



Trauma-Informed Policing

TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT:

Learning Objectives:

Why Learn About Trauma

Effects of Trauma

Understanding ACEs

Overview of Three Types of Trauma Officers Encounter

Practical Strategies and New Skills

Why Learn About Trauma?⁽¹⁾

This training is about how being trauma-informed can **improve** criminal justice system responses

It is **NOT** a program about the treatment of trauma

It is directed to law enforcement professionals

Your role is not one of a counselor, however police are present in traumatic circumstances where “YOU” become the intervention

Understanding trauma behaviors can assist you in criminal investigations

Benefits⁽¹⁾

- Builds trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.
- Empathy and understanding during interactions lead to more positive outcomes.
- Reduces the likelihood of escalation during encounters with individuals in distress.
- Officers are trained to recognize the signs of distress and respond appropriately.



The Nature of Police Work₍₂₎

- Even though we refer to the police as law enforcement officers, it is only one of **several** functions that the police perform.
- Police are frequently called upon to be social workers, conflict mediators, traffic directors, mental health counselors, detailed report writers, and neighborhood patrollers all in the span of a single shift.
- In a [New York Times Article](#) June of 2020, call data of 10 police agencies, including places with relatively high violent crime rates was reviewed. Officers responding to violent crime made up only around 1% of calls for service.

Officer Training⁽³⁾

- A 2016 national study of the training of 135,000 recruits across 664 local police academies found, on average, officers each received 168 hours of training in firearm skills, self-defense, and use of force out of 840 total hours.
- Another 42 hours were spent on criminal investigations, 38 on operating an emergency vehicle, 86 on legal education aimed primarily at force amendment law, and hundreds more on basic operations and self-improvement.
- Topics like domestic violence only accounted for (13 hours), mental illness (10 hours), and mediation and conflict management (9 hours).
- Topics like homelessness and substance abuse, were so rare they didn't make the data set.

Engaging Empathy

Members of Law Enforcement regularly engage in showing empathy

- ▶ Suicide
- ▶ Child drowning
- ▶ Sexual assault victim
- ▶ Domestic violence victim

What is Trauma?

The 3 “E’s” ⁽⁵⁾

*Individual trauma results from an **event**, a series of events, or set of circumstances **experienced** by an individual that are physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that have lasting adverse **effects** on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. ~ SAMHSA*

Abuse	Loss	Chronic Stressors
Abuse	Death, Abandonment	Poverty
Emotional	Neglect	Racism
Sexual Physical	Separation	Invasive medical procedure
Domestic Violence	Natural Disaster	Community trauma
Witnessing violence	Accidents	Historical trauma
Bullying	Terrorism	Family member diagnosed with mental illness
Assault	War	Family member with addictions
Institutional		Family member incarcerated

Potential Traumatic Events

Experience of Trauma Affected by ⁽⁵⁾

It is an individual's experience of the event
not necessarily the event itself that is traumatizing



- ▶ How
- ▶ When
- ▶ Where
- ▶ How Often
- ▶ Who is involved



Effects of Trauma⁽⁵⁾

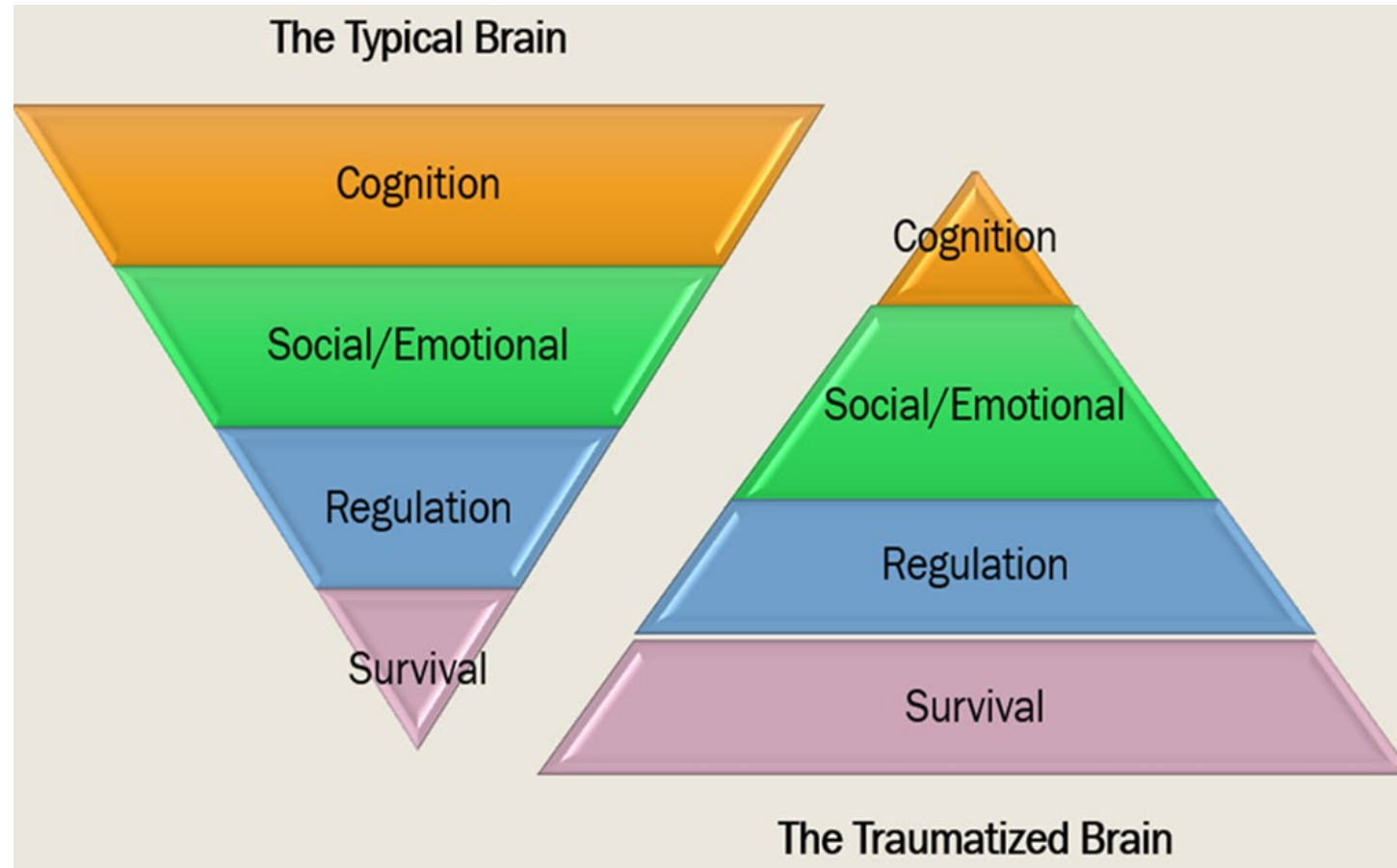
- Trauma creates symptoms that are ADAPTATIONS: What we may see as the problem is the person's solution.
- The effect of trauma on an individual can be conceptualized as a normal response to an abnormal situation.

