




Building a Trauma-Informed Workplace

Part 3 of the Spring 2025 Well-Being Series Workshops



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Spring 2025 Well-Being Series Workshops

1 – 2pm PT | Zoom | Second Thursday in April, May, and June

April 10: Stress First Aid Essentials

Explore critical components of the Stress First Aid model—initially designed to support the military and later customized for healthcare—and its invaluable tools for navigating stress in the workplace, no matter your role. Discover practical techniques and strategies aimed at providing immediate support and intervention during times of stress for yourself or for someone else. Whether you're a clinician, employee, manager or HR professional, this session will equip you with actionable methods to promote resilience and well-being in your workplace. Don't miss out on your chance to enhance your stress management toolkit and foster a healthier work environment for all.

May 8: From Cynicism to Radical Acceptance – How to cope during challenging times

This one-hour interactive workshop will explore cynicism and how it is often leveraged as a protection mechanism during challenging and overwhelming times. We will also delve into the concept of radical acceptance and how it allows us to accept what is happening around us in a way that opens us to intentionally choosing and changing our path forward. Cynicism abdicates our sense of what we can control from the perspective of what is wrong or painful in our environments (and convinces us it's not worth trying to change). Conversely, radical acceptance supports us in facing our realities and in identifying what is within our control.

June 12: Cultivating a Trauma-Informed Workplace

Please join us for an engaging presentation on cultivating a trauma-informed workplace at UW Medicine. We'll discuss on our present-day workplace realities, with a focus on healthcare and research, and offer tangible tools for re-building trust and promoting work environments that support individual and collective well-being for our staff, faculty, learners, and patients.



Objectives

At the end of this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Verbalize an increased awareness of the impact of trauma on individuals, team functioning, patient safety, and overall workplace wellbeing.
2. Describe actionable trauma informed principles for creating a supportive and resilient work environment.



Are you familiar with the term "Trauma-informed care"?

0

Yes- I could speak to it

0

No- I haven't heard it before

0

Maybe I have heard of it, but I am not sure that I could speak to it

What is Trauma-Informed Care?

- Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is an approach that assumes that an individual is more likely than not to have a history of trauma.
- Trauma-Informed Care recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms, acknowledges the role trauma may play in an individual's life and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.



What is wrong with you?

What happened to you?

Trauma-informed care seeks to:

Adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's "Trauma-Informed Approach"



Realize

- Realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand paths for recovery;

Recognize

- Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in patients, families, and staff;

Integrate

- Integrate knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and

Avoid

- Actively avoid re-traumatization.

What is Trauma?

“A psychological, emotional response to an event or an experience that is deeply distressing or disturbing.”

–The Center for Treatment of Anxiety and Mood Disorders, 2021

“An emotional injury that effects performance and well-being.”

–Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2022



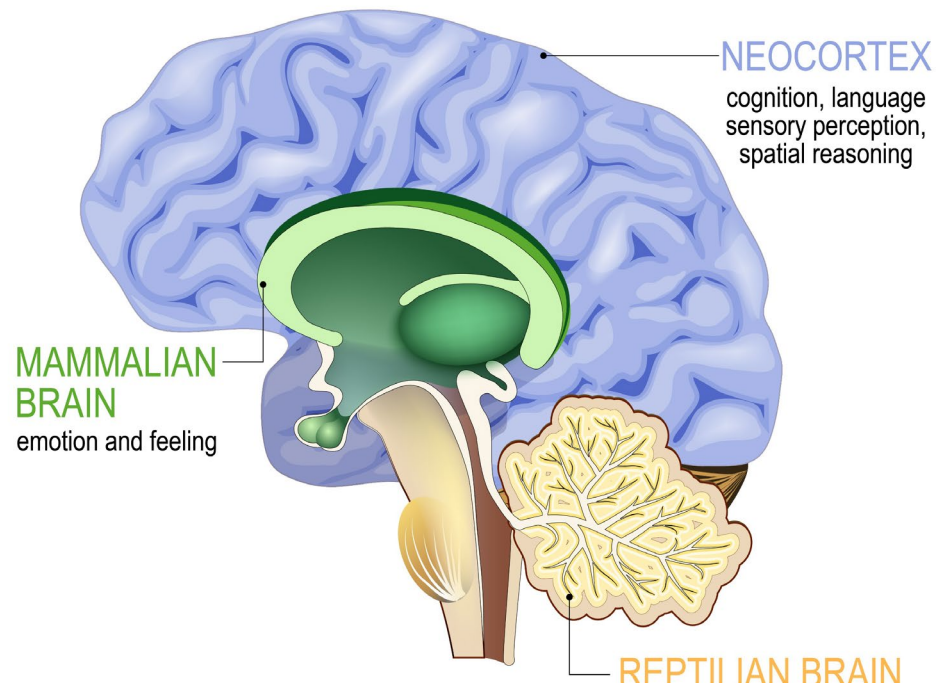
Types of Trauma

Acute trauma: Results from a single stressful or dangerous event

Chronic trauma: Results from repeated and prolonged exposure to highly stressful events (*includes Developmental Trauma*)

Complex trauma: Results from exposure to multiple traumatic events (*including Community Trauma*)

