

WISCONSIN LITERACY PRESENTATION
OCT. 5 2021
BY JANE E. GRAHAM JENNINGS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR- THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY

UNDERSTANDING HOW ABUSE HAS LONG TERM IMPACTS ON THE PSYCHE OF SURVIVORS AND WHY SUPPORT AND CLEAR BOUNDARIES ARE IMPORTANT FOR HELPING THEM RECOVER.

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

- Overwhelming experience
- Involves threat
- Results in vulnerability and loss of control
- Leaves people feeling helpless and fearful
- Interferes with relationships and fundamental beliefs

• (Herman 1992)

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

Refers to the individual's (or family's) perception of significant events or circumstances, past or present. These events or circumstances may result in a cluster of symptoms, adaptations, and reactions that interfere with the individual's functioning.

(Modified from Report from Wisconsin Trauma Summit, 2007)

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA-EXAMPLES

- Violence in the home, personal relationships, workplace, school, systems/institutions, or community
- Maltreatment or abuse: emotional, verbal, physical, sexual, or spiritual
- Exploitation: sexual, financial or psychological
- Change in living situation such as eviction or move to nursing home
- Neglect and deprivation
- War or armed conflict
- Natural or human caused disaster

COMPLEX TRAUMA

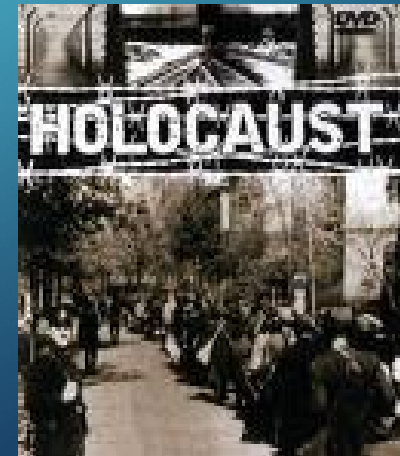
Result of traumatic experiences that are interpersonal, intentional, prolonged and repeated. Often leads to immediate and long-term difficulties in many areas of functioning.



HISTORICAL TRAUMA

Historical trauma is the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the life span and across generations, resulting from trauma experienced by the individual's social group.

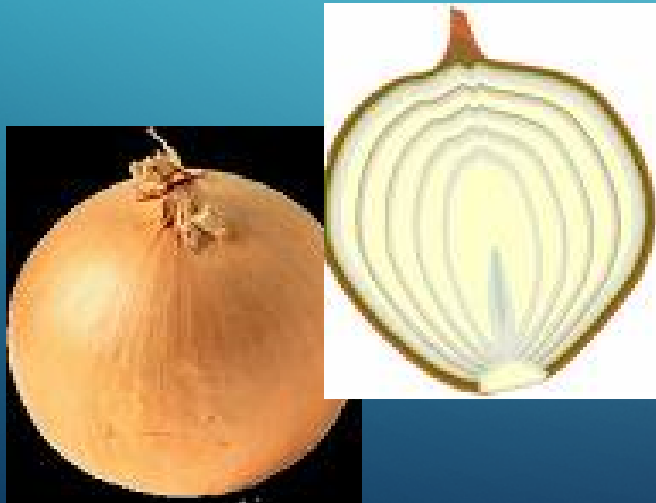
Historical trauma generates such responses as survivor guilt, depression, low self-esteem, psychic numbing, anger, victim identity, preoccupation with trauma, and physical symptoms.



(Braveheart 2005)

TRAUMA

Trauma occurs in layers, with each layer affecting every other layer. Current trauma is one layer. Former traumas in one's life are more fundamental layers. Underlying one's own individual trauma history is one's group identity or identities and the historical trauma with which they are associated.

