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What Is Trauma-Informed Care?

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Trauma by the numbers[1,2]

- **70%** of U.S. adults have experienced a traumatic event at least once in their lives.

- More than **90%** of patients utilizing public behavioral health care services have experienced trauma.

- More than **66%** of children have experienced at least one traumatic event by age 16.

- **33%** of young people exposed to community violence will experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

What Is Trauma-Informed Care?

Trauma-informed care is a multipronged public health approach that helps providers and caregivers better understand trauma and its far-reaching effects. Trauma, which occurs when a person has an intense and negative emotional response to a serious event, can happen to anyone regardless of age or background. However, certain communities and people with certain conditions may be at a heightened risk for trauma.[3]

The American Academy of Family Physicians recommends that practices must be prepared to safely and promptly address experiences of trauma, including ongoing cases of trauma, such as interpersonal violence, that require immediate attention and compliance with mandatory reporting laws where applicable.[4]

What does trauma look like?

Traumatic events can come in many forms. Some examples can include:[3, 5]

- Sexual abuse.
- Physical abuse.
- Mental or emotional abuse.
- Adverse childhood experiences.
- Interpersonal violence.
- Community violence.
- Loss of a loved one.
- Gruesome accidents or injuries.
- Witnessing violence or death.
- Fire or natural disaster.
- Racial, cultural, identity, and gender discrimination.
- Chronic poverty, homelessness, and lacking basic needs.

How does trauma impact health?

Experiencing trauma and living through a traumatic event can seriously impact a person's health and well-being — both physical and mental. According to Harvard Women's Health Watch, the more trauma a person has experienced, the worse that person's health typically is.[6]

Physical health risks increased by trauma:[5,7]

- Heart attack.
- Stroke.
- Cancer.
- Obesity.
- Diabetes.
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
- Sexually transmitted diseases.

Behavioral health risks increased by trauma:[5, 7]

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD.
- Depression.
- Anxiety.
- Substance use disorder.
- Suicidal ideation and behavior.

Highlighting discrimination-based trauma

Racism is an ongoing public health crisis. In addition to **prompting poorer health outcomes,** discrimination-based trauma further increases societal inequities and decreases opportunities for success in individuals, communities, and entire generations.[8]

According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, people of color experience higher levels of trauma and adverse life experiences compared to their white counterparts. The cumulative effects of stress on people of color stemming from racial trauma have far-reaching consequences. Compared to their white counterparts:[9]

- People of color have an increased risk of PTSD, depression, and substance use disorders with fewer resources to help successfully manage these conditions.

- Communities of color face unprecedented economic and educational disadvantages in addition to experiencing daily inequities in regards to bias, violence, and experiences with the legal and health systems.

- Generations of color continue to experience the effects of intergenerational and historical trauma, which can be passed down through epigenetics.

Is your practice trauma-informed?

For more information on trauma-informed care, contact **your dedicated Select Health of South Carolina** Provider Network Management Account Executive. If you're not sure who your Account Executive is, you can find a list of account executives and the service areas at **https://www.selecthealthofsc.com/pdf/provider/provider-account-executives-map.pdf.**

Sources:

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4. "Providing Trauma-Informed Care," *American Academy of Family Physicians,* accessed August 6, 2021, www.aafp.org/afp/2017/0515/p655.htmlource.

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7. "Adverse Childhood Experiences: Looking at How ACEs Affect Our Lives & Society," *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,* accessed May 11, 2021, https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/phl/resource_center_infographic.html.

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9. "Cultural Responsiveness to Racial Trauma," *National Child Traumatic Stress Network,* accessed May 5, 2021, www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/special-resource/cultural_responsiveness_to_racial_trauma_understanding_racial_trauma_why_it_matters_and_what_to_do.pdf.