Trauma in the Brain

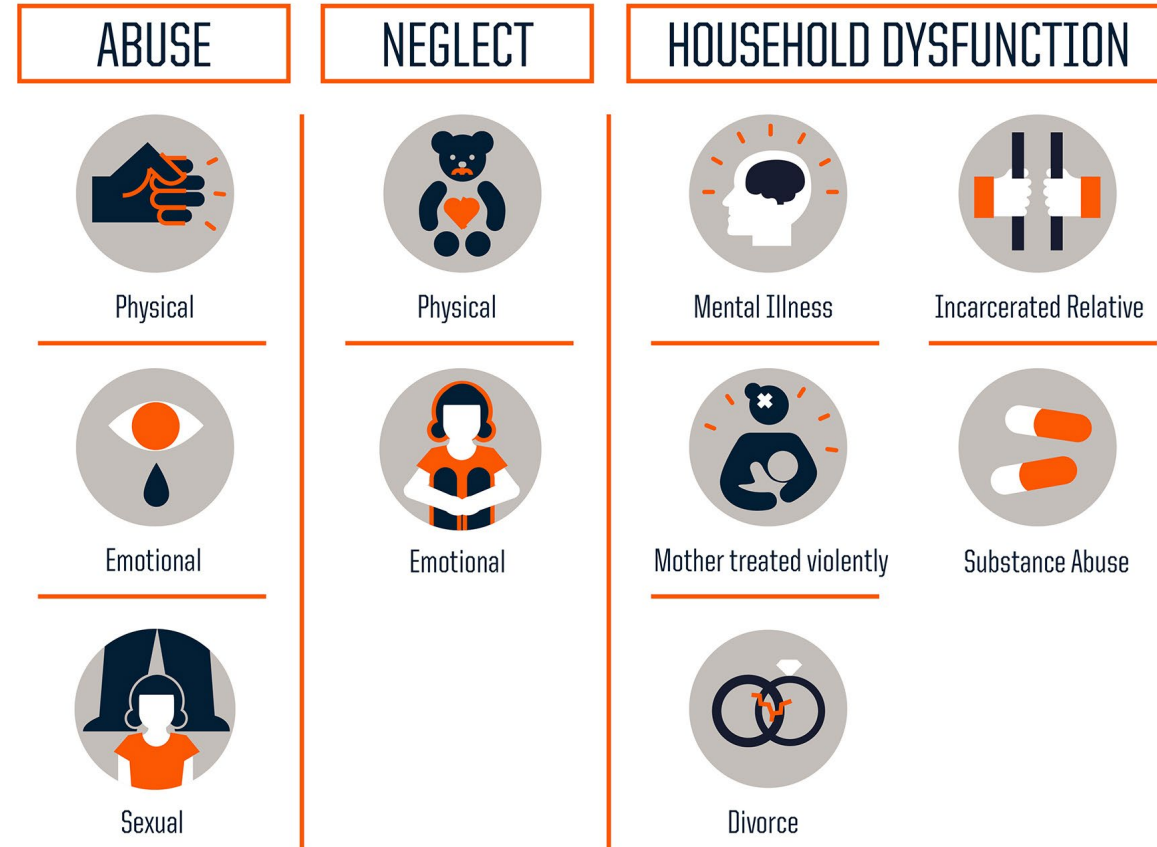


- A precipitating event occurs, and normal coping mechanisms do not work to resolve the situation
- The person can be acting and responding from an intense emotional level, rather than a rational/thinking level, in response to a highly stressful situation

17,500 adults asked about exposure to *adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)*:

Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

(CDC and Kaiser 1995-1997)



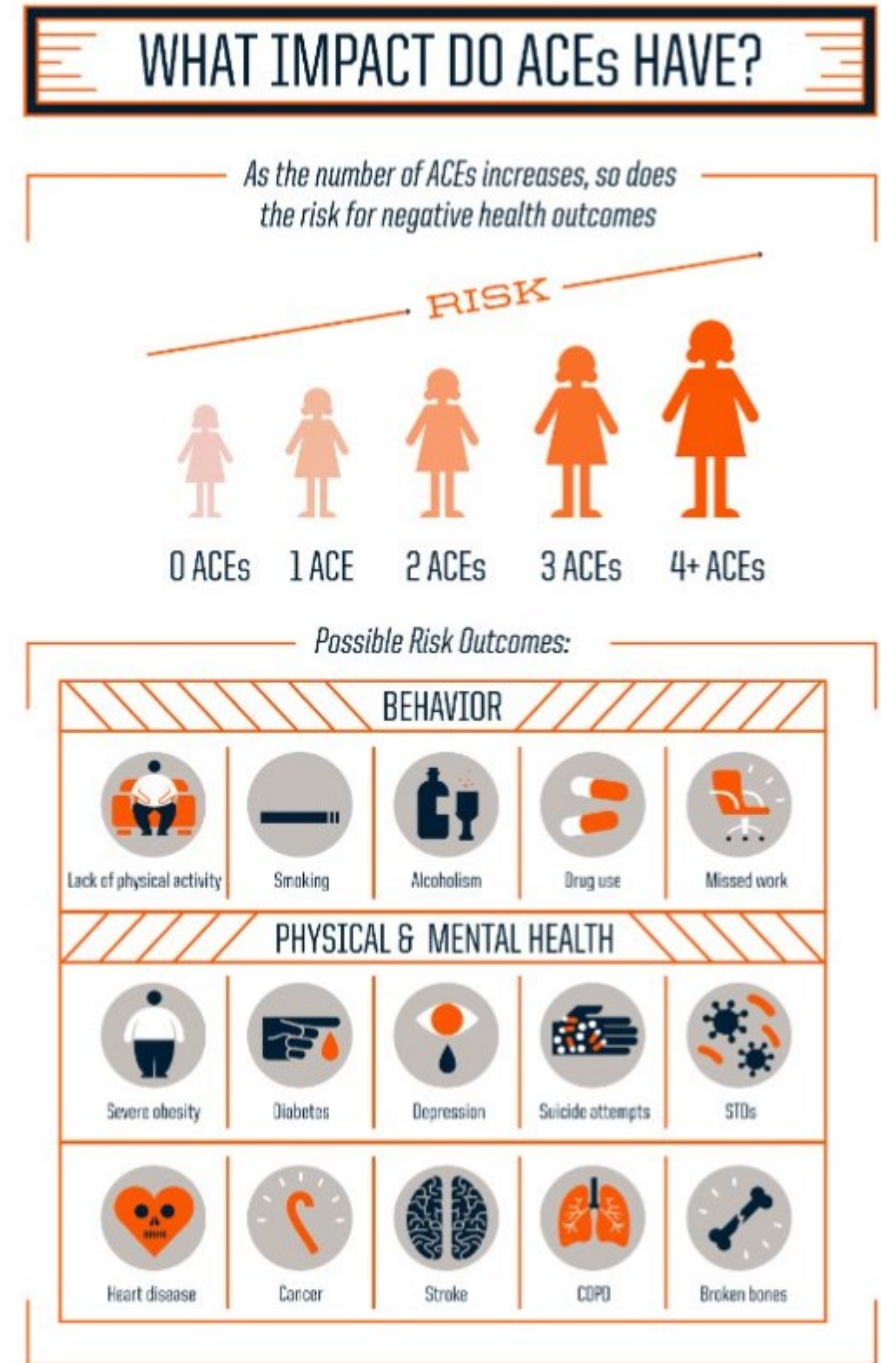
**Other factors: Bullying, systemic racism, other minority status, historical traumas*

