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Trauma Informed Services in the Library: Understanding and Serving our Community

An Infopeople Webinar

January 25, 2017

Presented by: Elissa Hardy, LCSW



Awareness: Trauma Informed Services

Mental Health Care and Health Care Programs have adopted the Trauma Informed Care Model.

- Everyone who seeks treatment has experienced trauma.
- From “what’s wrong with you?” to “what happened to you?”

In libraries we don’t provide care, but we do provide services.

- Assume all have experienced a form of trauma.
- Treat everyone with this understanding, with the awareness that something has happened to this person.



What is Trauma?

- Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence
- Experience a real or perceived threat



Stating Trauma only applies to a dangerous event does not give credit to the severe effects of:

- Oppression
- Racism
- Sexism
- Ableism
- Discrimination related to sexual orientation and gender identity
- Ageism
- Poverty/Homelessness
- Generational Trauma
- Historical Trauma
- Etc.



Trauma Informed Care Movement = Trauma Informed Library Services

But I work in a LIBRARY! Why do we need to know about this?

- We are exposed to people who have experienced trauma.
- We have experienced stressful and/or traumatic events ourselves.
- The effects of trauma ripple out like a water drop in a pool.

When our own experiences overlap or are affected by the people we encounter, we are even more vulnerable to vicarious trauma and even burnout.



Resiliency

- When we have an awareness and understanding of how trauma effects society, culture, and communities we can approach our customers from a more compassionate place.
- We can absorb the resiliency of our customers and communities in the same way we absorb the trauma.
- Think about your most challenging customer:
- Imagine what adversities that person may have faced and recognize the amount of strength and resiliency that person must possess to make it into the library and continue to move through life.



Mental Health First Aid

<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/>

- “Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.
- You are more likely to encounter someone with a mental health issue or substance use issue than someone having a heart attack.
- Areas discussed:
 - Depression and Anxiety
 - Psychosis
 - Substance Use
- Knowing how to talk to someone who is having one of these experiences helps us feel more confident and safe in our work.



Stigma



Self Care- Healthy Boundaries



Recognize How Your Work Affects You

- Awareness of how trauma effects society, allows us to be more aware of how we are impacted by our work.
- Symptoms of Trauma Exposure:
 - Loss of Creativity
 - Hypervigilance
 - Exhaustion
 - Mood Swings or Changes
 - Coming in Late to Work
 - Sense of Helplessness or Hopelessness
 - Sense that One Can Never do Enough



Build Your Community

- In order to do our work, we must have a support system
- We need a group of people that hold us up and support us in our goals
- This same group can also hold us accountable for our self care

Books for Support:

- Laura Van Dernoot Lipsky – “Trauma Stewardship”
- Thich Nhat Hanh – “Work” and “Keeping the Peace”



Create a Self-Care Plan

- Address all areas of life:
 - Physical Health
 - Mental Health
 - Spiritual Health
 - Emotional Health
 - Relational Health
- Who will support you and hold you accountable?
- How will you utilize your supervisor?
- Write it out
 - Print it out
 - Keep it somewhere for reminders
- It is a working document
- Transition ritual from home to work and from work to home



Questions



Elissa Hardy, LCSW
Denver Public Library
Denver, CO
ehardy@denverlibrary.org
720.865.3443