Survival mode is supposed to be a phase that helps save your life.

It is not meant to be how you live.

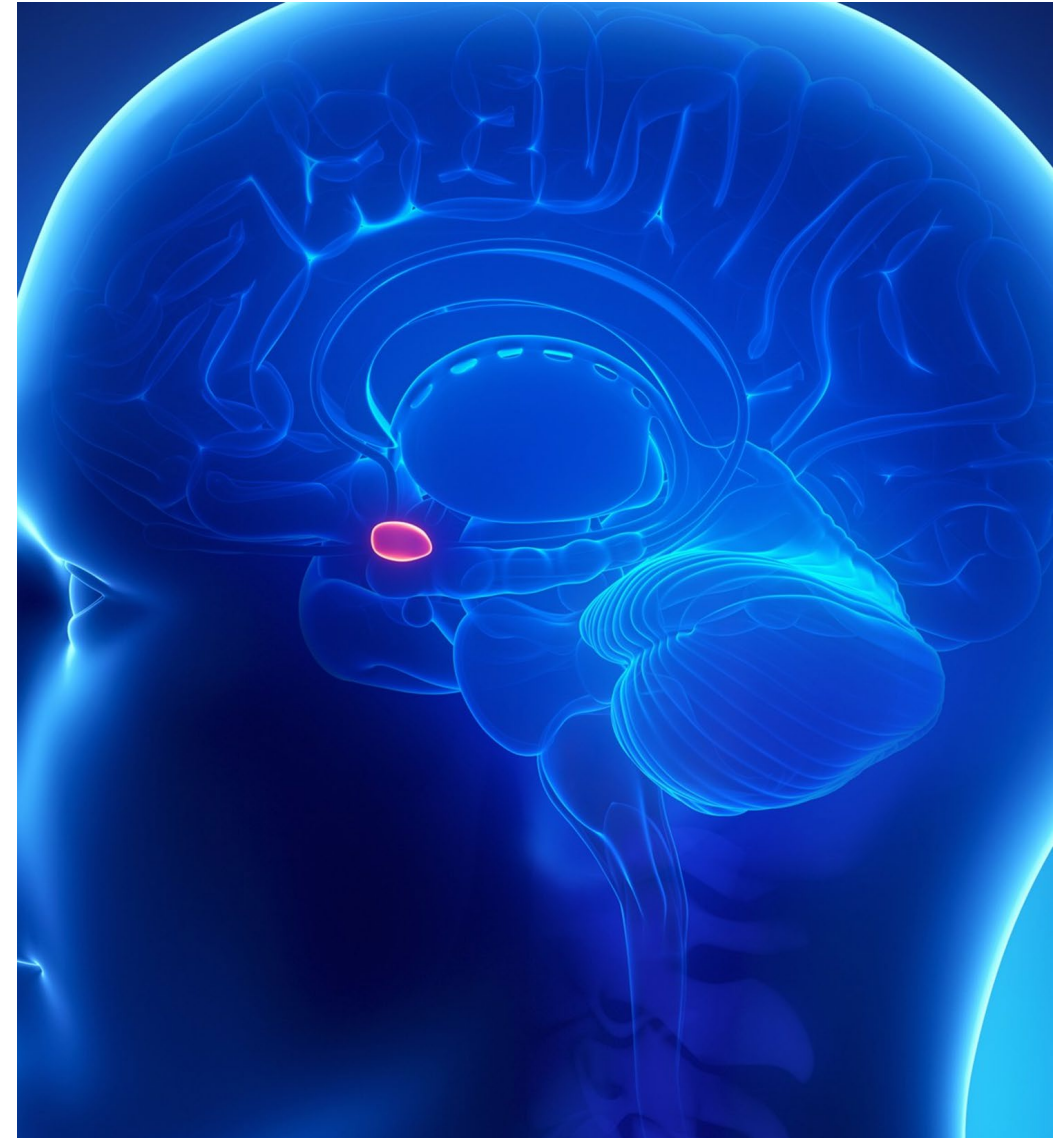
Michele Rosenthal
Author, *Your Life After Trauma*

