Together, we can create a culture in Colorado that values and upholds healthy relationships based in equity and respect.

Creating Accessible, Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed Services
Webinar: ACRTI Module #1
Together we can end relationship abuse
NCDVTMH is one of four Special Issue Resource Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Children and Families, Family & Youth Services Bureau, Family Violence Prevention and Services Program.

NCDVTMH’s mission is to develop and promote accessible, culturally relevant, and trauma-informed responses to domestic violence and other lifetime trauma so that survivors and their children can access the resources that are essential to their safety and well-being. Our work is survivor defined and rooted in principles of social justice.

NCDVTMH provides training, consultation and resources to DV/SA advocates; health, mental health, substance use treatment providers; legal professionals; and government officials/policymakers on improving agency and system response to survivors of domestic violence and other trauma.
National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health’s Resource – “Tools for Transformation: Becoming Accessible, Culturally Responsive, and Trauma-Informed Organizations”

Online Training and Resource Center: Advocacy from the National Center on Domestic Violence Trauma and Mental Health:
http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/trainingta/

Accessible, Culturally-Relevant, Trauma-Informed Services and Organizations (ACRTI)
Thinking about Trauma in the Context Of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Advocacy: An Integrated Approach

Module 1

National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, & Mental Health

Core Curriculum on Trauma-Informed Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services, NCDVTMH (Revised August 2019)
Our Work is Informed by…

- Human Rights & Social Justice Lens
- Trauma-Informed Lens
- Culture & Community Lens
- Domestic Violence Advocacy Lens
- Physical & Emotional Safety
- Survivor-Defined Approach
- Relationship & Connection
- Hope & Resilience
Applying Values, Purpose and Vision

- How We Understand Trauma
- What We Mean by Accessible, Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed

Fully Incorporating an Integrated Approach
What Do We Mean by Trauma?

**Individual Trauma**: The unique individual experience of an event, series of events or set of circumstances

- Experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening
- Has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.
- The individual’s coping capacity and/or ability to integrate their emotional experience is overwhelmed causing significant distress.

What Do We Mean by Trauma? (continued)

Collective Trauma:

- Cultural, historical, political and economic trauma that impacts individuals and communities

- Cumulative emotional, psychological and spiritual wounding over the lifespan and across generations emanating from massive group trauma experiences
Potential Sources of Trauma

- Childhood sexual, physical, emotional abuse, neglect, abandonment
- Sexual violence; assault, coercion, trafficking, stalking
- Domestic violence
- Other violent crime
- Injury, Illness, death, loss, grief
- Institutional abuse, neglect

Cave and Johnan, 2007

- Dislocation, homelessness
- War, terrorism, combat
- Community and school violence, bullying
- Hate crimes
- Abuse through religion
- Collective historical and generational targeted violence
- Chronic stressors like racism, poverty
- Natural disasters
- Healthcare interactions, medical procedures
- Any misuse of power by one person/group over another
Trauma in the Context of Domestic Violence: Other Aspects to Consider

- Interpersonal violence and trauma
- Intimate and social betrayal
- Cumulative burden
- Ongoing risk
What Have You Experienced in Your Work?

Consider what people have survived.

▪ What strengths did you see?
▪ How do traumatic experiences impact people’s ability to engage services, parent their children or participate in court?
Reflecting on Culture and Experience

Culture matters in what we experience and the sense we make of it:

- What we find helpful
- The beliefs and traditions we draw upon
- How we determine if respect, authenticity, belonging and safety feel present
- Our sources of strength and resilience
- Experiences with discrimination and oppression
- How behavior is interpreted by others

Cave, 2012
Experience Can Impact Connection

Access and Connection to Trusted Others

Historical Experience

Interpersonal Violence

Self Identity

Community Experiences

Organizational Behaviors and Attitudes

Cave, 2014
Organizational Behaviors: Assumptions of Privilege

If Power is in the Inner Circle, Who is in the Margins?

Who is included or excluded?
Who makes decisions?
What are the messages?

Who is judged?
Worthy?
Innocent?
Complicit?

Cave 2001, 2014, Cullinan
What Do We Mean by Trauma-Informed?

Why Does it Matter?
Accessible, Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed

- Understanding the pervasiveness and impact of trauma
- Mitigating and transforming those effects
  - Minimizing retraumatization
  - Supporting healing, resilience and well-being
  - Attending to the impact on providers and organizations
- Addressing the underlying conditions that produce abuse, violence and oppression
- Embodying in our lives and our work the world we want to create

Warshaw, 2009
How We Respond and the Environments We Create Make a Difference!

- When we respond in culturally attuned, trauma-informed, survivor-defined/person-centered ways, people feel safer talking about their experiences, are more likely to access our services, and are more likely to find our services helpful.
How We Got Here

- Domestic violence programs were seeing survivors with more complex needs.

- Advocates did not feel equipped to address survivors’ mental health and substance abuse concerns
How We Got Here

- Advocates were also concerned about placing survivors in jeopardy by referring them to the mental health and substance use systems.

