The intersection of disability & trauma
August 2022
Partners for Youth with Disabilities
To create a world where young people with disabilities can lead self-determined lives filled with dignity, pride, and purpose.
Kristin Humphrey
NDMC Director
khumphrey@pyd.org
she/her
Learn how you learn best.
Agenda

*Intros*
- Quick reflection

*Trauma & Disability*
- What is trauma?
- Trauma & youth
- Trauma’s intersection with disability

*Wrap-up*
- Final reflections & applications
What is trauma?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental grounding</th>
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What is trauma?
Trauma is an emotional response to an event or an experience that is deeply distressing or disturbing.

Typical traumatic events tend to threaten the well-being of a person or someone important to them.
Trauma arises as a result of stress and our reaction to that stress.
POSITIVE
A normal and essential part of healthy development

TOLERABLE
Response to a more severe stressor, limited in duration

TOXIC
Experiencing strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity
Common trauma responses

- “On edge”
- Numb
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficult trusting

- Anger
- Sadness
- Shame
- Trouble sleeping
- Eating

**These responses may present themselves as externalizing behaviors (aggression, non-compliance) or internalizing behaviors (withdraw, seclusion).**
Disability & trauma
Disability

Trauma
Disability → Trauma

- Reduced concentration
- Sadness
- Anger
- Separation anxiety
Disability

ADHD
Depression
Mood disorder
Anxiety

Trauma
Reduced concentration
Sadness
Anger
Separation anxiety
POSITIVE
A normal and essential part of healthy development

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Adults with Disabilities: Ethnicity and Race

When it comes to the health of people with disabilities, it’s important to know the health differences among racial and ethnic groups.

Approximate number of adults with a disability by ethnicity and race:

- American Indian Alaska Native: 3 in 10 have a disability
- Black: 1 in 4 have a disability
- White: 1 in 5 have a disability
- Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander: 1 in 6 have a disability
- Hispanic: 1 in 6 have a disability
- Asian: 1 in 10 have a disability
LGBTQIA+ individuals with disabilities are more likely to have a mental health disability in their lifetime, such as depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders.

Source: Movement Advancement Project (2019)
COVID-19 and Trauma

• Concerns about health care access (rationing of supplies/personnel)
• Ableism and discrimination based on disability history and underlying medical conditions
• Disruptions to necessary medical care and personal care assistance
• Concerns for family members and friends in the disability community
• Masking and social distancing concerns
Medical model

Ableism
4 times more likely
80%
3-5 times more likely
"Based on the findings, the author predicts that nearly half of ABA-exposed autistic children will be expected to meet the PTSD criteria four weeks after commencing the intervention; if ABA intervention persists, there will tend to be an increase in parent satisfaction despite no decrease in PTSS severity."
“I need to silence my most reliable way of gathering, processing, and expressing information, I need to put more effort into controlling and deadening and reducing and removing myself second-by-second than you could ever even conceive, I need to have quiet hands, because until I move 97% of the way in your direction you can’t even see that’s there’s a 3% for you to move towards me.” ~Julia Bascom
Trauma Informed Principles
- Positive Relationships
- Understanding Trauma and Its Impact
- Culture of Self-Care
- Promoting Safety
- Voice and Choice
- Access to Resources
- Cultural Competence & Promotion of Equity
- Positive Youth Development
- Social-Emotional Learning

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<tr>
<th>TRAUMA INFORMED PRINCIPLES</th>
<th>WHAT COULD IT LOOK LIKE?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRINCIPLE</strong></td>
<td><strong>WHAT?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Relationships</td>
<td>Children who have experienced trauma may have difficulty forming healthy relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistent, supportive adults can support healing and growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding Trauma &amp; Its Impact</td>
<td>Trauma is widespread and can influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors</td>
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<td>Understanding trauma and how it affects individuals and communities is the first step to bringing knowledge into action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture of Self-Care</td>
<td>Working with traumatized children can cause secondary or vicarious trauma in providers</td>
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<td>Working with traumatized children can remind us of our own trauma</td>
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<td>Vicarious trauma harms staff and can limit the effectiveness of programming</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Culture of self-care in the workplace helps to minimize secondary trauma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion of Safety</td>
<td>Traumatized children often have experienced chaos and unpredictability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>They may expect bad things will happen to them and that others cannot be trusted</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Trauma causes the brain to be overly sensitive to signals of danger. Reminders of trauma trigger automatic “survival brain” reactions</td>
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<td>Creating safety—routines, rituals, consistency, predictability, reassuring trauma reminders—allows children to relax and shift their energy from survival to healthy learning/development</td>
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<td>Having predictable, structured activities, for example, weekly schedule on wall at children’s eye level</td>
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<td>Having secure entities, eats and retreats</td>
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<td>All staff interactions are consistent</td>
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<td>Staff, children and families have clear expectations and boundaries for behaviors</td>
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Supports for Youth-Safety; Voice & Choice

1. Know youth triggers and avoid them
2. Provide structure
3. Avoid power struggles at all cost
4. Provide choices / Use redirection
5. Provide opportunities for empowerment
<table>
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<th>No Change</th>
<th>After the Change</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“If things stay the same...”</strong></td>
<td><strong>“If things change...”</strong></td>
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<td>Pro’s + Benefits?</td>
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<td>Con’s - Costs?</td>
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Programs succeed online when they are intentionally programmed to do so.

