had power over you"

Mistrust and paranoia become "you learned that it was safer to assume the worst in people than to assume the best"

Encourage the development of other coping strategies for solving the same problem
Teach Reframing

- Mistrust and paranoia become "you learned that it was safer to assume the worst in people than to assume the best";
- Self-loathing becomes "you found a way to protect your family [or to feel you had some control] by blaming yourself."
- Trauma survivor has symptoms instead of memories.
The Therapeutic Relationship

– The most crucial areas of consideration for the initiation of this life saving work
– The key that will open the door
– Interpersonal issues of trust and safety
– Fear, disempowerment, shame, guilt, self blame, anxiety
– Healing lies within this relationship
– Corrective emotional experience
In this relationship attend to:

- Collaboration
- Validation
- Respect
- Honesty
- Structure
- Humanity
- Empathy
- Speak directly to the emotional pain
In this relationship attend to:

- Healing happens within this relationship and modeling
- Listen
- Attend/Support/Nurture
- Respect the uniqueness of this human being
- Speak to their needs
- Safety
- Support network
- Recognize vulnerability
Countertransference (recognized and unrecognized)

- Feeling uneasy during or after sessions with certain clients
- Feeling drowsy or falling asleep
- Showing carelessness with scheduling
- Altering sessions frame
- Making special financial arrangements with clients
- Wishing to help client outside the session
- Dreaming about the patient
- Being preoccupied with a patient in leisure time
THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHO-EDUCATION
Evidence based practices

- Narrative therapy
- Interpersonal therapy
- Attachment commitment therapy
- Trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy
- Focusing-Oriented Therapy
- Pharmacotherapy
- Behavior therapy exposure
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Hypnotherapy
- Mindfulness Based Meditation
The ABC's of Trauma Treatment

 Awareness

- Consciousness
- Recognition
- Realization
- Embodiment
- Sensations
- Felt sense
- Ability to directly know and perceive
- To feel
The ABC's of Trauma Treatment

Balance
- Keep or put (something) in a steady position so that it does not fall
- Steady
- Stabilize
- Compare
- Evaluate
- Consider
- Assess
- Appraise
The ABC's of Trauma Treatment

Connection

- Self /Identity
- Family
- Friends
- Spirituality / Culture
- Healers / Elders
- Community
- Resources
About Shame

- The experience of shame—a feeling of being unworthy, bad, or wrong—can be extremely uncomfortable.
- Shame has the potential to change the way we see ourselves and may lead to long-lasting social, professional, and sexual difficulties and also affect other areas of life.
Where Does Shame Come From?

- Usually originates in childhood, and uncovering the experiences that led to shame can help relieve it, as can engaging in new experiences that foster a sense of goodness and worth.

- Shame is sometimes rooted in experiences of a sexual nature that were, in the child’s perception or understanding, not accepted by or acceptable to adults. In other words, children who engage in sexual activities at a young age or who were abused sexually may develop a sense of shame about their role in these acts, especially if adults shame them on purpose or do not take steps to reassure them of their blamelessness in these acts and their innocence in the abuse.
About Vulnerability and Powerlessness
Questions?