			
Physical	Emotional	Behavioral	Cognitive
• Low energy • Hyperarousal • Hypoarousal • Paleness • Lethargy • Somatic complaints • Lack of coordination or balance • Headaches • Digestive complaints	• Anxiety • Emotional numbness • Anger • Depression • Guilt • Shame • Fear • Avoidance	• Substance and alcohol use • Eating disorders • Compulsive behaviors • Changes in interpersonal relationships • Anger-related issues • Isolation and detachment from others	• Inability to concentrate • Memory lapses • Learned helplessness • Increased distraction • Intrusive thoughts • Dissociation • Cognitive errors • Flashbacks



The Brain's Response to Stress – Amygdala⁽⁶⁾

- The “fire alarm” of the brain is in the amygdala
- The frontal lobes of the cortex (at the top or the thinking part of the brain) shut down to make sure a person is focusing completely on survival
- That's why it's hard to think when in a crisis

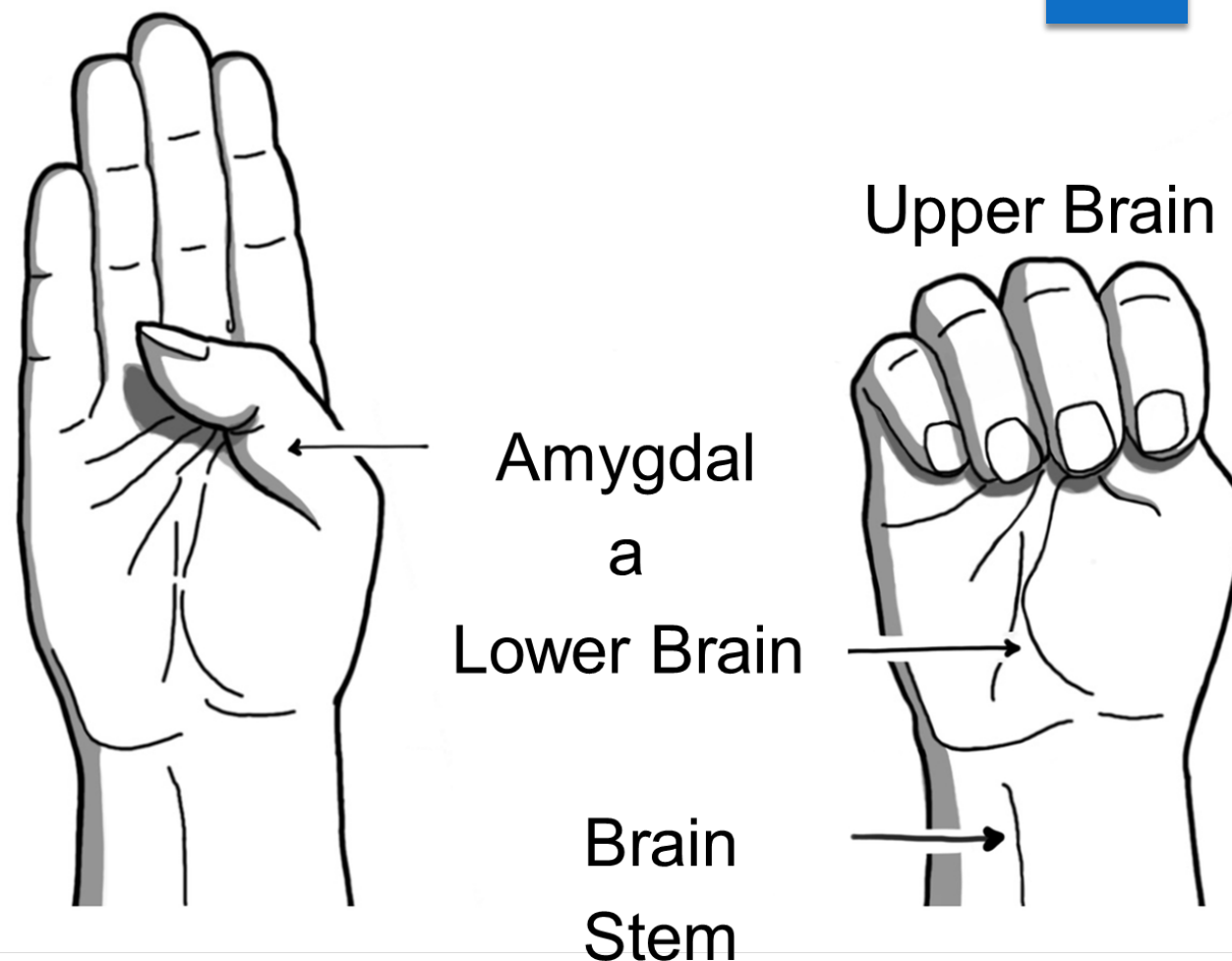


Understanding the “Whole Brain”⁽⁷⁾

Simple illustration to understand
how the brain works by using
your fist

Upstairs brain – where you make
decisions and do the right thing,
even when you feel upset

Downstairs brain – where
STRONG emotions come from.
(i.e. fear, panic, etc.)