Adverse Childhood Experiences

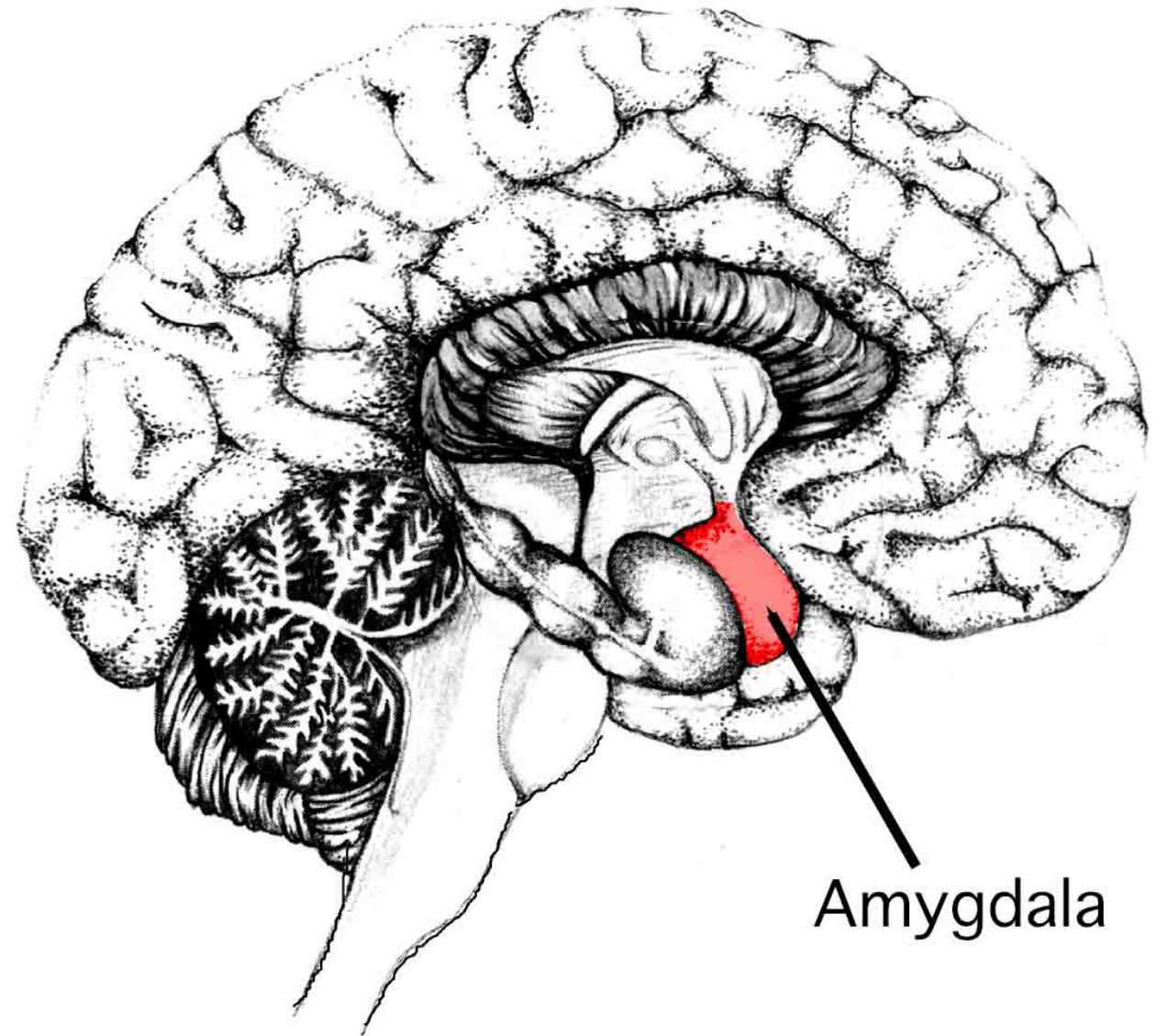
(CDC and Kaiser 1995-1997)

For every event, participants got a point toward the total score:

- 67% had at least one ACE
- 12.6% had 4 or more
- **Conclusion: Early trauma physiologically effects brain- MRI scans showed measurable differences in amygdala (fear response)**



The Emotional Watchman



Amygdala



BUT wait...didn't the participants engage in high-risk behaviors that increased their risk?

Even without high-risk behaviors, they were at risk!

