Building a culture of resilience through Trauma Informed communities of faith

Healing
Connecting
Restoring
ACEs and your community

• ACEs = Adverse Childhood Experiences
3 Types of ACEs

The three types of ACEs include:

**ABUSE**
- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual

**NEGLECT**
- Physical
- Emotional

**HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**
- Mental Illness
- Incarcerated Relative
- Mother treated violently
- Substance Abuse
- Divorce
How prevalent are ACEs?

**ABUSE**

- Physical Abuse: 28.3%
- Sexual Abuse: 20.7%
- Emotional Abuse: 10.6%

**NEGLECT**

- Emotional Neglect: 14.8%
- Physical Neglect: 9.9%

*percentage of study participants that experienced a specific ACE*
How prevalent are ACEs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Dysfunction</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household Substance Abuse</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Divorce</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Mental Illness</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Treated Violently</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarcerated Household Member</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of 17,000 ACE study participants:

- 36% have experienced 0 ACEs
- 26% have experienced 1 ACE
- 16% have experienced 2 ACEs
- 12.4% have experienced 3 ACEs
- 9.5% have experienced 4+ ACEs
- 64% have at least 1 ACE
Resilience the Movie
Why “trauma-informed?”

• It’s helpful to “speak the same language” as those outside of our faith communities

• It’s accessible:
  – Focuses on something most faith communities are good at: education and advocacy
  – It’s not a program! It’s more like a lens or filter...
TIC = Trauma-informed care
Key starting point:

From, “What’s wrong with you?” to “What happened to you (and how can we help)?”
Types of stress responses

**POSITIVE**

A normal and essential part of healthy development

EXAMPLES
- getting a vaccine,
- first day of school

**TOLERABLE**

Response to an intermittent stressor, limited in duration and intensity

EXAMPLES
- loss of a loved one,
- a broken bone

**TOXIC**

How deep is the mud? Depends on who you ask.

We all go through the same stuff differently.
What is a Trauma-Informed Community?

• *Realizes* the widespread impact of trauma and understand and have faith in potential paths for recovery;
• *Recognizes* the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved;
• *Responds* by integrating knowledge about trauma into everyday policy, practices, and procedures; and
• Seek to *actively* resist *re-traumatization*.
What is Retraumatization?

- A **relapse** into a state of **trauma**, subsequent to a triggering event or experience.
How to help traumatized individuals

• Ask “what happened?” instead of “what’s wrong?”
• Understand that when someone is traumatized or triggered, their responses will be more “all or nothing”; extreme; black or white; friend or foe. Nuance is difficult during times of trauma.
• Recognize substance abuse, eating disorders, violent behavior, depression, and anxiety as symptoms of trauma,
• Respect, support, inform, connect, and give hope that recovery is possible and that Traumatic Growth Syndrome is real,
• Access the power and of partnership among community actors to create resilient/safe neighborhoods.
Guiding Growth

• Faith leaders and health ministers can help individuals find the purpose in pain

• Longsuffering or perseverance is a virtue in many faith traditions


If there is meaning in life at all, then there must be meaning in suffering.

Viktor E. Frankl
Post-Traumatic Growth

• “Positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances or traumatic events”

• The Post-traumatic Growth Inventory includes factors of New Possibilities, Relating to Others, Personal Strength, Spiritual Change, and Appreciation of Life.
Principles of a trauma-informed community

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer support and mutual self-help
- Collaboration and community
Guiding Principles (cont.)

• Provide opportunity for voice & choice
• Individuality & uniqueness
• Recognize cultural, historical, and gender issues
Secondary Trauma/Vicarious Trauma

• The suffering/stress that comes from witnessing, helping or trying to help a traumatized person.

• Those in helping professions, including health ministers, teachers, nurses, faith leaders may experience secondary trauma;

• Symptoms of secondary trauma can include sadness, anger, poor concentration, emotional exhaustion and shame.
How about a Rat Park?

Rat Park: could solving for loneliness cure the world?
If it works for Rats... !?!

• The #1 way to combat ACEs and to help the trauma-affected is through relationship
• Faith communities can answer the “relevancy question” by becoming trauma-informed communities of hope that build resilience
• You’ll hear a lot today... hold on to hope, strengthen your resolve to advocate for those your mission or ministry call you to.
Bruised Reeds & Smoldering Wicks

A bruised reed he will not break.
A smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
Isaiah 42:3

An eight week small group Bible study on building trauma-informed ministry, and helping those impacted by adversity in childhood.

Click HERE to order the 2nd edition of “Bruised Reeds and Smoldering Wicks,” a curriculum designed to help churches minister to those affected by traumatic experiences. Used in over 100 ministries in 30+ States to develop trauma-informed ministries that help hurting people.

“I am using it in a bible study for women living in a local shelter. It has been very well received and the women have been interested to learn about ACEs and how Jesus interacted with those who have been through trauma.”

– Deb Bishop, Orange City, Iowa

“The curriculum gave us a biblical framework that allowed us to address ACE’s with our congregation.”

– Pastor Donald Spachman, Greenville 1st United Methodist Church; Greenville, Michigan