

TRAUMA MATTERS

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CORE PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA INFORMED CARE (PART 5)

Core Principles of Trauma Informed Care, Pt 5

This is a continuation of the series discussing each of the core principles (domains) of trauma informed care. The development of the domains are the work of Fallot & Harris (2006) with implementation ideas gathered from a variety of sources during the past few years, including survivors/consumers, direct care workers, written "lessons" learned, and researchers.

Domain #1e- Empowerment:

How can services be modified to ensure that experiences of empowerment and the development or enhancement of consumer skills are maximized? (Fallot & Harris, 2006)

A few specific questions that agencies can use to generate discussion are:

- Do consumer-survivor advocates have a significant advisory voice in the planning and evaluation of services?
- Does the program communicate a sense of realistic optimism about the capacity of consumers to reach their goals?
- Does the program foster the involvement of consumers in key roles wherever possible (e.g., in planning, implementation, or evaluation of services)?
- Does each contact aim at two endpoints whenever possible: (1) accomplishing the given task and (2) skill-building on the part of the consumer?

Some examples of the specific changes that agencies have made in order to empower consumers are:

- Offering a Recovery and Wellness class on how to write your own treatment or recovery plan. (Western CT Mental Health Network, Trauma Center of Excellence, North West Mental Health Authority (NWMHA), Torrington, CT)
- Developing short-term consumer advisory groups with specific task assignments such as: reconfiguring and decorating the waiting room and being part of the committee interviewing prospective new directors. (Trauma Center of Excellence, NWMHA, Torrington, CT)
- Developing a menu of options for group attendance, with some required core groups and some optional "open access" groups. (APT Foundation, Outpatient and Residential Services, New Haven and Bridgeport)
- Moving responsibility for stocking cleaning (non-toxic) and paper supplies from staff to clients. (CPAS, Residential, Putnam, CT)
- A Consumer Advisory board that meets regularly and includes a meeting with the CEO/Executive Board once per quarter. (Birmingham Group, Ansonia, CT)
- Staff and consumers developing a brochure describing trauma-informed care for new staff and newly admitted consumers. (Capitol Region, Hartford, CT)

The word "empowerment" can be one of those overused words that, as a result, loses meaning. The examples above show that empowerment can range from ideas that are relatively simple to implement to those that are more complex.

Submitted by:
Eileen M. Russo, MA,LADC
Roger Fallot, PhD

Men and Trauma: A Brief Overview

Though it may be surprising to some, large community-based surveys have found that men report at least as much lifetime exposure to traumatic events as do women, both in terms of the percentage who report having experienced any traumatic event and in terms of the number of such events.

Men and women also report many similar responses to such overwhelming occurrences. However, there are important gender differences in the specific types of trauma experienced. Men report more physical assault, witnessing violence, and combat trauma while women report more sexual abuse. In addition, men's coping styles tend to be more action-oriented and "externalizing," whereas women are often more emotionally expressive and "internalizing".

In working with male trauma survivors, it is important to recognize the central part played by gender role socialization in men's responses to trauma and to services designed to assist them in recovery. For many men, being a victim and being a "real man" are fundamentally incompatible. Therefore, boys and men are often extremely reluctant to discuss the feelings of vulnerability, shame, and helplessness that attend traumatic events. Men's tendencies to deny or minimize the impact of trauma, coupled with the expectation that they "should" handle such things independently, are among the challenges to engaging men in trauma recovery services. We have found that it is important to offer men information that normalizes their responses; to recognize the strengths inherent in their capacity to survive horrible circumstances; and to appeal to men's frequent interest in problem-solving as a key element in recovery. Gender-specific groups in which men can talk openly with other male survivors offer an especially promising path to trauma recovery.

Submitted by:
Roger D. Fallot, PhD

FEATURED RESOURCE: MEN'S TRAUMA RECOVERY

Antwone Fisher and Men's Trauma Recovery

Antwone Fisher, the 2002 movie inspired by the autobiographical account, *Finding Fish*, provides a sensitive and poignant depiction of the lifelong impact of boyhood emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

Antwone's story is revealed through his encounters with a Navy psychiatrist to whom Antwone is sent for mandatory evaluation due to repeated fights. Over the course of Antwone's evaluation and treatment, links emerge between current explosiveness and the physical abuse he suffered in foster care. Similarly, current relationship problems and sexual difficulties are traced to sexual abuse perpetrated by a much older foster sister. The movie is a wonderful teaching tool that highlights key men's trauma issues, upends myths about abuse in boys and men, and dramatizes ways that masculine gender role socialization and shame about victimization affect men's recovery. Ultimately, the movie offers a powerful message of hope and resilience.