**Structure**

**Personnel**

**Expectations**

**Agenda**

**Reminders**
Programs succeed online when:

Personnel are made available and tasks are delegated

- With the general structure of the program in place, we have found that virtual programming runs more smoothly when staff members are made available to help support the program.
  - Tech support: at least 1
  - Point-person/facilitator
  - Moderator/mediator: at least 1
- Other staff involved in the program should be given specific jobs that help the lead staff facilitate the program more effectively.
Programs succeed online when:

The agenda is shared for the participants to reference

- What is the program going to be focusing on?
- How long is devoted to each segment?
- Are there any transitions?
- Are there any breaks?
Mentor Appreciation Night

Opening Remarks
By Regina Snowden

Moment of Silence
By Regina Snowden

Schedule Overview
By Kristin Humphrey

Rayleen Lesacy Spirit Award
Recipient: Kavon Perry

Chris Dunne Peer Leadership Award
Recipient: Cody Rooney

Break!
Tweet us a question or comment you want to share!
Mentor Appreciation Night

GREG DEES & ANITA MCGAHAN AWARD
Recipient: Simone Malki

GIRLS CHRONICALLY ROCK
By Keisha Greaves

LENS RISING STAR AWARD
Recipient: Derrik Jones

BREAK!
What is something you love about your mentor/mentee? Tell us!

MENTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD
Recipient: Lisa Mantrundola

CLOSING REMARKS
By: Kristin Humphrey
Programs succeed online when:

Reminders are sent and follow-up is conducted

• Participants should be registered in advance of the event and should be included in communications with periodic reminders of when the event is, when it starts, and when it will be accessed.

• If you haven’t heard from a participant, follow-up should be conducted.
Remote Activity Examples

Mentee/Mentor Book Club. Schedule a time to talk about each chapter until you’re done with the book.

Go on a virtual tour-art museum.

Listen to music together. You can share your favorite songs with one another and talk about why you like them.

Cook together. Find a recipe that looks good to both of you and make a plan to cook it on the same night over FaceTime.

Learn something new together with this list of 1,500 free online courses.

Do a virtual Zumba, yoga or other workout class together.

Play Taboo Online
Self-care is making healthy lifestyle choices and changes for your physical and mental health. This includes stress management behaviors!
Do you think you practice self-care? How?

- If yes, share your care! If possible, let’s do it together.
- If no, let’s brainstorm some ideas. What could you do to make yourself feel cared for?
Just Breath Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVA2N6tX2cg
Mental Grounding

1. **Describe your environment in detail using all of your senses.** Describe objects, sounds, textures, colors, smells, shapes, numbers, temperature.

2. **Play a categories game.** Try to think of “tv shows”, “songs” “ice cream flavors”…..

3. **Say a safety or coping statement.** My name is_________; I am safe right now. I am safe right now; I’m in the present, not in the past; this feeling will pass.

4. **Say kind statements,** as if you were talking to your best friend. For example, “You’re a good person going through a hard time. You’ll get through this.”

5. **Remember** the words to an inspiring song, quote, prayer or poem.

6. **Visualize** a place that is calming and safe.

Source: Boston Public Health Commission
Physical Grounding

1. **Touch various objects around you**: a pen, keys, your clothing, a table, a wall. Notice textures, colors, materials, weight, temperature.
2. **Dig your heels into the floor**: Remind yourself that you are connecting to the ground.
3. **Carry a grounding object in your pocket** - a small object (stone, ring, coin, piece of cloth, beads, etc.) that you can touch or hold.
4. **Stretch**: Extend your fingers, arms, or legs as far as you can; roll your head around gently.
5. **Clench and release your fists**.
6. **Eat or drink something**: Describe the flavors or notice the temperature in detail.
7. **Focus on your breathing**: noticing each inhale and exhale. Take deep "belly breaths".

Source: Boston Public Health Commission
1. Which trauma informed practices are you doing already?
2. Which trauma informed practices would you like to expand upon?
3. How have you adapted/pivoted in the pandemic?
Final reflections
Questions? Feedback?

Let me know!