

# Trauma Modalities

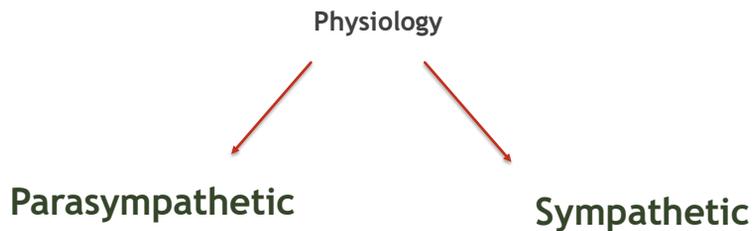
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## Trauma Defined

- ▶ **Trauma** is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, death, severe injury, rape or natural disaster.
- Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea.
  - High Intensity Environmental (Episodic)
  - Low Intensity w/ High Frequency Occurrence
    - Accumulative Effect
    - Complex Trauma

## How Trauma is Created

- ▶ Over-activation the body's threat/stress response system
- ▶ Flight/fight /Freeze
- ▶ Sympathetic Nervous System



## Trauma - Physiology

- ▶ Sympathetic
  - ▶ Accelerate (excite) the heart rate, constrict blood vessels, and raise blood pressure, muscle tension, physical sensation amplification. Inhibition of insulin production to maximize fuel availability , cold hands and feet, headaches
- ▶ Parasympathetic
  - ▶ Promotes digestion, intestinal motility, fuel storage (increases insulin activity), resistance to infection, circulation to non-vital organs, endorphins or the "feel good" hormones. Decreases heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature

### When confronted w/Trauma

Body's threat/stress response system activated

## What is a threat?

- ▶ **Unmet Basic Human Needs can be seen as threat!**
  - ▶ Not feeling capable
  - ▶ Not successful or achieving at something
  - ▶ Not feel cared for
  - ▶ Not belonging to a group
  - ▶ Not having power to/ and influence in environment/world
  - ▶ Not in control in one's life
  - ▶ Not stimulated in mind and body
- ▶ **Fears & worrisome fantasies**
  - ▶ Not having fun and pleasure
  - ▶ Not understanding reality
  - ▶ Not appearing competent to others
  - ▶ Not being seen as being worthwhile or held in esteem by to others
  - ▶ Not feeling safe
  - ▶ Not feeling secure in our attachments to others
  - ▶ Not having a sense of meaning or purpose in life
  - ▶ Being judged
  - ▶ Not measuring up
  - ▶ Not being liked
  - ▶ Not being loveable
  - ▶ What if I fail
  - ▶ What if I can never get better
  - ▶ Not being competent

## What is a threat?

- ▶ **Fears & worrisome fantasies**
  - ▶ What are they thinking about me
  - ▶ What if I can't do this
  - ▶ Thought to be stupid
  - ▶ Being criticized
  - ▶ Not meeting other important folks' expectations and demands
  - ▶ Will they still like/love me
  - ▶ Being asked questions
  - ▶ If this doesn't work what am I going to do

## Trauma- Physiology

- ▶ **Adaptation** is the action or process of adapting. (become adjusted to a conditions, circumstance) such as hiding/or isolating yourself when someone threatens you, jumping out of the way if someone is trying to hit you.
- ▶ **Mitigation** is the action of reducing the severity, seriousness, or painfulness of some aspect of the situation (this could be provoking a fight, before the tension gets too high, take a few drinks or some drugs before you walk into a family get together, pop a valium before a big presentation).
- ▶ Activation of the threat/stress response systems shoves the entire body into a reactive adaptation

## Trauma- Physiology

### Traumagenesis

- ▶ The progression of over-activating the body's threat/stress response system, which creates reactive adaptation and mitigation behaviors that interfere or interrupt normal developmental processes in the major domains of human existence.

### Sympathetic Dominant

- ▶ Physiological arousal affects how the nervous system regulates thoughts, emotions, and physiology

**Sympathetic Nervous System in Charge**

**Dorsal Vagal System Enhanced**

**Parasympathetic Nervous System Suppressed**

**Executive Functioning Suppressed**

**Sympathetic Dominant**

**Threat Perception System Enhanced**

**Ventral Vagal System Suppressed**

**Sub-diaphragmatic systems Suppressed**

► **Sympathetic In Charge**

- Angry
- Aggressive
- Defensive
- Reactive
- Overtly manipulative
- coercive
- Impulsive
- Hostile
- Irrational
- Self-centered

**Dorsal Vagal Enhanced**

- Freezing, stuck, paralysis of action
- Dissociation
- Emotional numbing
- Distraction
- Covertly manipulative
- Engage as a martyr
- Self-soothing
- Reactive
- Impulsive

