



Creating Trauma Informed Systems of Care

Strategies for Self Regulation

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Prevalence of Trauma in the General Population

- 90% of public mental health clients have been exposed to trauma.
- In the general population, 61% of men and 51% of women reported exposure to at least one lifetime traumatic event, but majority reporting more than one traumatic event.

(Kessler, et al, 1995)

Stress/Trauma Lives in the Body

- A chronic overreaction to stress overloads the brain with powerful hormones that are intended only for short-term duty in emergency situations.
- Serum cortisol levels
- Chronic hyperarousal – nervous system does an amazing job of preparing the individual to deal with the stress but:

- ❑ Growth, reproduction and immune system all go on hold
 - ❑ Leads to sexual dysfunction
 - ❑ Increases chances of getting sick
 - ❑ Often manifests as skin ailments
-
- Increases permeability of the blood brain barrier
 - Dr. Robert Sapolsky: “Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers” – study on salmon

Self- Regulation

- The challenge is to not let the nervous system stay chronically aroused
- Have a plan to deal with triggers/arousal
- Practice, practice, practice

What is a Crisis Prevention Plan?

- An individualized plan developed proactively by consumer and staff *before* a crisis occurs
 - A therapeutic process
 - A task that is trauma sensitive
 - A partnership of safety planning
 - A consumer-owned plan written in easy to understand language

Why Are They Used?

- To help consumers during the earliest stages of escalation before a crisis erupts
- To help consumers identify coping strategies before they are needed
- To help staff plan ahead and know what to do with each person if a problem arises
- To help staff use interventions that reduce risk and trauma to individuals

Essential Components

- Triggers
- Early Warning Signs
- Strategies

First, Identify Triggers

These Triggers

- A trigger is something that sets off an action, process, or series of events (such as fear, panic, upset, agitation)
- Also referred to as a “threat cue” such as:
 - bedtime
 - room checks
 - large men
 - yelling
 - people too close

No, not *that* Trigger ...



Trigger,
Roy Rogers'
Horse

More Triggers: *What makes you feel scared or upset or angry and could cause you to go into crisis?*

- Not being listened to
 - Lack of privacy
 - Feeling lonely
 - Darkness
 - Being teased or picked on
 - Feeling pressured
 - People yelling
- Arguments
 - Being isolated
 - Being touched
 - Loud noises
 - Not having control
 - Being stared at
 - Room checks
 - Contact w/family

More Triggers:

- Particular time of day/night
- Particular time of year
- Contact with family
- Other*

* Consumers have unique histories with uniquely specific triggers - essential to ask & incorporate

BEING TOUCHED

YELLING

A CERTAIN TIME OF DAY

BEDROOM DOOR OPEN

You may not know unless you ask me.

LOUD NOISE

BEING ISOLATED

NO INPUT

UNIFORMS



**Second, Identify Early
Warning Signs**

Early Warning Signs

- A signal of distress that is a physical precursor and/or manifestation of upset. Some signals are not observable, but some are, such as:
 - restlessness
 - agitation
 - pacing
 - shortness of breath
 - sensation of a tightness in the chest
 - sweating

Early Warning Signs

What might you or others notice or what you might feel just before losing control?

- Clenching teeth
- Wringing hands
- Bouncing legs
- Shaking
- Crying
- Giggling
- Heart Pounding
- Singing inappropriately
- Pacing
- Eating more
- Breathing hard
- Shortness of breath
- Clenching fists
- Loud voice
- Rocking
- Can't sit still
- Swearing
- Restlessness
- Other _____

Third, Identify Strategies

Strategies

- Strategies are individually-specific calming mechanisms to manage and minimize stress, such as:
 - time away from a stressful situation
 - going for a walk
 - talking to someone who will listen
 - working out
 - lying down
 - listening to peaceful music

Strategies:

What are some things that help you calm down when you start to get upset?

- Reading a book
- Pacing
- Coloring
- Hugging a stuffed animal
- Taking a hot shower
- Deep breathing
- Being left alone
- Talking to peers
- Therapeutic Touch, describe _____
- Exercising
- Eating
- Writing in a journal
- Taking a cold shower
- Listening to music
- Molding clay
- Calling friends or family (who?)

More Strategies

- Blanket wraps
- Using cold face cloth
- Deep breathing exercises
- Getting a hug
- Running cold water on hands
- Ripping paper
- Using ice
- Having your hand held
- Snapping bubble wrap
- Bouncing ball in quiet room
- Using the gym

Even More Strategies

- Male staff support
- Female staff support
- Jokes
- Screaming into a pillow
- Punching a pillow
- Crying
- *Spiritual Practices:* prayer, meditation, religious reflection
- Touching preferences
- Speaking with therapist
- Being read a story
- Using Sensory Room
- Using Comfort Room
- Other

If a person is getting agitated, don't forget to use **HALT**.

ARE THEY...

Hungry?

Angry?

Lonely?

Tired?

If it prevents
one person from
getting hurt or one
person from relapse,
It is worth it!

*Noble Hospital, Westfield, Ma
Screensaver – staff reminder*

What Does Not Help When you are Upset?

- Being alone
- Not being listened to
- Being told to stay in my room
- Loud tone of voice
- Peers teasing
- Humor
- Being ignored
- Having many people around me
- Having space invaded
- Staff not taking me seriously

"If I'm told in a mean way that I can't do something ... I lose it."

-- Natasha, 18 years old

What makes you feel upset?

(Circle all that make you feel sad, mad, scared or other feelings)

Being touched



Too many people



Darkness
bedroom



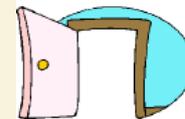
Certain time of year



Certain time of
day/night



Having my
door open



Loud noises



Yelling



Thunderstorms



**MA DMH, Manual,
Promoting
Strength-Based
Care, 2006**

How do I know I am angry, scared or upset?

(Circle all that apply)

Cry



Being mean or rude

Clench teeth



Swearing

Loud voice



Racing heart

Red/hot face



Breathing hard

Laughing/giggling



Wringing hands



Clenched fists

Tantrums

Rocking

Hyper

Pacing



Making the Plans Client-Centered

- Post on doors, bedrooms or bulletin boards
- Review in groups
- Create a “pocket” version for consumers – laminated card
- Develop a computer version to email

Crisis Plan

Additional Guidelines for Use

- Revise and re-tool after escalation using all de-briefing information
- Help consumers “practice” strategies before they become upset
- Teach about the impact of external and internal triggers and stressors & learn new skills to manage reaction
- Support in “coping skills” group

*What do consumers say
they need in crisis planning?*

What do Consumers Find Helpful?

- MA DMH conducted a point in time survey: (*MA DMH, 2003*)
 - 185 adolescents participated (average age = 16)
 - 19 hospitals (acute & continuing care)
- Response to the question: "*What could staff do differently to avoid using restraint and seclusion?*"
 - Talk to me 80
 - Leave me alone 75
 - Distract me 54











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