

Care for the Care Provider: Understanding Trauma and How it Impacts You!

Regina Palliative Care Inc. Bereavement Centre

Dwayne Yasinowski

Education Services Coordinator

306.523.2786

Dwayne@rpci.org

Discussion Items

The focus is on the care-giver

- Trauma Informed Care
- ▶ Trauma – how does it impact you?
- ▶ Self-care – how do you stay health?

Trauma Informed Care



Trauma Informed Care

- ▶ It is an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma.
- ▶ It emphasizes physical, psychological and emotional safety for both clients [persons or animals] and **staff**.
- ▶ It helps trauma survivors rebuild a sense of control and empowerment while minimizing re-victimization.
- ▶ Recognizes trauma is cumulative and can be intergenerational.
- ▶ Facilitates recovery.

Trauma Informed Care

- ▶ Recognizes the possibility/probability that the client [people or animal] and **the staff** have experienced trauma in their life.
- ▶ Provides services in a way that does not trigger a traumatic response from the past or creates a new traumatic response.
- ▶ Does not necessarily “treat” trauma, but provides services in a compassionate and caring manner.

Trauma Informed Care

- ▶ The elimination of 'power over' relationships.
- ▶ The education of all staff about the characteristics and affects of trauma.
- ▶ Educating the client and **staff** about the role and affect of the trauma in their life, and empower the client with emphasis on skill building.
- ▶ Creating a service provision environment that ensures the trauma informed care of the clients and staff through policy and standard operating procedures.

RPCI Bereavement Centre

What is Trauma?

- ▶ “Emotional experiences or situations that are painful and overwhelms a persons ability to cope leaving them feeling powerless.”
Centre for Nonviolence and Social Justice



RPCI Bereavement Centre

Types of Trauma?

- ▶ Single Event
- ▶ Multiple Exposure
- ▶ Intergenerational Trauma
- ▶ Community Trauma

RPCI Bereavement Centre

Characteristics of the Crisis

- ▶ Warning
- ▶ Time of day
- ▶ Duration
- ▶ Natural/man made
- ▶ Intentionality
- ▶ Scope of the Impact
- ▶ Post Crisis Environment
- ▶ Preventability
- ▶ Suffering

RPCI Bereavement Centre

The Traumatic Event

*“Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life” – Judith Herman
Trauma and Recovery*

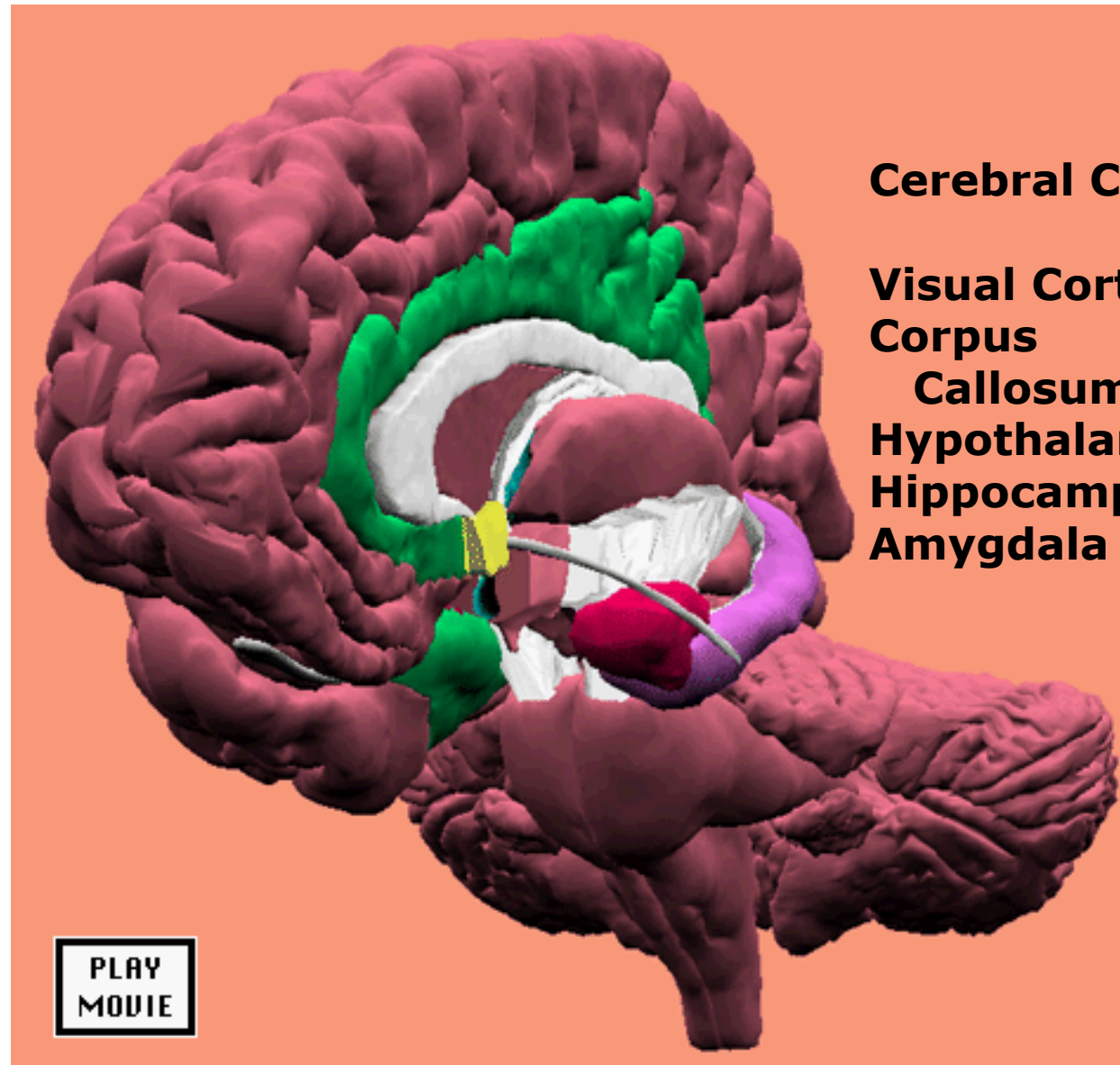
- ▶ Involves a Traumatic Picture
- ▶ Is sudden or unexpected
- ▶ Is forceful or violent
- ▶ Is perceived as being overwhelming or uncontrollable
- ▶ Results in feelings of helplessness, lack of safety and lack of control

