

*Refugees
Welcome*



TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

“...this question... is very difficult for me. When you (ask) which one is the most severe ... they were all severe, they were all unpleasant things...you didn't give me a very good measurement to measure this.” -A Kurdish Woman, 2001

Trauma Informed Lens

Gaining an understanding of the various types of traumas that may affect refugees

Being aware that trauma causes a variety of reactions depending on the person and their resilience

What is Trauma?

Trauma: *the unique individual experience of an event or enduring conditions, in which: The individual's ability to integrate his/her emotional experience is overwhelmed, or The individual experiences (subjectively) a threat to life, bodily integrity, or sanity.*

ACUTE

Single
Occurrence or
Disjointed
Occurrences

CHRONIC

Repeated and
Prolonged
occurrences of
abuse or
distress

COMPLEX

Extreme
Interpersonal
trauma often
occurring in
childhood

TYPES OF TRAUMA CONT.

- Historical Trauma (ex. genocide, war)
- Intergenerational (ex. trauma experienced by parents can affect the health and wellbeing of future generations)
- Complex: When the individual has experienced more than one type of trauma (ex. the individual could have experienced historical trauma because of their identity and then experienced a more personal form of trauma, too)
- Vicarious trauma: An individual's strong emotional response to listening to people who have experienced trauma and the effects it has had on their lives

EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

- FIGHT (irritability, anger, aggression, controlling behaviors)
- FLIGHT (anxiety and fear, panic, avoiding, chronic worry, perfectionism)
- FREEZE (collapse, immobilization, spacing out, dissociation, depression, shame)
- FAWN (people pleasing, avoiding conflict, prioritizing others needs over one's own, difficulty saying no, difficulty setting boundaries)

EVENT

- ▶ Domestic or Family Violence
- ▶ Community Violence
- ▶ Sexual abuse
- ▶ Neglect
- ▶ Emotional or physical abuse
- ▶ Natural Disaster
- ▶ Car Accident
- ▶ Unexpected Injury
- ▶ Sudden Death of Friend or Family

EXPERIENCE OF EVENT

- ▶ Physical
- ▶ Emotional
- ▶ Spiritual
- ▶ Psychological

... harm or fear - threat to safety of these domains

EFFECT

- ▶ Abusing substances
- ▶ Recurring nightmares
- ▶ Suicidal Ideation
- ▶ Negative view of the world
- ▶ Dysregulated emotions
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Developing a mental health disorder/condition
- ▶ State of fight or flight

Trauma Informed Care Principles

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness & Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration & Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

Resettling in a foreign land when not of one's choice.

Challenge: forming an identity in a place that may or may not be accepting of the refugee.

Loss of ...

- Social Status
- Identity
- Socioeconomic Status
- Sense of belonging
- Independence

The Trauma of Fleeing

Before being forced to flee, refugees may be...

- Imprisoned
- Tortured
- Loss of property
- Suffering from malnutrition
- Physical assaulted
- Terrorized
- Raped
- Loss of livelihood
- Separated from family members
- Robbed
- Forced to inflict pain or kill
- A witness to torture or killing
- Lose close family members or friends
- Endure extremely harsh environmental conditions

Examples of Interacting with Traumatized Individuals

You have been assigned to a newly arrived family. You are excited to meet them and help them in their resettlement process. There are a few things to be mindful of as a trauma informed volunteer:

- ▶ As much as you want to hear their story, please do not pry. Sometimes asking clients to tell you their story means asking them to relive their trauma. When clients are comfortable enough they will share their story with you.
- ▶ In many situations, well-meaning volunteers want to take the lead in making decisions for clients. Always encourage clients to have a choice. Give them a voice in the process of their resettlement and help them feel a sense of control.
- ▶ It is important to be culturally sensitive. Clients will most likely be feeling the loss of their culture and way of life. Respect their decisions even if not a reflection of your values.

