

## A Trauma Informed Community Model:

Tools to Help Older adults and Care Partners Navigate the System

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## NY State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

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<http://www.opdv.ny.gov/professionals/advocacy/ursulaforem/index.html>

## Objectives

- Understand why the aging population is important to follow
- Understand trauma and trauma informed care at a high level
- Learn what elder abuse is and what it means to our field
- Have a better understanding of how a lifespan of trauma can put older adults at greater health risk
- Learn how the healthcare systems can be challenging for older adults
- Learn about using the ACE with Life Event Screening tool to assist older adults through difficult systems

## Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Inc.

- An organization that offers programs to older adults wishing to age in place:
  - Eldersource
  - Health Care Coordination
  - Elder Abuse Prevention
  - Financial Management
  - Ombudsman
  - Finger Lakes Caregiver Institute
  - Community Care Connections
  - NY Connects
- Which program do I work for??

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## Age Wave

- By 2050 Americans ages 65 and older are projected to double from 48 million to over 88 million.
- By 2050, global life expectancy at birth is projected to increase from 68.6 years in 2015 to 76.2 years in 2050.  
<http://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/worlds-older-population-grows-dramatically>
- Population aging quicker:
  - France's aging population increased from 10% to 20% over 150 years.
  - Brazil, China, and India will have 20 years to make the same adaptation as France.  
<http://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/aging>
- Asia has 60% of the world population:
  - People 65 and older will increase from 207 million in 2000, to 857 million by 2050.
  - People under 15 years of age will shrink from 30% to 19% by 2050.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16096163>




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## Elder Abuse Statistics

- Nearly 1 out of every 6 older adults experience elder abuse world wide.
- A study from the World Health Organization stated 16% of older adults age 60 and older experience some form of the following abuses:
  - 11.6% financial abuse
  - 4.2% neglect
  - 2.6% physical abuse
  - 0.9% sexual abuse
- Statistics taken from 52 studies in 28 countries from differing regions, including 12 low and middle income countries.
  - 16 of those countries have income ranges.
- Currently there are 141 million people in the world.

<http://www.who.int/en/news-room/detail/14-06-2017-abuse-of-older-people-on-the-rise-1-in-6-affected>

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## Trauma: Elements and Definition

- Individual trauma results from:
  - An event
  - Series of events
  - Set of circumstances that:
    - Are overwhelming or life changing.
    - have profound effects on the individuals psychological development or well-being.
    - often involve a physiological, social, and/or spiritual impact.
- The word trauma describes:
  - An emotionally and distressing experiences(s) or event(s).
  - An experience or event that *overwhelms a persons ability to cope*.
  - The person is left feeling *powerless*, within the circumstance and their lives.
  - The experience or event is considered outside the realm of normal human experience.

<http://www.namviolenceandsocialjustice.org>

## Trauma Informed Terminology

### Secondary Trauma

- Vicarious Trauma
- Compassion Fatigue

### Re-traumatization

- Re-victimization
- Traumatic distress reactivation
- Sanctuary harm
- System-oriented trauma
- Immoral Trauma
- Historical Trauma



## Traumatic Life Events Specific to Older Adults

- Retirement
- Loss of spouse
- Health and medical challenges
- Loss of lifestyle
- Death of other loved ones/friends
- Concerns for adult children and grandchildren
- Worsening of long standing mental health/addiction issues
- Addiction from long term maladaptive coping skills for depression, anxiety and insomnia
- Elder Abuse

Lee Hyer, *Psychological Treatment of Older Adults*. New York, New York: Spring Publishing Company, 2014.

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## Understanding Trauma in Later Life

- Grief and loss in older adults:
  - What constitutes loss in later life?
- May present with comorbid diagnosis:
  - mental health with drug addiction.
- Under reported symptoms:
  - Attribute physical ailments or memory challenges to "growing old".

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## Symptoms of Trauma in Later Life

- Trauma masked by other symptoms:
  - Major Depressive Disorder
  - Substance Related Disorder
  - Panic Disorder
  - Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
  - Generalized Anxiety Disorder
  - Social Phobia
  - Hoarding

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## Why Are Symptoms Important?

- Effects of Stress on Brain Development:
  - Prolonged stress in young children can slow — or even stop — both 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.
  - How long does cortisol linger in the body after it's released?

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## Toxic Stress

- A person experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity:
  - physical or emotional abuse
  - chronic neglect
  - caregiver substance abuse
  - mental illness
  - exposure to violence
  - accumulated burdens of family economic hardship—without adequate supports.

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## How Does Trauma Affect Thoughts?

### Changes in the Brain

- Alpha waves located in the back of the brain monitor emotions and reactions.
  - After trauma the alpha waves can increase in speed, moving quickly indicating danger and agitation (animal instinct).
- Beta waves are located in the front of the brain monitoring focus and attention.
  - After trauma the beta waves slow down making it harder for a person to pay attention and retain information.

\*The brain becomes primal, focusing on survival and instinct instead of understanding and intellect.

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## How Does Trauma Affect The Body?

- Chronic Diseases and Disorders: **Bodies under constant stress**
  - High blood pressure.
  - Autoimmune diseases.
  - Cardiovascular disease.
  - Pulmonary conditions.
  - Inflammatory diseases caused by stress induced increases of Cortisol.
  - Sleep deprivation.