- Fight or flight stress response overacting- toxic stress-that effect on body (adrenaline, cortisol released)
- This system is activated over and over again- becomes maladaptive- effect on immune system, even DNA



The Impact of Our Work

“In the same way that oils splatter on a painter’s shirt or dirt gets under the gardener's nails, trauma work has an impact.”

Laura van Dernoot Lipsky *Trauma Stewardship*, 2009



The Ripple Effects of Trauma in Healthcare Workplaces

An initial traumatic event such as a medical error, patient death or violent encounter in a clinical setting has a long-lasting negative effect on a healthcare team member's attitudes, behavior and other aspects of functioning.



Less obvious trauma might come from leadership demands or organizational requirements that prevent one from providing the quality of care they believe in.



Droplet-sized traumatic events add up over time, along with larger stressors, leading to the familiar symptoms of burnout—exhaustion, cynicism, a loss of sense of self and feelings of ineffectiveness or lack of accomplishment.



Secondary suffering continues to propagate with emotional, psychological and physical consequences moving out like waves in a pond from the central traumatic event. Ripples dampen over time and space, but many can be left in the wake of the initial wounding surge.

The Impact of Trauma in Healthcare Workplaces

Employee Well-Being

- Emotional exhaustion, anxiety, depression, PTSD, insomnia
- Increased risk of moral distress, compassion fatigue and burnout
- Higher rates of absenteeism

Team Functioning

- Breakdown in communication and collaboration
- Increased conflict and decreased psychological safety
- Difficulty maintaining trust among staff

Patient Safety

- Distracted or impaired clinical judgment
- Higher risk of errors, missed care, and delayed interventions
- Reduced patient satisfaction and trust

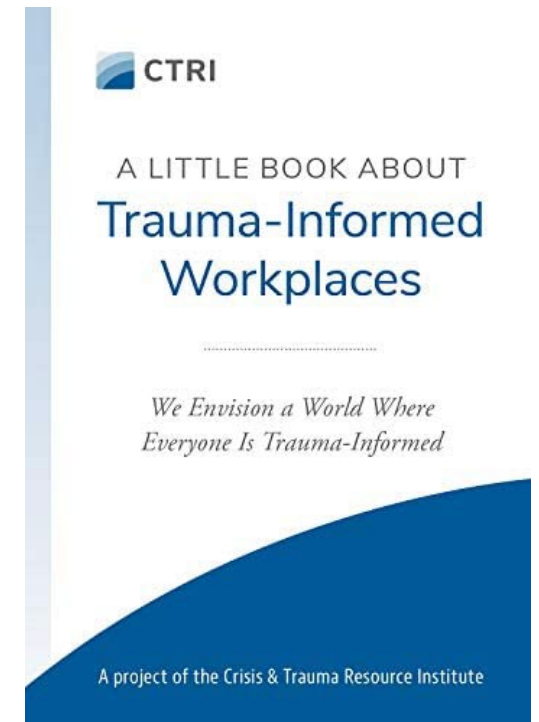
Retention & Engagement

- Increased turnover and difficulty recruiting
- Reduced motivation and sense of purpose
- Loss of experienced staff impacting continuity of care



What is a Trauma-Informed Workplace?

- Understand the presence of trauma, acknowledge the role trauma can play in a person's life, and promote work environments that support the individual and collective well-being of staff and clients.
- Actively works to mitigate the effects of trauma by creating a sense of belonging, connection and safety through attitudes, policies and practices.
- Understands that the way a team supports one another during crisis will reverberate in their organization for many years to come.



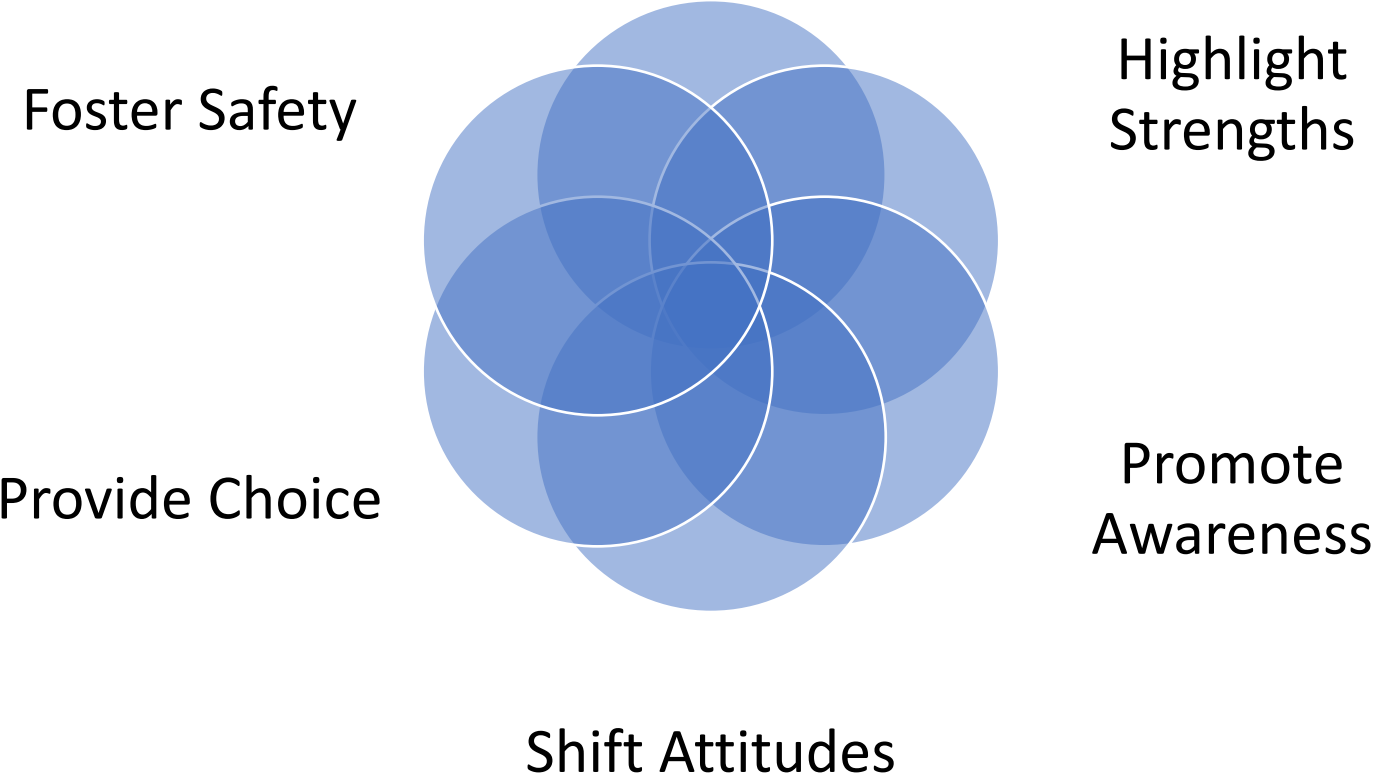
List from last session of topics we are radically accepting