Tough Conversations with Clients

How to Help

MYTH OR FACT:

Talking about suicide or directly asking if someone is considering suicide will increase their chances of doing so.

MYTH! Research shows that openly asking if someone is considering suicide does nothing to increase their chances to do so - in fact it increases trust!

Scenario 1

What should you do?

1. Practice active listening and show interest in the client's emotions
2. Inquire if the client has been having suicidal thoughts

IF CLIENT SAYS 'NO':

1. Continue with active listening & support
2. Let JFS Case Manager know

You have taken your client out to the park and you get into a conversation. They seem less talkative than usual and distant. When you ask if anything is wrong they say, "I just don't feel I will ever belong here. I am crying at night when no one is around, and I'm unsure if I can continue on like this."

IF CLIENT SAYS 'YES':

1. Thank them for their honesty and recognize their strength in sharing
2. Let them know you will have to let JFS staff know so they can provide them with the care they need.

Scenario 2

What should you do?

1. Ask if they have let their case manager know about the situation
2. If you are concerned about the situation regardless of the answer - notate it in Better Impact Hour Log after the visit.

You are at a client's house helping with some tech support. You notice that the child keeps coming up to you and the adult client asking about food. The client looks agitated and tells the child to go back to their room. The client tells you it's been hard to give everyone more than two meals a day and sometimes it's only one.

Taking Care of Yourself

You can't pour from an empty cup!

How to recognize compassion fatigue

Identifying when you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed

Developing mindfulness and self care practices to help yourself

Compassion Fatigue: the emotional, physical, or spiritual distress that caregiving individuals (staff or volunteers) can feel when providing long term care to those in emotional or physical distress.

- ▶ People who are attracted to this type of work tend to naturally be extremely empathetic and other-directed.
- ▶ Check in with yourself and others to maintain balance between self-care and caring for others.

Think about which of these statements are true for you

- ▶ I tend to feel deeply what others around me feeling
- ▶ When I see or hear about devastating news and world events it makes an impact on me for the rest of the day
- ▶ I have often been the “advice giver” or “listener” for others
- ▶ I am valued for my caring and empathetic personality
- ▶ I have a hard time saying no
- ▶ I have a hard time setting boundaries
- ▶ Being around large groups of people is overwhelming for me
- ▶ I work or have worked with individuals experiencing trauma or hardship
- ▶ I have experienced trauma myself and have not seen a therapist

Any of these can contribute to you becoming more susceptible to compassion fatigue

Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue

- ▶ Feeling exhausted physically and psychologically
- ▶ Feeling helpless or powerless
- ▶ Feeling irritable, angry, sad, or numb
- ▶ A sense of being detached or having decreased pleasure in activities
- ▶ Ruminating about the suffering of others and feeling anger towards the events or people causing the suffering
- ▶ Blaming yourself and having thoughts of not having done enough to help the people who are suffering
- ▶ A decreased sense of personal and professional accomplishment
- ▶ Avoidance of the family you are providing care to

Preventing Compassion Fatigue by Adhering to Roles

- ▶ Helps clients have a clear understanding of expectations (who is helping them with what and how)
- ▶ Reduces clients receiving contradictory information from volunteers and staff
- ▶ Improves communication between volunteers, clients, staff, and sponsors
- ▶ Spreads responsibility for success to all and makes the work more enjoyable and productive

Scenarios

Staying Aware of Your Internal State and Current Stress Levels

Everyone's reaction to stress is different - do you know what your first initial physical and emotional symptoms that you need to take a break are?

What fills your cup?

What do you do when you begin to feel stressed to help alleviate the symptoms? Talking to a friend, going for a walk, spending time in nature, or keeping a gratitude journal are all examples of what can recenter someone. Everyone's process is different. Spend time getting to know your own!

Know When to Ask for Help

We know how hard this work can be. If you would benefit from discussing a matter with the Volunteer Coordinator or Case Manager, feel like you need to take a break, or have questions or concerns, please remember:

The JFS staff is here for you!