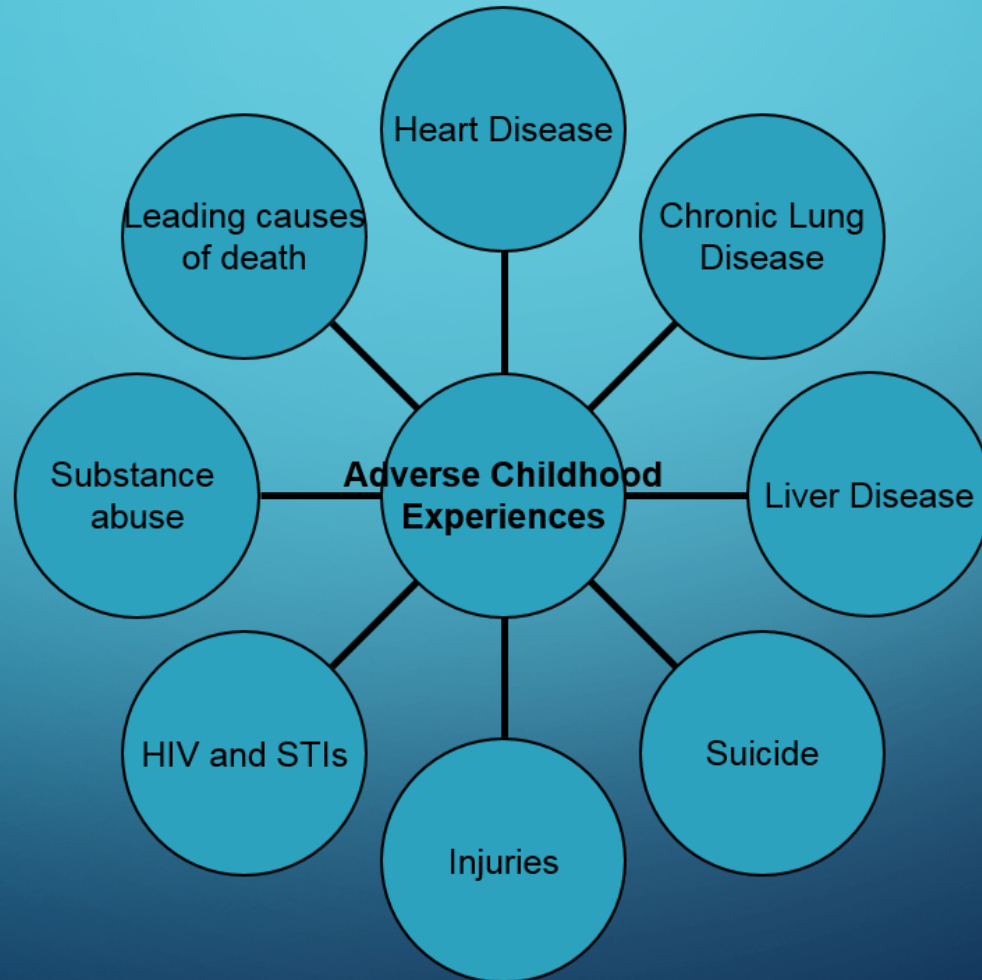


Bonnie Bustrow

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACE'S) STUDY

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical neglect
- Emotional neglect
- Intimate partner violence
- Mother treated violently
- Substance misuse within household
- Household mental illness
- Parental separation or divorce
- Incarcerated household member

ACES INCREASE RISK



IMPACT OF TRAUMA OVER THE LIFE SPAN

ACE Study - effects are neurological, biological, psychological and social in nature, including:

- Changes in neurobiology
- Social, emotional and cognitive impairment
- Adoption of health-risk behaviors as coping mechanisms
- Severe and persistent behavioral health, physical health, social problems, and early death

(Felitti

TRAUMA COMPLEXITY CONTINUUM

SIMPLE TRAUMA

- **Adult-onset**
- **Single-incident**
- **Adequate child development**
- **No comorbid psychological disorders**

COMPLEX TRAUMA

- **Early onset**
- **Multiple**
- **Extended**
- **Highly invasive**
- **Interpersonal**
- **Significant amount of stigma**
- **Vulnerability**

(Bloom, 2009)

IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON WORLD VIEW

- The world is unsafe place to live in
- Other people are unsafe and cannot be trusted
- My own thoughts and feelings are unsafe
- I expect crisis, danger and loss
- I have no self-worth and no abilities

COMMON TRIGGERS

- Reminders of past events
- Lack of power/control
- Separation or loss
- Transitions and routine/schedule disruption
- Feelings of vulnerability and rejection
- Feeling threatened or attacked
- Sensory overload

TRIGGERS ARE COMMON

- May know and do what you can to avoid
- May not know and suddenly feel like you are in that place
- Senses are part of triggers, particularly sense of smell
- Triggers may be unresolved issues or may be trauma response
- Develop safety plan for triggers

HOW BEST TO HELP

- Listen
- Do not judge
- Think from a place of curiosity
- Do not compare traumas

HOW BEST TO HELP

- Be an advocate not a savior
- They need support not rescuing
- Don't make assumptions

QUESTIONS?

Jane E. Graham Jennings

Executive Director-The Women's Community

jane@womenscommunity.org

715-842-5663