## Trauma-Physiology

**Threat Perception System Enhanced**

- Faster to react,
- The here and now gets distorted
- Difficulty Being True to Oneself
- Externally focused, Increases self-centeredness
- Pleasure and connection to others can become less rewarding

**Ventral Vagal System Suppressed**

- General reduction in feeling pleasure, particularly in relational terms.
- Difficulty relating to others and forming satisfying attachments
- Fear of allowing pleasure,

## Executive Functioning Suppressed

### Deficits in

- Working toward a defined goal
- Ability to determine future consequences of current activities
- Ability of prediction of outcomes
- Ability to suppress urges
- Determine good and bad
- Determine better and best
- Determine same and different
- Concentration
- Judgment
- Emotional & Behavioral Regulation

Failure to be self-reflective  
 Impaired learning  
 Poor Problem solving ability  
 Poor Decision making  
 Inappropriate social behavior

## Sub-diaphragmatic Systems Suppressed

- Reduced nutrition from foods eaten
- Elimination difficulties
- Inflammation leading to a host of illnesses and pain
- Painful sexuality

## Physiology of Trauma

## PTSD

### Increased activation in the amygdala

- Amygdala disables the frontal lobes and activates the fight-or-flight response
- Hinders ability to think clearly, make rational decisions, or control your responses
- Heighten fear and anxiety

## Bigotry & Trauma

- ▶ **INTERSECTIONALITY** - the analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege.
- Racism
  - Structural
  - Institutional
- Sexism
- Homophobia
- Xenophobia
- Transphobia

## Bigotry & Trauma

- ▶ **Insidious trauma** - the daily incidents of marginalization, objectification, dehumanization, intimidation, et cetera that are experienced by members of groups targeted by racism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, sexism, and other forms of oppression, and groups impacted by poverty
- ▶ Examples:
  - ▶ *Black women firefighters*
    - *Insufficient instruction*
    - *Coworker hostility*
    - *Silence*
    - *Close/hostile supervision*
    - *Lack of support*
    - *Stereotyping*

## Moral Injury

It's a wound of the conscience

- ▶ Acts of Commission -When someone does something that goes against their beliefs
- ▶ Acts of Omission - when an individual fails to do something in line with their beliefs
- ❖ A moral injury can occur in response to acting or witnessing behaviors that go against an individual's values and moral beliefs.
- ❖ Individuals may also experience betrayal from leadership, others in positions of power or peers that can result in adverse outcomes
- ❖ Moral injury is the distressing psychological, behavioral, social, and sometimes spiritual aftermath of exposure to such events

## History of EMDR

- ▶ Accidental by Francine Shaprio, a PhD psychology student in 1987.
- ▶ Her walk.
- ▶ “...when disturbing thought came into my mind, my eyes spontaneously started moving rapidly back and forth in an upward diagonal...”
- ▶ Tried with friends
- ▶ Developed protocol (EMD - Eye movement desensitization).

## EMDR (Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing) Defined:

EMDR is adaptive information processing (AIP); this posits that much of psychopathology is due to the maladaptive encoding or incomplete processing of traumatic or disturbing adverse life experiences. This can impair an individual's capacity to integrate experiences in an adaptive manner.

EMDR- argued by many; therefore many studies.

## Inclusive to EMDR

- ▶ Psychodynamic
- ▶ Behavioral
- ▶ Cognitive
- ▶ Gestalt
- ▶ Reichian
- ▶ Feminist

## EMDR

### Will EMDR change who I am?

No. Personality traits are habitual characteristic responses based on stored experiences. The physical memory networks interact to produce psychological pathology or health.

EMDR provides direct, nonintrusive, physiological engagement with the stored elements.

## EMDR - Processing

- ▶ Processing the old memories and distortions.
- ▶ Desensitization of disturbing material
- ▶ Embedded shifts

## Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE)

- ▶ Developed by Dr. Edna B. Foa as one of the most empirically supported treatments for PTSD.
- ▶ CBT approach.
- ▶ 2 emotions at the same time.

## Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE)

- ▶ Facing the feared stimuli
- ▶ In-vivo exposure and Imaginal exposure
- ▶ How can fear help us?

## Brain Spotting

- ▶ Founder- therapist David Grand in 2003
- ▶ Clearing trauma blockage
- ▶ Visual Field; Fluid kind of therapy- no standard protocol - therefore receives more criticism

## Brain Spotting Protocol

- ▶ State of relaxation
- ▶ Identify a place in body where you feel most distress
- ▶ Where your eyes naturally focus
- ▶ Outside or inside window
- ▶ Hone in on the feelings
- ▶ Process the experience through talk.
- ▶ Then again rate the stress

## Brain Spotting, what for?

- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Attachment concerns
- ▶ Substance Abuse (also EMDR protocol for this).
- ▶ PTSD
- ▶ Chronic pain
- ▶ Major depressive disorder (EMDR protocol for this too).

Questions?

## References

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EMDRIA.org