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## Symptoms Associated with Traumatic Life Events

- Somatization/Undiagnosed Physical Pain
- Migraines/Cluster Headaches
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Insomnia (sleep deprivation)
- Enabling responses to stressful personal and family relationships
- Compromised immune system
- Autoimmune Diseases

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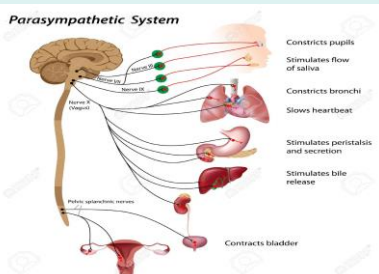
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## Bessel A. van der Kolk, MD

- Danger where none exists
- Impaired filtering system
- Disconnect between emotion and cognition
- Feelings and emotions no longer fit the situation:
  - Anger is expressed when others are happy.
  - Feelings of joy are dulled by feelings of pain and heartache.
- When feelings of pain and heartache increase, independent coping skills decrease:
  - Expansion of maladaptive coping skills

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## Lifespan of Trauma

- Un-addressed trauma, occurring in the early years of a childhood could potentially lead to:
  - Maladaptive coping skills
  - Poor mental and physical health throughout a child's lifespan
  - Continual state of fight or flight
  - Constant Hypervigilance
  - A feeling of having to choose between needs
  - No sense of safety

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## Elder Abuse and Health

- Elder Abuse is an action or lack of action which can cause harm or distress to an older person, occurring in any relationship where there is an expectation of trust.
- "Elder abuse is rarely discussed in policy circles, less prioritized for research and addressed by only a handful of organizations," (Dr. Etienne Krug, Director of the WHO Department for the Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, Disability, Violence and Injury Prevention).
- People age 60 and over expected to reach 2 billion globally by 2050, doubling in population.
- Majority residing in low and middle income countries.
- Due to the population growth, older adults affected by abuse expected to hit 320 million victims by 2050.

<http://www.who.int/en/news-room/detail/24-06-2017-abuse-of-older-people-on-the-rise-1-in-6-affected>

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## What Does This Mean for Healthcare

- High rates of recidivism
- Increased appointments to primary care providers
- Heightened level of Emergency Room or Urgent Care visits
- More prescriptions for aches and pains that are not caused by a diagnosable disease or illness
- Changes in Insurance coverage

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## Implementing Trauma Informed Care

- Be aware
- Taking time to talk & to listen
  - Is information being processed?
    - Can the older adult hear you?
    - Can the older adult see you?
    - Does the older adult have language abilities?
- Give the adult time to process information
- Be transparent
- Respect boundaries (yours and the adults)
- Share control
- Foster mutual learning
- Understand non-linear processing
- Demonstrate awareness and healing of trauma (be a witness to the older adult's story)

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## Ursula Forem Fellowship

### Screening Older Adults for Life Long Trauma:

- Research conducted by Kathleen Kendall-Tacket (2013) identified:
  - Correlation between childhood trauma and adverse health outcomes for older adults.
- Data from an ACE (Adverse Childhood Event) study conducted in 1995 showed:
  - Increased likelihood of autoimmune disease
  - Increased hospitalization for older adults coping with highly stressful life situations stemming from unresolved traumatic life events (Dube et al., 2009)

### Trauma Screen for Older Adult

- The Life Event Screening Tool (LEST) was created to:
  - Compare ACES score and LEST score for correlation of poor health and medical recidivism in later life.
  - Identify older adults in need of additional trauma informed care supports
  - Evaluate if additional supports were effective in reducing health risks

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## Childhood Trauma

- The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE Study)
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being:
  - These experiences range from:
    - Physical Abuse
    - Emotional Abuse
    - Sexual Abuse
    - Divorce
    - Incarceration

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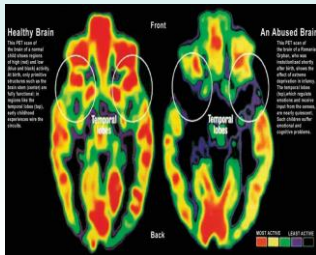
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If it affects us when we are young,  
will it affect us when we are old?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmDaSv1mkGk>

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## Examples of Trauma in Later Life

- Life Event Screening Tool (LEST)
  - Life history of trauma that has long lasting effects of trauma on older adults:
    - These experiences range from:
      - Divorce
      - Retirement
      - Loss of a child
      - Incarceration
      - Elder Abuse

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## Life Event Screening Tool & Assessment

- See Hand Outs

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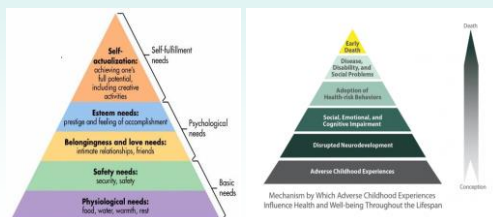
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## Hierarchy Comparison




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## Nature Vs. Nurture




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## Healing Through Sleep

- The Thalamus collects naturally occurring stimuli experienced throughout waking periods.
- While we sleep the information moves from the thalamus moves to the frontal lobe
- The frontal lobe processes the information and resets the brain to have a larger perspective on life associations.
- People with PTSD tend to wake themselves from their dreams, disrupting their REM sleep.
- People experiencing trauma do not process their traumatic information in their dreams because they don't reach REM sleep.

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## Self-Care Tips

- Use mindful thought processing when working with others.
  - What you say matters, as well as how you say it.
- Use mindful problem solving with client's, as well as in your own life.
  - Allow time to process information you received before responding.
  - Let others around you take your queue.
- Try to remember what you have control over.
  - Only yourself and your own reactions.
- Try to make self-care part of your life, not something you're "fitting in".

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