Submitted by:
Richard Bebout, PhD
Community Connections

Getting into Trauma Matters

- You can access an electronic version of the "Trauma Matters" Newsletter at www.traumamatters.org; www.dmhas.state.ct.us; or www.womensconsortium.org
- Do you want to be placed on our mailing list or is there an event or topic you would like covered in this newsletter? Please call "Trauma Matters" editor Carol Huckaby at 203.498.4184, x25 or e-mail her at chuckaby@womensconsortium.org.

Men, Trauma and Gender Role Conflict

Men who have experienced trauma are underrepresented in treatment. This article explores some of the factors which get in the way of men admitting and seeking treatment. Gender role conflict is examined as one of the major barriers for men seeking treatment for PTSD. Specific ideas for working with male survivors are suggested. Men are socialized to be resourceful, strong, stoic and non-expressive (Addis & Mahalnik, 2003; Brannon & David, 1976; Cialdini, et al.,2001). As a result, men are less likely than women to seek help for depression, substance abuse and stressful life events (McKay, et al.,1996). Men who have survived trauma are just as unlikely to come forward. A mediating variable which may influence this process is gender role conflict. As defined by O'Neil, Good & Holmes, 1995 it is "a psychological state in which socialized gender roles have negative consequences on the person or others". Not seeking treatment for PTSD would be one of those negative consequences. Relationship difficulties, anger management issues and substance abuse would be other potential negative consequences.

O'Neil (1990) found four factors associated with gender role conflict. These are: 1.) success, power and competition, 2.) restrictive emotionality, 3.) restrictive affectional behavior and 4.) conflict between work and family relations. It is apparent that many of these factors lead male survivors to develop negative attitudes toward seeking help for trauma. Addis & Mahalik (2003) wrote a thorough examination of barriers to men seeking help. Their five questions that men ask themselves during their decision-making process are worth elaborating.

- Is the problem "normal"? : Are the experiences of flashbacks, nightmares, emotional dysregulation and rage reactions part of what men view as "normal"?
- Is the problem a central part of me? A man who conforms to emotional stoicism is likely to feel that seeking help for PTSD is a threat to his self-esteem.
- Will I have the opportunity to reciprocate? Men's trauma groups need to place reciprocity as integral to the therapeutic work (Andronico, 1996) . Men need to feel that the group not only is there for them, but that they are helping others, too.
- How will others react if I seek help? This is especially important when men view others who seek help as "weak".
- What can I lose if I ask for help? When men acquiesce to friends and relatives who encourage their seeking help, they may experience loss of control in decision-making.

How should knowing this effect the way we deliver services to men? Addis & Mahalik (2003) suggests three ways to treat men in differently. First, we need to find non-traditional forums that reduce blows to men's self-esteem which are gender-specific; second, internet discussion groups may be helpful in providing an anonymous and safe space for personal disclosure and finally, a life-skills coaching approach may be accepted by men rather than emotionally laden group sharing.

Submitted by:
Richard Stillson, PhD

Additional Resources for Men and Trauma

Books:

- *FDNY Crisis Counseling: Innovative Responses to NY Firefighters, Families and Community*, Greene, Paul (2006) Wiley:New York.
- *The Way of the Wound*, Grant, R.
- *I Can't Get Over It*, Matsakis, A.
- *I Don't Want to Talk About It*. Real, Terrence

Websites:

www.jimhopper.com/male-ab

www.menstrauma.com

www.trauma-pages.com/resources.php

www.batteredmen.com

www.sidran.org/

www.istss.org/index.cfm

www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/index.jsp

www.traumacenter.org

A POEM

Clean up your act, get on with your life
Be the bigger person, forget the strife

It's hard to look forward when the path is unclear
Hang in there darling, gotta face that fear

Gotta get strong, gotta be bold
Find things out for yourself, not just do what you're told

I know you're scared, I know it's hard
Whatever you do, don't let down your guard

Live in the moment, enjoy each day
Just doin what ya want, wouldn't have it any other way

Trying to learn who you really are
And if you need my help, I won't be very far

Never compromise yourself, or try to be anything you're not
You who are, you got what you got

Learn from mistakes, correct the error of your ways
Then just keep smiling and move on to better days

So carry on when life gets tough
Cuz life is beautiful, even when it's rough

Submitted by:
Laura



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