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- My health
 - Very serious health changes (nearly dying) and accepting new disabilities
 - Toxic work culture I dread going to work every day
- My cancer treatment and fears of it returning.
- The war in Gaza
- Raising teen with mental health issues
- Assault
- The fact my parents are never going to change
 - death of my mother
 - Illness
- divorce
 - Stigma to being recovered alcoholic and can't openly vouch for how great DBT is!
- Brother in law with severe etoh disorder who is unhoused
- Identity crisis
 - Anguish and fear for Trans family member under current administration



Trauma-Informed Workplace

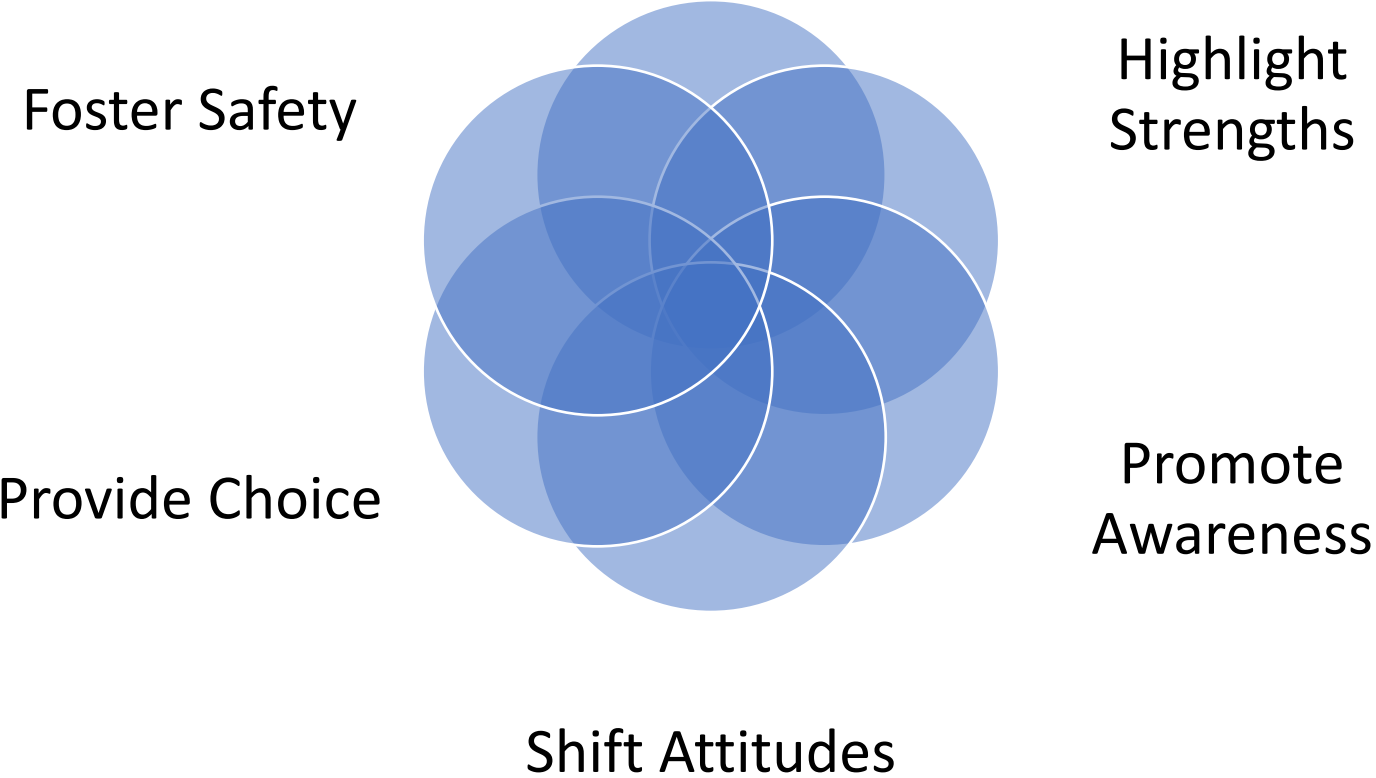


Discussion Question

Considering the TIW model, how can workplace culture be realistically adapted to create a safer and more supportive environment for those with a history of trauma and/or those who are exposed to trauma in the workplace?