RPCI Bereavement Centre

Symptoms of Trauma

- ▶ Concentration
- ▶ Memory Loss
- ▶ Learning
- ▶ Anger
- ▶ Sleep
- ▶ Negativity
- ▶ Repetitive thinking [monkey brain]
- ▶ Immune System
- ▶ Hypervigilance
- ▶ Dissociation
- ▶ Lack of attachment
- ▶ Depression

Limbic Brain



Cerebral Cortex

Visual Cortex

Corpus

Callosum

Hypothalamus

Hippocampus

Amygdala

PLAY
MOVIE

RPCI Bereavement Centre

Reducing Cortisol

- ▶ Massive doses of vitamin C
- ▶ Chocolate
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Chewing gum
- ▶ Climbing stairs
- ▶ Deep breathing
- ▶ Eat a banana
- ▶ turn off the screens
- ▶ Watch positive images, tv, movies
- ▶ Laugh
- ▶ Spend time with positive people [friends]

RPCI Bereavement Centre

What About You?

RPCI Bereavement Centre

Mirror Neurons

- ▶ A type of brain cell that responds equally the same when we perform an action or witness someone else performing an action.
- ▶ The same equal response occurs with feelings or emotions.

RPCI Bereavement Centre Professionals and Trauma

- ▶ Secondary Trauma
- ▶ Compassion Fatigue
- ▶ Vicarious Trauma

RPCI Bereavement Centre

Secondary Trauma

- ▶ Secondary Trauma is the transformation of the trauma of another [person or animal] to yourself.
- ▶ The traumatizing event experienced by the person or animal becomes a traumatizing event for the care giver/service provider.
- ▶ The symptoms are very similar to those of the trauma survivor.
- ▶ It can happen suddenly – from one story.

RPCI Bereavement Centre

Compassion Fatigue

- ▶ Results from continually working with people or animals that are suffering or hurting.
- ▶ It comes from constantly empathizing with them and feeling sympathy to them.
- ▶ Results in becoming hard hearted – you stop feeling.
[defense mechanism]
- ▶ You have nothing left in the tank – there is nothing left to give emotionally.

Secondary Trauma and Compassion Fatigue – Symptoms

- ▶ Bottled up emotions
- ▶ Social withdrawal
- ▶ Trauma related nightmares
- ▶ Feelings of hopelessness
- ▶ Loss of respect for clients
- ▶ Loss of energy [mentally and physically]
- ▶ Always talking about work
- ▶ Reduced productivity
- ▶ Inability to concentrate and make decisions
- ▶ Loss of motivation
- ▶ More likely to become ill
- ▶ No longer find pleasure in certain activities.
- ▶ Poor self-care

RPCI Bereavement Centre

Vicarious Trauma

- ▶ Vicarious trauma is a permanent change in the care giver which is the result of the empathetic engagement with the clients traumatic background [hearing the stories and seeing the way the trauma affected the person or animal].
- ▶ It affects all aspects of your life including your body, mind, character and beliefs – altering your world view
- ▶ It develops over a period of time from many stories and painful experiences.

