Navigating Trauma Responses with Self and Others

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Goals

• Understand the framework of the Structural Dissociation of Trauma model.
• Explore how a personal response to primary and secondary trauma increases a responder’s self-awareness and aids the trauma survivor’s regulation, safety, and recovery.
• Consider how a trauma-specific lens may increase a responder’s understanding and help individuals recover from self-destructive behaviors.
Types of Trauma

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Spiritual
- Financial
- Relational
Jason’s Story...
How Jason’s Trauma Affected Others

- First Responders
- Family
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Physicians

- Nurses
- PT/OT Team
- Surgeons
- Lawyers
- Counselors
Nervous System

• Our nervous system gets activated in trauma.
• With proper support and the ability for the body to process through it, we come back to regulation with relative ease.
• When the trauma is more significant than our brain is meant to process then the nervous system can get stuck in activation of hyper-arousal or de-activation into hypo-arousal.
• This can lead to anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Additionally, this can keep people in a fight response, a flight response, a freeze, etc.
Emotional Regulation

Hyper-Arousal

Window of Tolerance

Hypo-Arousal
Structural Dissociation

- Fight
- Flight
- Freeze
- Submit/Collapse
- Attach
Ways Structural Dissociative Responses Interact

FIGHT  FLIGHT  FREEZE  SUBMIT  ATTACH
Trauma Responses

Consider the following:

• How you personally respond to your exposure to trauma
• How trauma responses show up in your family interactions
• How trauma affects the people you serve
• How your trauma responses interact with each other
Karrie’s Story...
Ways to Get Grounded
(Return to the Window of Tolerance)

• Breathe: deep slow breaths, exhale longer than your inhale
• Bring into the here and now by connecting with the frontal lobe
• Utilize the metaphor of a wave
• Draw from the five senses
• Somatic resources: straightening the spine, hand on heart, feeling the feet on the floor
• Utilize the social engagement system: “look in my eyes; I’m here with you.”
Treatment for Trauma

• Proper treatment is critical for moving trauma through the brain and body, to a place of rest.
• Unresolved trauma usually does not just go away or resolve. It takes a physiological toll on the brain and body.
• Whatever treatment option you choose, be sure you are working with those who are trauma informed and utilize effective, research-based trauma treatment modalities.
• Traditional talk therapy is usually not as affective as a therapy modality that addresses the nervous system.
Types of Treatment

- Individual Therapy
  - EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing)
  - Somatic Work: Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, Somatic Experiencing
  - Attachment Therapy
  - Trauma Sensitive Yoga

- Group Therapy
- Psychiatric Care
- Residential Treatment
Healing is Possible

Exhale
PTSD Recovery Centers