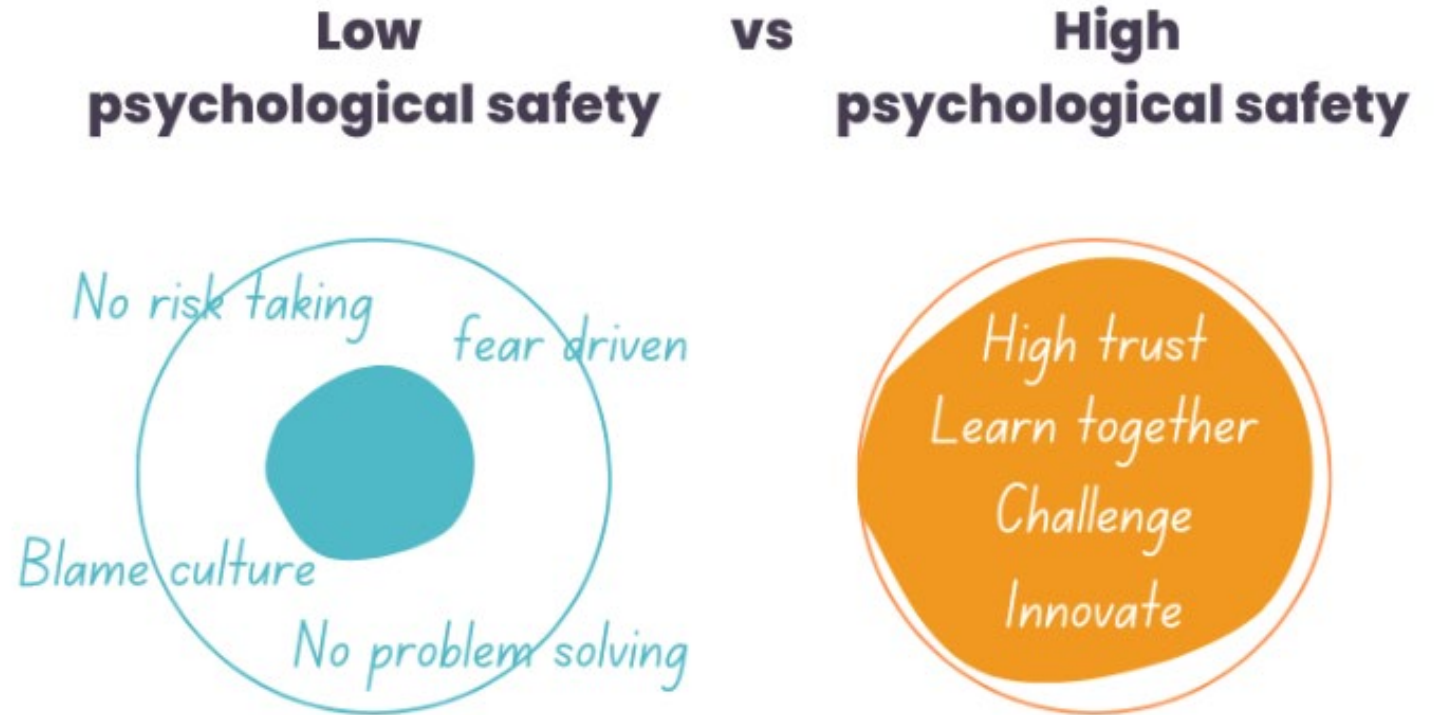


Trauma-Informed Workplace



Foster Safety: Leadership Transparency and Providing Psychological Safety

- Organizations with a trusting workplace perform better.
- Psychological safety means that employees are willing to admit their mistakes without a fear of retribution or ridicule.
- It's about feeling comfortable asking for help when you need it.



Edmondson, 2019

Foster Safety: De-escalation

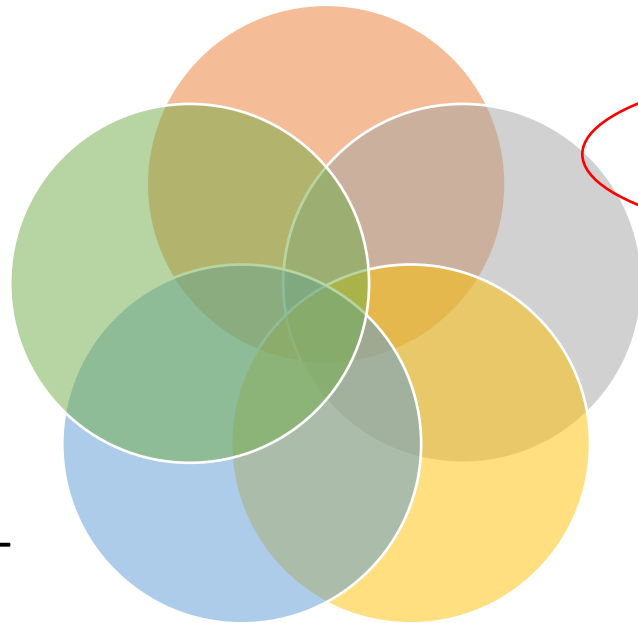


Highlight Strengths: Gallup Guide to Employee Engagement

Measure
engagement

Focus on
wellbeing

Have growth-
oriented
conversations



Have strengths-
based conversations

Provide clear,
ongoing
communication

Gallup, 2022

Highlight Strengths: Via Character Strengths Survey

Free assessment that helps you to identify and understand your best qualities

<https://www.viacharacter.org/>



1. Gratitude

TRANSCENDENCE

Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.



2. Bravery

COURAGE

Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what's right even if there's opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it.



3. Kindness

HUMANITY

Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them.



4. Humor

TRANSCENDENCE

Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes.