Regulate

Calm the survival response

Examples:

Deep Breathing

Count backwards 10-1

Movement

Distraction

Quiet safe spaces

Food and rest

Relate

Connection through relationships

Empathy

Compassion

Listening

Voice tone

Body language

Positive Communication

Reason

Problem Solving

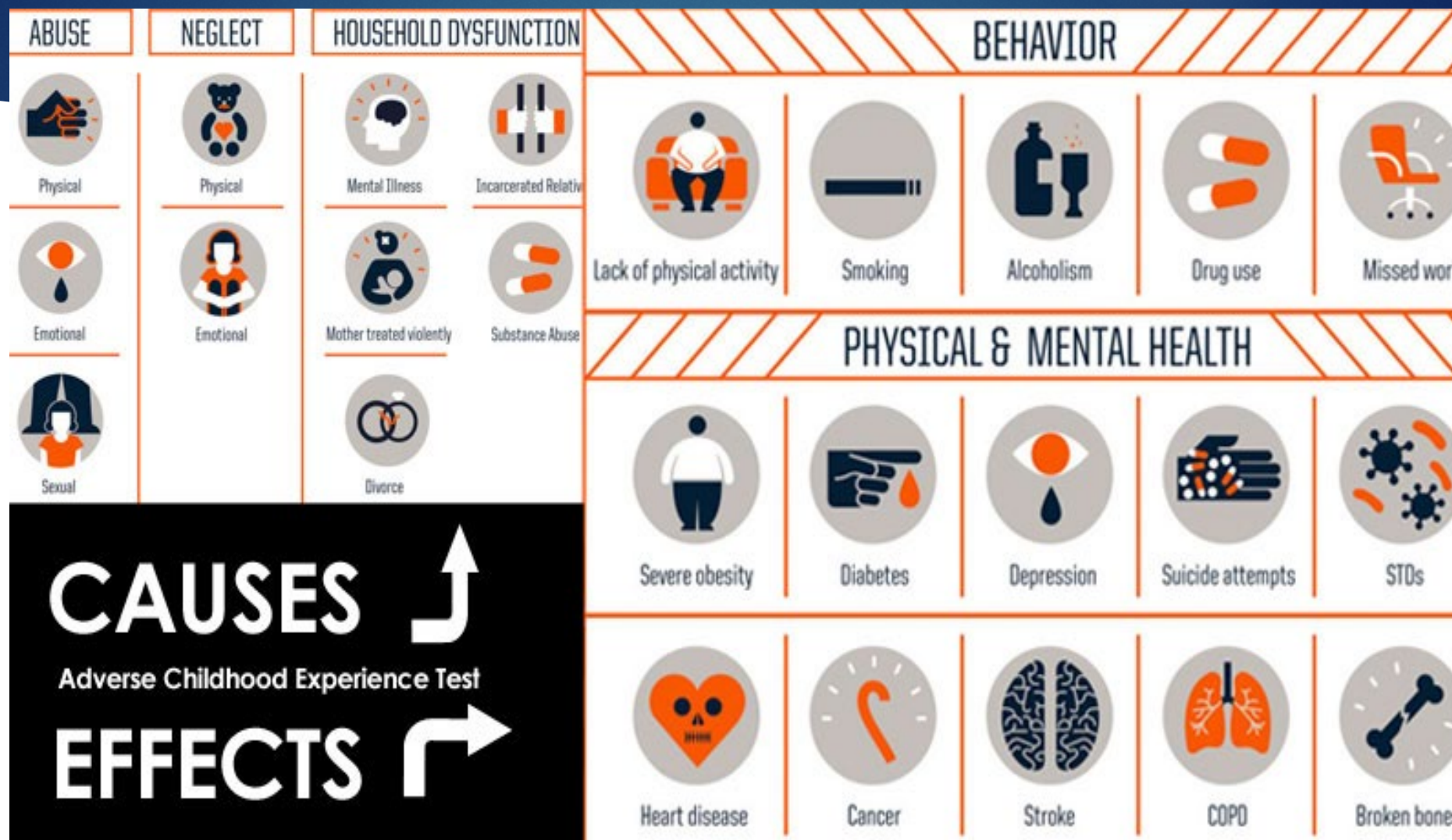
Reflect, learn, and engage

Reframing



What Does
Trauma Look
Like?

Understanding ACE's⁽¹²⁾



Scoring 4 or More ACEs^(14,15)

3.7 times more likely to experience anxiety

4.4 times more likely to have chronic depression

5.6 times more likely to be involved in illicit drug use

5.8 times more likely to have problematic alcohol use

7 times more likely to go to prison

7.5 times more likely to experience violence victimization in adulthood

15 times more likely to attempt suicide

1,350 times more likely to face opiate abuse

ACEs is Science

Law enforcement professionals have long used science to enhance public safety.

Fingerprints, DNA samples, rape kits, blood alcohol tests and more.

ACEs IS science. Once trained, law enforcement personnel can effectively use this science to improve public safety as well.



“The research could not be clearer. Exposure to toxic stress and traumatic events is the root cause of many of the issues we deal with in law enforcement. The good news is this: What is predictable is preventable.”

– Chief Chris Leusner

Middle Township, NJ Police Department

Actions4ACEs.com



Justice Professionals Need to Know About Trauma

“It’s not about going soft on crime but it’s becoming smart on crime.”

Judge Shelia Calloway, Nashville/Davidson County
Juvenile Court Judge



Rob Reed, Executive Deputy Attorney
General for Special Initiatives
Pennsylvania Office of Attorney
General

“Trauma needs to be viewed as a public health matter if society is going to benefit individuals in a lasting and positive way.”