- The emergence of trauma theory created a bridge for addressing these concerns.
Trauma-Informed or Just Good Advocacy?

- Not understanding trauma is often what gets in the way of good advocacy.

- Being trauma-informed means adding a layer of understanding about the impact of trauma - not defining everything through a trauma lens.
Why Think about Trauma in the Context of Domestic Violence?
Domestic violence and sexual assault have significant health, mental health, and social consequences
Survivors are at Increased Risk for Developing:

- Depression
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Substance use
- Suicide attempts
- Sleep disturbances

Discrimination and oppression increase these risks

Bimi et. al. 2007, Thoma & Huebner 2013, Blosnich & Bossarte 2009, Black et. al. 2011, Chen et. al. 2013
Abuse, Violence, and Trauma Across the Lifespan

Play a key role in the development and exacerbation of health, mental health, and substance use conditions
Abuse, Violence, and Trauma Across the Lifespan

- Gender based violence increases risk for health, mental health, and substance use conditions.

- Women are twice as likely to develop PTSD and depression after trauma exposure and may use substances to manage the traumatic effects of abuse.

- Adverse childhood experiences also increase the risk for health, mental health, and substance use problems as an adult.

Increased Risk and Exploitation

- Coping strategies can increase risk for harm
- Not learning one has the right to protect oneself can increase risk for being harmed
- Social conditions, discrimination and lack of human rights protections increase the risk of being harmed
- Abusers exploit these experiences

Fabri: Triple Trauma Paradigm; Root: Insidious trauma; Packard: Cultural and Historical Trauma; Roberts et. al. Pervasive trauma exposure among sexual minorities, NCAVP Hate Violence
Safety, Support, and Access to Resources Can Help to Mitigate These Effects
At the Same Time...

- Experiencing a mental health or substance use condition puts someone at greater risk for being abused.
- And symptoms may be a direct result of coercive control.
- Why is this? How does this work?
Traumatic Effects of Abuse or Coercive Control?

- High rates of substance use among women who have been victimized
  - Self-medication is common; may be symptom specific

- High rates of victimization among women in substance use treatment
  - May be coerced into using or dealing; using increases risk for coercion

Nayak et. al. 2012, Heffner et. al. 2011, Lipskey et. al. 2010, Schneider et. al. 2009,
Mental Health and Substance Use Coercion

Abusers use mental health and substance use issues to control their partners

- Undermine sanity, sobriety, credibility, and parenting
- Coerced overdose, coerced use, coerced illegal activities, coerced sex
- Control meds, control treatment; sabotage recovery
- Prevent access to support, resources, protection and custody of children
- Convincing systems survivors are not capable

Warshaw, Lyon, Bland, Phillips, Hooper, 2014
Mental Health and Substance Use Coercion

- Why does this work?
  - Stigma associated with mental health and substance use conditions
  - Reports of abuse not taken seriously
  - Assumptions that mental health challenges and substance use preclude good parenting
  - Poverty, discrimination, isolation and fear

Warshaw, Lyon, Bland, Phillips, Hooper, 2014
Abusers exert coercive control in many domains

Children (and survivors’ concern for their welfare) are often used as tactics of control

Abusers also engage in deliberate acts to undermine parenting

Holding a survivor’s own needs in mind at the same time we support their role as a parent is critical
Trauma Can Affect Survivors’ Access and Response to Services

Including…

- Willingness to reach out and engage
- Mobilization of resources, decision-making
- Responses to domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy and supports
- Responses to law enforcement, testimony, and legal case
- Appearance and demeanor in court
Trauma Theory
As A Bridge
How Does a Trauma-Informed Approach Help?

- Normalizes human responses to trauma
- Shifts our understanding of symptoms from *What’s wrong with you?* TO *What happened to you?*
- Recognizes symptoms as survival strategies
- Recognizes the importance of understanding the meaning that each person makes of their experiences
How Does a Trauma-Informed Approach Help?

- Considers the whole person; offers a more holistic approach by integrating cognitive, emotional, physical, spiritual and relational domains
- Is empowerment based; views relationship as a key component of healing
- Offers caring and respectful ways of being in relationship - which may be new for survivors
- Considers and attends to the impact of trauma on providers and organizations
Trauma and Domestic Violence: Framing the Issues

- Without a domestic violence lens, services can be endangering
- Without a trauma lens, services can be retraumatizing
- Without a culture lens, services may not relevant or helpful and can do more harm
- Without an human rights lens, services may be oppressive and/or inaccessible
- Without a social justice lens, we would not be engaged in social change
Leading to a more integrated approach
Creating Accessible, Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed Services and Organizations

Transforming the Conditions that Perpetuate Oppression and Abuse

- Recognize Pervasiveness & Impact of Trauma
- Create Institutional Supports; Promote Social Change
- Minimize Retraumatization
- Create Physical & Emotional Safety
- Attend to Impact on Providers & Organizations
- Honor Strengths, Support Resilience & Healing; Create Community
- Attend to Organizational Culture & Environment
- View Relationship as a Key Component of Healing
How does this framework resonate with you?

How does this change how you think about your day-to-day work?
Questions?

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