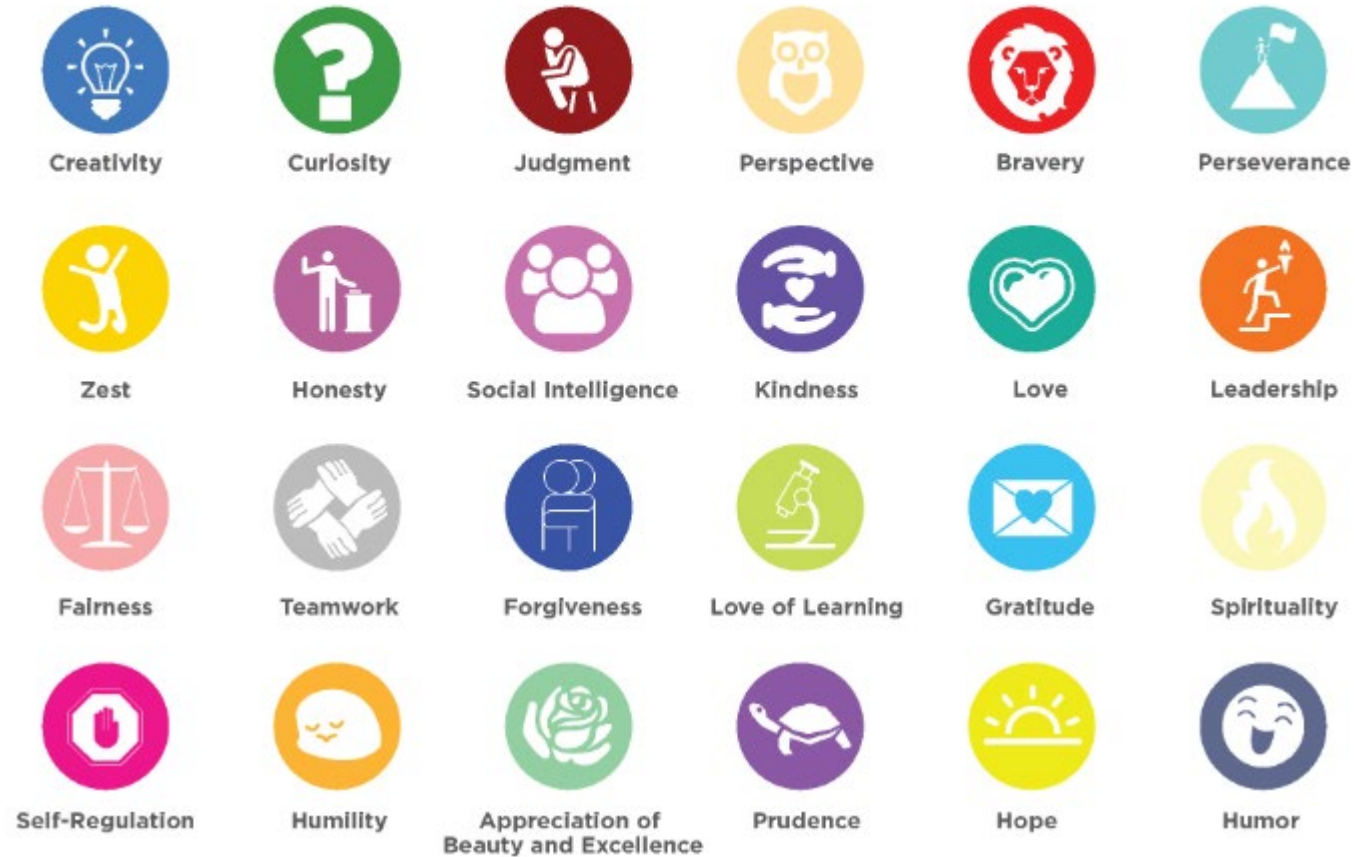
5. Hope

TRANSCENDENCE

Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about.

What is YOUR top strength?

VIA Classification of Character Strengths www.viacharacter.org



Team Character Strengths

Huey	Dewey	Louie	Bugs	Betty Boop	Yosemite Sam	Kermit	Miss Piggy	Gonzo	Beaker	Fozzie	Belle	Beast	Simba	Scar	Mulan	Mickey	Ariel	Moana	Elsa
Gratitude	Honesty	Honesty	Love	Kindness	Love	Honesty	Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence	Honesty	Love	Love	Honesty	Honesty	Love of Learning	Spirituality	Humor	Love of Learning	Honesty	Fairness	Fairness
Hope	Kindness	Love of Learning	Perspective	Humor	Honesty	Love of Learning	Honesty	Love of Learning	Zest	Love of Learning	Perspective	Kindness	Gratitude	Love of Learning	Judgment	Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence	Fairness	Love	Honesty
Bravery	Love of Learning	Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence	Humor	Honesty	Fairness	Judgment	Love	Judgment	Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence	Gratitude	Teamwork	Love	Forgiveness	Teamwork	Prudence	Curiosity	Hope	Spirituality	Creativity
Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence	Fairness	Leadership	Hope	Gratitude	Forgiveness	Zest	Humor	Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence	Leadership	Hope	Leadership	Humor	Bravery	Fairness	Love	Fairness	Zest	Love of Learning	Curiosity
Leadership	Curiosity	Kindness	Teamwork	Hope	Social Intelligence	Curiosity	Perspective	Humor	Humor	Spirituality	Kindness	Love of Learning	Honesty	Hope	Honesty	Zest	Love of Learning	Gratitude	Perspective

Wisdom & Knowledge	Courage
Creativity, Curiosity, Judgment, Love of Learning, Perspective	Bravery, Honesty, Perseverance, Zest
Humanity	Justice
Kindness, Love, Social Intelligence	Fairness, Leadership, Teamwork
Temperance	Transcendence
Forgiveness, Humility, Prudence, Self-Regulation	Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence, Gratitude, Hope, Humor, Spirituality

Provide Choice



- Staff voice in decision making (shared leadership, feedback loops)
- Autonomy, flexible schedule, when possible
- The 80%-20% Rule:
 - According to the Mayo clinic's research, healthcare team members are far more likely to experience physical and psychological burnout if less than 20% of work consists of doing things you love
 - Intention in building what you love to do into at least 20% of your work
 - As you consider your work, what has energized you in the past 6 months or so?