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Trauma, Substance Abuse and the Justice System⁽¹⁸⁾

Among Adults:

98% of female offenders have experienced trauma, often interpersonal trauma and domestic violence

75% of adults in substance abuse treatment report histories of trauma

93% of homeless mothers have a lifetime history of trauma

70% of adults in the U.S. have experienced some type of traumatic event at least once in their lives.

In public behavioral health, over 90% of clients have experienced trauma.

Trauma Prevalence In Children/Youth⁽¹⁹⁾

70% of children and youth in foster care have experienced at least two types of trauma

85% of children in Head Start have experienced trauma

72% of youth who runaway and are homeless report being exposed to trauma

90% of youth involved in juvenile justice have been exposed to at least one potentially traumatic event

68% of youth will be exposed to violence before graduating high school

Trauma and Law Enforcement

Law enforcement professionals are exposed to trauma in at least 3 ways.



This training is designed to address reducing the effects of:

1. Trauma on scene

2. Community Trauma

3. Officer trauma

1. Reducing Trauma on Scene

Trauma-Informed Policing

Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery.

Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in those involved within the system.

Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices.

Seeks to actively **resist re-traumatization.**

Vera Institute of Justice



Altovise Love-Craighead
Law Enforcement Commander

Trauma Informed Policing⁽²¹⁾

1. Safety and Security – **restore a sense of safety**
2. Validation and Ventilation – **listen with empathy**
 - According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, some police officer have a false but widely held view of sexual assault survivors perceiving that a high number of sexual assault cases are false reports. ⁽²²⁾
 - FBI crime data suggests it is only 2-8% of reports filed are false.
3. Preparation and Prediction – **provide narrative of next steps in the justice system**

Skills Drill

Respond to a female university faculty member at her home who reports she was raped a few hours ago on campus.

Reflect on your actions to incorporate the 3 tenets of trauma informed policing



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Examples of Trauma-Informed Policing

Domestic violence calls with children on scene and officers make referrals to child mental health services for follow up.

Social worker or Mental Health Ride Alongs – allows trained professionals to evaluate individuals for best response

Tele-Behavioral Health Access – officers have access to provide tele-behavioral health evaluation on scene

Mental Health Professional or Social Worker on staff

5. Juvenile Civil Citation - holds the youth accountable for delinquent behavior, involves the parents in sanctioning the youth, and helps prevent the youth's further involvement in the juvenile justice system.
6. Cop Care Bags – patrol cars have items to help calm children on scene
7. Bigs in Blue/Lunch Buddies – officer mentoring programs
8. Softening environments in police interview rooms
9. CIT and Trauma Informed Policing Training for officers

Handle With Care⁽²³⁾

- West Virginia Center for Children's Justice developed the model
- Handle with Care provides school leadership with a "heads up" when a child has been identified at the scene of a traumatic event involving law enforcement
- DE, KY and TN among states using HWC statewide



Cambridge Police Department

Revamped one of their interview rooms into a 'soft,' more comfortable interview space for survivors being interviewed about their assaults



Martinsburg Initiative⁽²⁴⁾

TMI is an innovative and police-school-community partnership focused on creating a trauma informed community working to build resilience in children, so they are less likely to succumb to scientific research predictions.

- Berkeley County Schools
- Martinsburg Police Department
- Shepherd University
- community organizations
- The Boys & Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle
- the Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)





Martinsburg Initiative

Tactical Breathing Considerations₍₁₀₎

- Prior to using physical force, officers should use proper de-escalation techniques to decrease the likelihood for use of force.
- Officers should employ techniques to engage with individuals who are not compliant:
 - Initiate tactical breathing
 - Establishing rapport
 - Using the appropriate voice intonation
 - Asking questions and providing advice to defuse conflict and achieve voluntary compliance before resorting to force options

Officers should evaluate whether an individual's failure to comply with an order is the result of one of the following factors:

- Medical conditions
- Mental impairment
- Developmental disability
- Physical limitation
- Language barrier
- Drug interaction
- Behavioral crisis
- Other factors beyond the individual's control

“

Almost half of the people who die at the hands of police have some kind of disability, according to a new report as officers are drawn into emergencies where urgent care may be more appropriate than lethal force.

”

- NBC U.S. NEWS, MARCH 14, 2016

What Can You Do?⁽¹⁰⁾

Engage	Engage the person, develop rapport
Provide	Provide a calm, soothing environment
Give	Give undivided, unhurried attention
Give	Give as much control & choice as possible
Validate	Validate concerns as understandable & normal
Allow	Allow support person to be present

Reducing Trauma on Scene for School Age Children (6-12 years old)₍₁₀₎

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Attempt

Attempt to limit the child's further exposure to out-of-control behavior once you arrive on scene

Find out

Find out what questions children have and talk to them about what happened in direct and plain language

Safety

Keep them in a location on scene where they are safe

- ▶ If children are so distressed that they are unable to put their thoughts into words:
 - Teach Tactical Breathing
 - Help children re-engage the thinking part of their brain by drawing, coloring or distracting
- ▶ Support caregivers in meeting the children's needs and seek out an alternative caregiver if necessary

Cops, Kids, and Domestic Violence - Five Core Messages⁽¹¹⁾

All children are affected by domestic violence; however, each child reacts in a different way.

Children living with domestic violence often have **complicated feelings** about their parents.

Children often **worry that they are responsible** for the violence in their homes.

Police Officers really matter to kids.

There are **simple things** police officers can do while on the scene to help **reduce the impact** of domestic violence on children.