RPCI Bereavement Centre

Vicarious Trauma Symptoms

- ▶ Your identity will change because you have changed
- ▶ Worldview will change [the world used to be fun and safe...now it is scary and hurtful].
- ▶ Psychological needs are impacted
- ▶ Belief system changes
- ▶ You memory and learning are affected

RPCI Bereavement Centre

Vicarious Post Traumatic Growth

Must also be able to experience positive changes in:

- relating to others
- new possibilities
- personal strength
- hope
- resiliency
- spiritual growth

Greystone Bereavement Centre

Professionals Trauma

- ▶ The danger is not in the symptoms or stresses associated with professional trauma.
- ▶ The danger is in not believing these symptoms or stresses exist; or
- ▶ In not believing the symptoms and stresses will affect you.

RPCI Bereavement Centre Professionals and Trauma

Staying Healthy

RPCI Bereavement Centre

Individual Risk Factors

- ▶ Personality and coping style
- ▶ Personal History
- ▶ Current Life Circumstances
- ▶ Social Supports
- ▶ Spiritual Connection
- ▶ Work Style
- ▶ Role at Work

RPCI Bereavement Centre Self-Care



Professionals and Trauma

What is Self care

- ▶ Self-care is the core of our well being
- ▶ It is crucial aspect of resiliency.
- ▶ It contributes to our long-term feelings of well being
- ▶ It is purposely and actively taking time for yourself to do something that rejuvenates and energises you.
- ▶ If we are not caring for ourselves, we are not caring for our clients [people or animals] in the best way we can

Professionals and Trauma

Self care

- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Set realistic goals
- ▶ Humour
- ▶ Take holidays
- ▶ Speak with trusted professionals or friends
- ▶ Have regular debriefing sessions
- ▶ Make sure to get the proper amounts of sleep
- ▶ Balance home and work
- ▶ Be open to learning and growing
- ▶ Be optimistic
- ▶ Positive self talk
- ▶ Recognize your strengths – forgive your weaknesses [and do this for others].
- ▶ Create a self care plan

Professionals and Trauma

Creating a Self care Plan

- ▶ Address all elements of your life, which can be broken down into 4 categories: physical, spiritual, mental/emotional and social
- ▶ Identify your goals and the strategies you will use to achieve them.
- ▶ Remember your self care plan will only be as affective as the genuine commitment you make to your own self care.

Professionals and Trauma

Physical Self Care

- ▶ Includes activities and practices for healthy eating and exercise.
- ▶ Includes your physical environment – do you need to de-clutter? Is your environment too chaotic?

Professionals and Trauma

Spiritual Self Care

- ▶ It is essential to nurture our body and soul spiritually
- ▶ How connected are you to that which you recognize as great than you?
- ▶ How much silent time do set aside for yourself prayer, nature, meditation?

Professionals and Trauma

Mental/Emotional Self Care

- ▶ How do you feel about yourself and the way you manage your emotions and feelings?
- ▶ Do you have a sense of contentment, high self esteem, confidence, a zest for life?
- ▶ Are you focused and flexible when you need to be?
- ▶ It is more than not being depressed - it is the presence of positive characteristics

Professionals and Trauma

Social Self Care

- ▶ Social interaction is vital to maintaining our mental and emotional health.
- ▶ We all have the need to feel like we belong, are loved and to feel affection.
- ▶ Do you interact with family and friends – do you laugh, support each other and joke?

Professionals and Trauma

Social Self Care


Physical	
Mental and Emotional	
Spiritual	
Social	

Trauma Informed Care and Staff

- ▶ Management and staff relationships – think of the power over relationships and how the procedures and agency rules are enforced.
- ▶ Recognize trauma in staff. Recognize that some of the trauma may have been brought with staff.
- ▶ Recognize that some of the trauma staff may be experiencing is a result of secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, burn-out or vicarious trauma.

Trauma Informed Care and Staff

- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Belonging
- ▶ Clear direction [with staff input and suggestions]
- ▶ Continues Education opportunities [trauma, self-care, emotional regulation, self-awareness].
- ▶ Open communication [active listening].
- ▶ Emotional health is a focus
- ▶ De-briefing for staff with professionals



**Care For the Care Giver:
Understanding Trauma and How it Impacts
You!**

Questions/Comments