Shift Attitudes

- Support anti-racism, equity and inclusion efforts
- Share common humanity- personal stories that model empathy and vulnerability
- Use shared leadership, surveys, or listening sessions to understand needs
- Provide education through learning opportunities and those designed to build empathy (ex. Schwartz Rounds, Narrative Medicine Storytelling)
- Normalize terms such as “psychological safety”, “secondary trauma”, “burnout” , “Stress First Aid”, “radical acceptance” into language



Shift Attitudes:

Building Systems That Support Healing and Resilience

- Trauma-informed leadership training
- HR and policy alignment (e.g., policies, EAP, wellness programs)
- Physical space considerations (break rooms, quiet spaces)
- Evaluating and redesigning punitive or hierarchical systems



Discussion



- What are examples of how a unit/dept has implemented trauma informed strategies and the impact? (Small wins build momentum)
- What can leaders, manager, staff do **today** to continue working toward a trauma informed workplace?
- What work still needs to happen for us to have an organizational approach to building a TIW?

Key Takeaways

- **What is Trauma-Informed Care?**

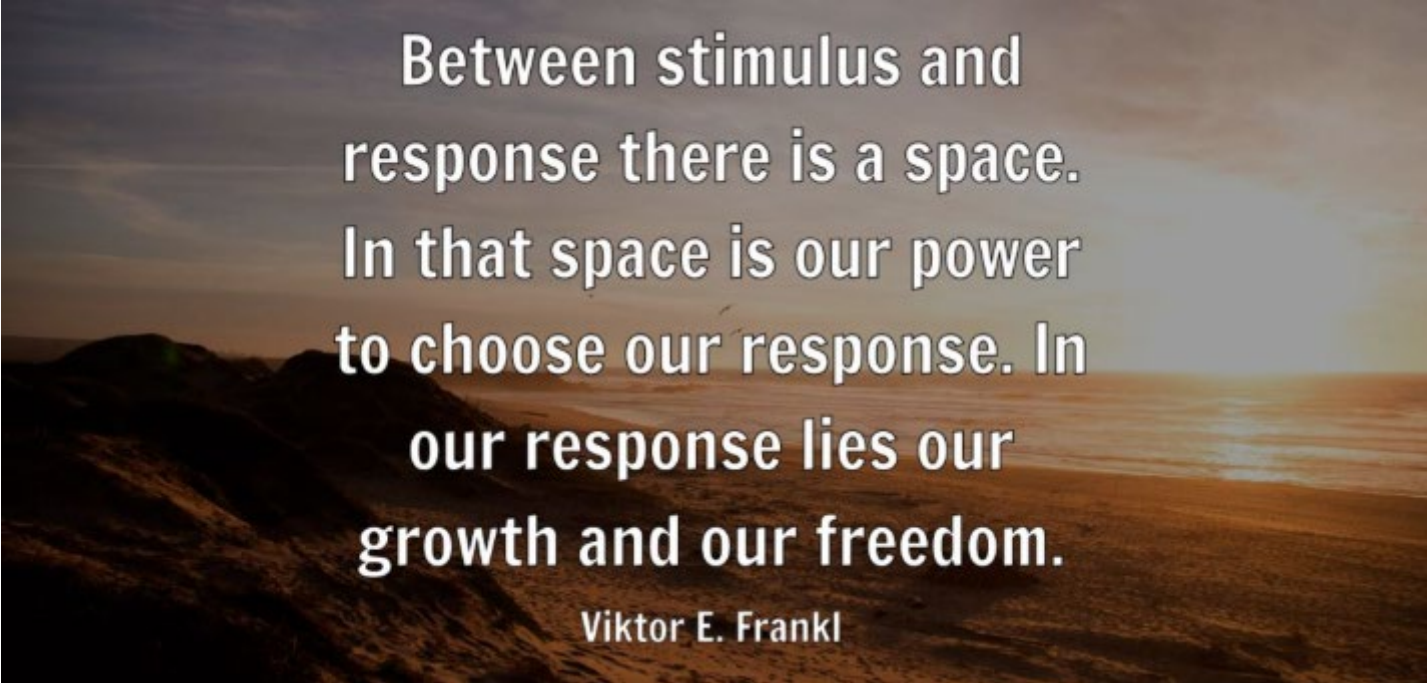
- Recognizes the widespread impact of trauma, actively resists re-traumatization, and promotes environments of safety, healing, and empowerment.

- **Workplace Impacts of Trauma**

- Employee Well-Being
- Patient Safety
- Team Functioning
- Retention & Engagement

- **Core Strategies for Building a Trauma-informed Workplace**

- Foster safety: Transparent leadership & psychological safety
- Provide Choice: Flexibility, shared decision making
- Highlight Strengths: Strengths-based approaches (ex. VIA, Gallup)
- Shift Attitudes: Promote equity, empathy, and normalize mental health language
- Promote Awareness: Training, policy alignment



Between stimulus and
response there is a space.
In that space is our power
to choose our response. In
our response lies our
growth and our freedom.

Viktor E. Frankl

Join at menti.com | use code **8124 2528**



What do you want to do to help make our workplace more trauma-informed?

Evaluation: We'd Love Your Feedback!



QUESTIONS?



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