Considering Children when Parents are Arrested⁽¹¹⁾

- Building and maintaining positive relationships with children is a good crime prevention strategy
- Children who learn to trust police are more likely to cooperate with them in the future
- For children, the loss of a parent is always experienced as traumatic

What Children Need When Their Parent is Arrested ⁽¹¹⁾

To know the parent's arrest is NOT their fault

To know what is happening to their parent

To know if they can have contact with their parent and when

To know with whom and where they will be staying while their parent is incarcerated

To know its okay to still love their parent and its okay sometimes to feel angry

To realize people make choices in life that can have consequences

Skills Drill

- Officers respond to a car crash with a 7-year-old child in the back seat in a car seat. The father who was driving the car is unconscious.
- What are 2 ways you can reduce trauma on scene for this child?



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2. Community Trauma

Reducing
Community
Trauma through
Cultural
Competencies

Know	Know cultural makeup of your community
Be	Be proactive to build relationships with key leaders
Increase	Increase local capacity, develop partnerships, enables partners to develop local solutions to local problems
Practice	Practice biased free policing by treating people in similar situations the same way.

Connecting to Community

- Coffee with a Cop
 - No agenda or speeches – just conversation
- Community Policing
 - Roundtable
- Lunch Buddies
- Cultural Events
 - Umoja
 - Martin Luther King Unity March
 - Tri Pride Rally
 - Faith Community



Skills Drill

- Describe 1 way you can build relationships within culturally diverse populations in your community.



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3. Officer Secondary Trauma

- Because officers respond to confrontation, conflict, and violence, they are repeatedly exposed to trauma and death.
- These traumatic experiences carry significant mental health risks, including suicide, which disproportionately affects police officers.
- Officer suicide data shows an increase the past few years. These numbers exceed the number of line-of-duty deaths during those same years.

The Facts₍₂₆₎

Psychological Armor

Officers replace bulletproof vests after taking rounds, so officers don't go back into harms way with compromised protection.

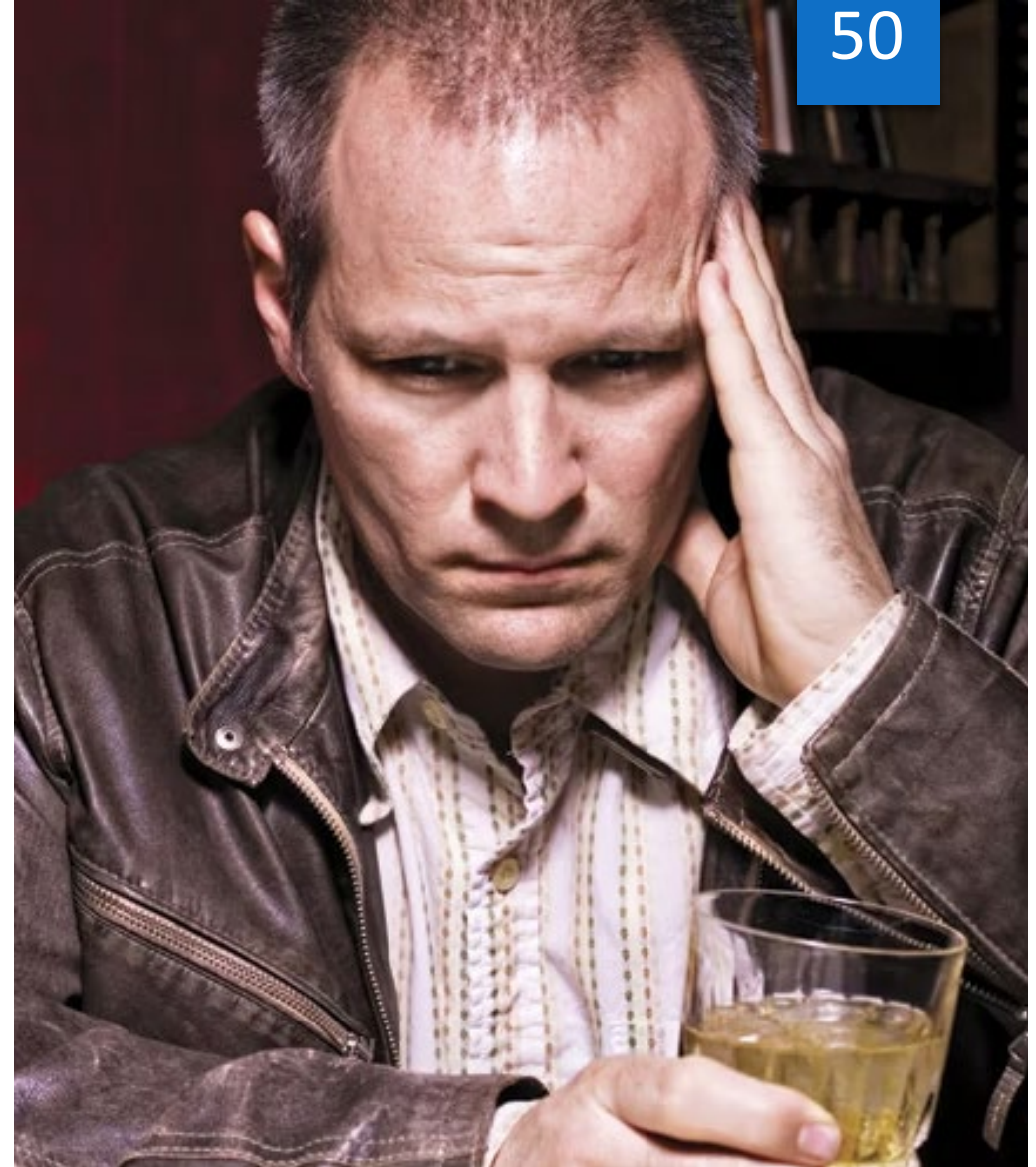
Think about their psychological armor. This vital gear used day after day and is seldom attended to making officers vulnerable to the effects of accumulated and unprocessed trauma.



