

Trauma Informed Care Lunch & Learn

Monday, November 22, 2021

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“The Wisdom of Truama”

ZOOM CHAT DISCUSSION

Questions developed by Rebecca Nicholson, Community Connector, Door County Partnership for Children and Families and asked by Cori McFarlane, Deputy Director of Door County Department of Health and Human Services.

Question #1: Dr. Gabor states that we have an epidemic on our hands, with 20% of children (1 in 5) considered diagnosable with a mental illness. What is your reaction to this? Is this statistic surprising to you?

Responses:

Jennifer Moeller: Yes, surprising to me. It saddens me.

Rebecca Nicholson: I am surprised by the statistic, I knew it must be high based on my personal experiences with others and through my work with the Partnership but is higher than I expected

Callie krauel: It's definitely an epidemic. I feel 20% is a conservative number. That is probably because a typical day for me consists of working with individuals who have anxiety and depression so it seems more prevalent to me.

Stephanie Short: I'm not surprised. I personally think it's more.

Cassy Schraft: I feel like, because of my role working with mental illness, it seems like EVERYONE has a mental illness. But with everything going on in our society, so many expectations, so much exposure to bad things, so many different ways that people are expected to be in order to be able to successfully adapt to the different demands of our society, it makes sense that more and more individuals are having a difficult time dealing with that pressure.

Question#2: Any reactions to the trauma-prison connection shown in this last clip?

Responses:

Stephanie Short: Some kids just have a better support and better coping

Jennifer Moeller: I'm not surprised about the prison scene other than pleasantly surprised that someone is talking to them about it.

Cassy Schraft: I did something similar as the prison clip as part of Challenge Day with students in the school; it was a very powerful and very

connecting tool for the students, and very emotional to watch and be a part of

Cori McFarlane: Agree

Beth Chisholm: The prison clip does not surprise me-very very sad. That is why we need to focus on healing trauma, or even better, preventing it!

Cori McFarlane: It makes me proud that we are beginning to implement treatment court alternatives here.

Amanda LaRoche: My reaction is... those are all people who are hurting inside and have hurt. And there is no question that trauma is a huge part of people being in the criminal justice system. I've witnessed it first hand to many people I love.

Kathy Schultz: I am not at all surprised by the trauma-prison connection. It is so important to break the cycle of abuse and behaviors that cause trauma.

Question #3: He is demonstrating the Compassionate Inquiry approach. Any thoughts from our MH professionals - or others -on this approach to treatment?

Responses:

Stephanie Short: I have been to jail and prison, and was lucky that now compared to how jail and prison used to be they have pretty good support, having mental health services, changes on how they treat people solitary confinement, in the women's prison they have inmate peer specialist to be on call for the women that may be in a mental crisis when mental health services is unavailable.

Cori McFarlane: Love that, Stephanie!

Cassy Schraft: I've found that Compassionate Inquiry is a struggle for many of my clients, because many really struggle with self-reflection and self-analysis. Bringing in that another, unconscious experience is contributing, can often times cause clients to become defensive. "How dare you suggest that there's something else than what I'm telling you" sort of mentality. Almost like they need to hold on to a certain aspect or certain narrative of their trauma experience and don't want to look further or deeper, so it can be a very delicate approach of knowing how and when to challenge clients to reflect in that way.

Cori McFarlane: Thanks for sharing that perspective, Cassy.

Amanda LaRoche: Thank you for sharing your experience Stephanie

Stephanie Short: Your welcome.

Jennifer Moeller: Cassy, your comment reminds me of a book I'm reading, "Normal People." The characters want that elusive think so badly.

Angela Steuck: This speaks to the power of prevention and Early Childhood programs!

Cori McFarlane: YES!

Jennifer Moeller: Yes, the sooner people are given some tools, the better for all.

Stephanie Short: One of the things I learned about anger is that it is not a primary emotion, it's a cover to another emotion, anger is a defense emotion

Question #4: How might this "wisdom of trauma" - the understanding that addictions and most mental illness can be traced back to trauma - benefit our community?

Responses:

Amanda LaRoche: Honestly, Door County is considered a shiny beautiful land of wealth. Awareness in our community that this IS happening HERE is a start. We all know it's here and other organizations know it's here, but it has to stop being swept under the rug. But all communities, not just ours.