Statistics⁽²⁷⁾

- According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics:
- There are approximately 800,000 Police Officers in the United States
- Statistics show that 20% to 25% of working police officers are chemically dependent on either alcohol or drugs (Police – The Law Enforcement Magazine)
- Statistically, that translates to 200,000 Police Officers battling addiction.

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Research⁽²⁸⁾

A recent survey published by the [University of Phoenix](#) found:

85% of first responders have experienced issues related to their mental health (through cumulative and vicarious trauma)

55% of first responders believe their supervisor will treat them differently if they mention their mental health concerns.

69% said mental health services are seldom or never utilized.

1 in 5 families will experience a mental health crisis

What Can Leadership Do?⁽²⁸⁾



The survey found that first responders may be more open to getting help if those around them are willing to discuss mental health



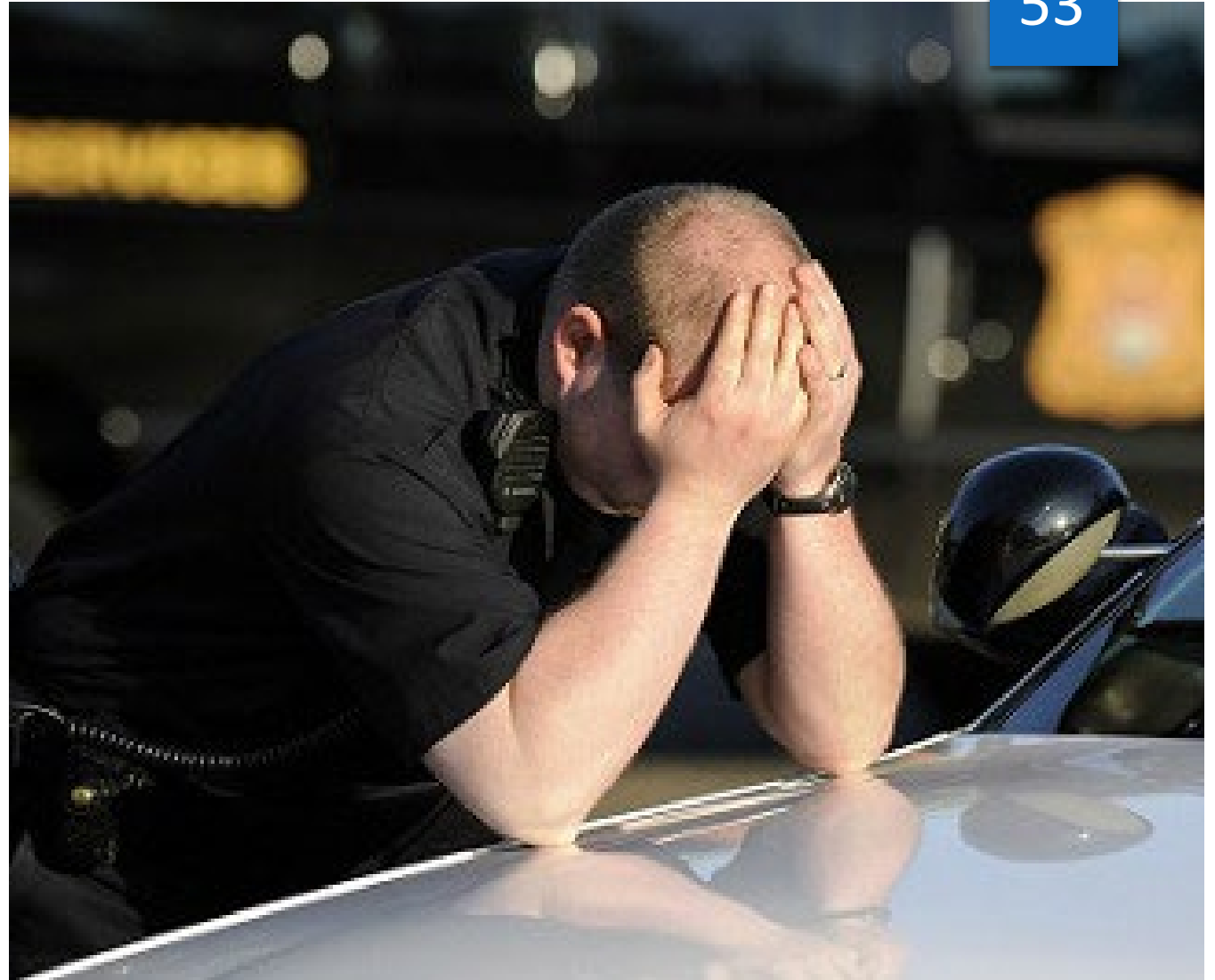
If a leader in their organization spoke about their own experience, 71% say they would be encouraged to seek professional help



Peers have an even greater influence, with 83% of first responders saying if a close colleague, friend or family member spoke up, they would be encouraged to seek help for themselves