Stephanie Short: it can benefit our community based on that knowledge builds understanding instead of judgement and understanding builds compassion and then compassion drives people to make changes

Cassy Schraft: I think it helps educate the community that mental illness and addiction isn't a choice. it's more than "have you tried not being sad? Have you tried not using?" It goes back to "what happened to you" rather than "what's wrong with you" and helps the community see people that way and have that approach to others and not just an approach that can be used as us as providers

Cori McFarlane: Wow....traumatized systems....I had not thought about that angle previously!

Stephanie Short: I think they should have required classes on trauma coping and basic life skills in elementary, middle and high school.

Amanda LaRoche: I agree Stephanie

Cassy Schraft: ^^ Yes Stephanie!!

Cori McFarlane: 👍

Question #5: Any new insights for anyone on how we can continue moving Door County to becoming a trauma informed community?

Responses:

Kris Miller: It is so incredibly frustrating that there's so little affordable housing in DC. Air bnb's and other vacation rentals, plus workers at the shipyards, all compete with local families. That is very traumatic for families.

Amanda LaRoche: Very much agree Kris!

Stephanie Short: I agree also

Cori McFarlane: So much goes back to meeting basic needs first, doesn't it (housing, food, clothing, etc.) The harm reduction approach is quite thought provoking for me...

Stephanie Short: To touch on how to get our community more trauma informed is having speakers at the schools and events happening, we have so much tourism based 'festival' take advantage of them and have fundraisers stands for local non for profits

Cori McFarlane: Good suggestion, Stephanie. We try to do some of this. Getting buy-in in the broader community can be a challenge.

Jennifer Moeller: The artwork in this film is extraordinary.

Cori McFarlane: Thanks for your attention and the great input, everyone. I need to attend to something here so will be signing off in a couple of minutes. Hope to see you next time! Watch for follow-up email from Rebecca. Happy Thanksgiving!

Amanda LaRoche: WOW!! Was on the verge of tears the entire time.

Stephanie Short: thank you

Amanda LaRoche: Thanks Rebecca and Cori!

Bibs Maloney: Thank you!

“The Wisdom of Trauma”

KEY TAKE-A-WAYS AND RESOURCES

Take-a-ways:

- Trauma is the invisible force that shapes our lives. It shapes the way we live, the way we love and the way we make sense of the world. It is the root of our deepest wounds.
- In a trauma-informed society parents, teachers, physicians, policy-makers and legal personnel are not concerned with fixing behaviors, making diagnoses, suppressing symptoms and judging, but seek instead to understand the sources from which troubling behaviors and diseases spring in the wounded human soul.
- Every human being has a true genuine authentic self (inner child) and the trauma is that disconnection from it and the healing is the reconnection with it.
- Trauma is not what happens to you. Trauma is what happens inside you, as a result of what happens to you.
- So much of what we call abnormality in this culture is actually normal responses to an abnormal culture. The abnormality does not reside in the pathology of individuals, but in the very culture that drives people into suffering and dysfunction

Self-Reflection Questions

1. Which of the bits of information from this documentary offer you new insights on the wisdom of trauma?
2. To what extent can you appreciate that there is actually wisdom in trauma?
3. What are some of your perspectives on suffering? Does this information offer new ways for you to appreciate what suffering is about?
4. What are some ways you can grow in your compassion, understanding, patience and love and monitor any tendencies to be self-righteous, contemptuous, critical or condemning when someone you know shows the symptoms of unresolved trauma, especially those caught up in addiction?
5. What are some ways you can grow in your compassion, understanding, patience and love toward yourself? In what ways can you check that you are not unfairly critical or condemning of yourself?

More from Dr. Gabor Maté`

Dr. Gabor Maté's website: <https://drgabormate.com/>

Video: Dr Gabor Maté | “90% of people are addicts; 10% are lying to themselves”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrF91EOuSKQ>

Video: Dr. Gabor Maté – “The Power of Addiction and the Addiction to Power”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66cYcSak6nE&t=13s>

Book: In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts <https://drgabormate.com/book/in-the-realm-of-hungry-ghosts/>

Book: Hold onto Your Kids <https://drgabormate.com/book/hold-on-to-your-kids/>

Book: When the Body Says No <https://drgabormate.com/book/when-the-body-says-no/>

Book: Scattered Minds <https://drgabormate.com/book/scattered-minds/>

Book: The Myth of Normal: Trauma, Illness & Healing in a Toxic Culture (due to be released September 13, 2022) <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/1118254/the-myth-of-normal/9781473571075.html>

Other Resources

Reflection to the film by Hannah Merchant <https://hannahmerchant.medium.com/the-wisdom-of-trauma-reflection-21608b6135d5>

Science and Non-Duality website: <https://www.scienceandnonduality.com/>