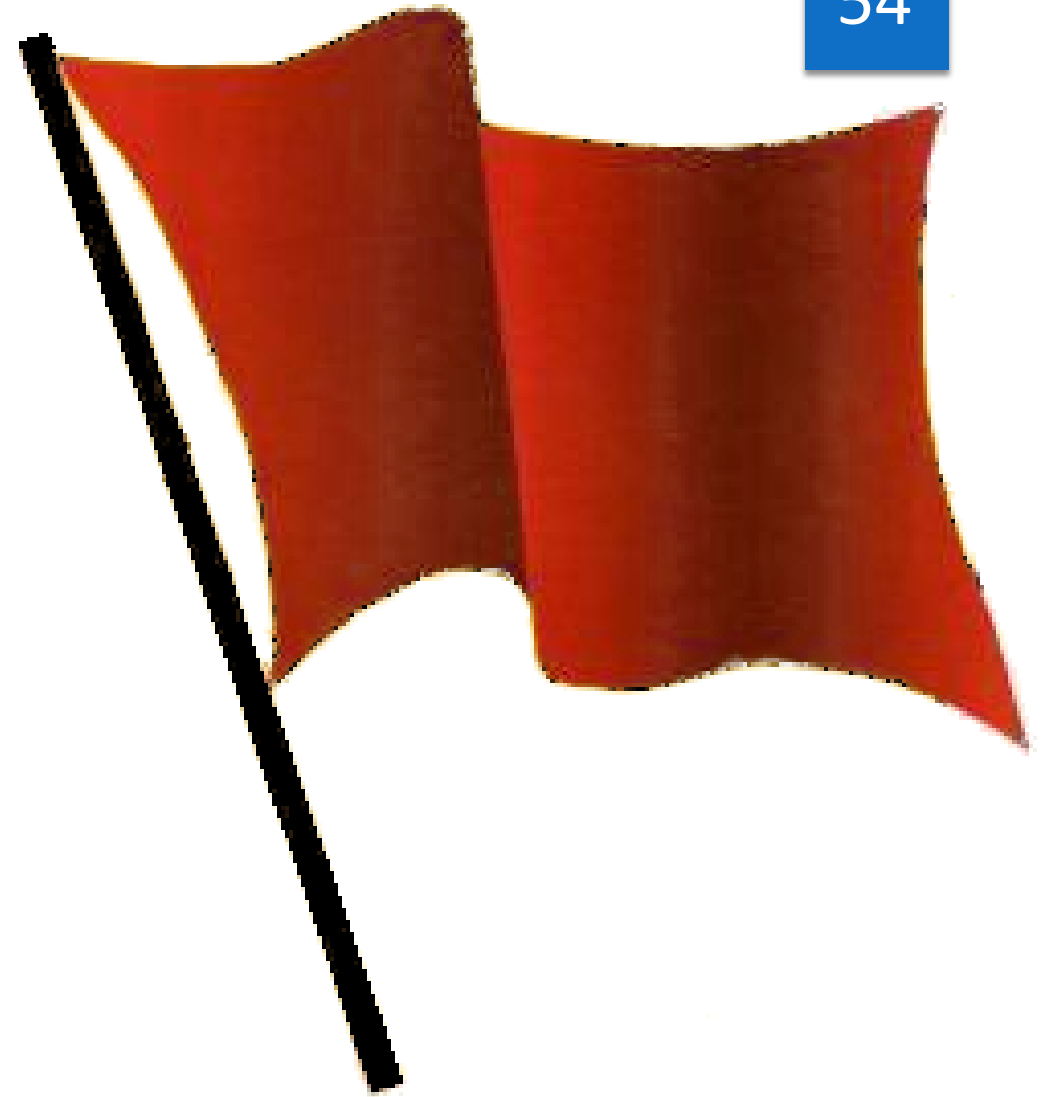
Professional Quality of Life⁽³¹⁾

- Compassion Satisfaction
- Compassion Fatigue
- Burnout
- Secondary Trauma



Traumatic Stress Red Flags

- ▶ It's been six weeks, not feeling any better
- ▶ Having trouble functioning at home and work
- ▶ Experiencing terrifying memories, nightmares, or flashbacks
- ▶ Having an difficult time connecting and relating to others
- ▶ Experiencing suicidal thoughts or feelings
- ▶ Avoiding more and more things that remind you of the disaster or traumatic event



Recovery Tips

- Reach out to others – be aware of isolation
- Do normal things you enjoy
- Make processing stress a priority. Processing trauma related to your job is not a character weakness
- Practice mindful breathing. Take time to relax.
- Maintain normal routines
- Practice a balanced life
- Eat a healthy diet



Chat openly and anonymously 24/7 with your First Responder peers.

The App that's always On Call.

First Responders are different. And while no one understands the highs, lows and in betweens of your life better than another Responder, you don't always want to talk to the ones in your department or organization. Or maybe you're a Responder in a remote area and don't have many colleagues you can connect with nearby.

So, we created ResponderRel8, a peer-to-peer chat app that provides a platform for you to connect, celebrate and commiserate with First Responder peers anonymously (unless you choose to be known).

Remember ... this app is for First Responders only. If you or someone you know is not a First Responder but could benefit from an anonymous chat app for the general public, check out iRel8.org.

Sign Up for App Access at ResponderRel8.com or on the App login page after downloading from the Apple or GooglePlay app store. ResponderRel8 is FirstNet Listed® and also available in the FirstNet App Catalog.



This is a paid app (99 cents per month) and requires an in-app subscription to access content. Additional subscription information is available in the Apple App Store or Google Play.



**ONLY FOR FIRST
RESPONDERS**



PEER-TO-PEER CHAT



ANONYMOUS



24/7

Police Chat App

Thank you!

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