TRAUMA INFORMED DEMENTIA CARE

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GOALS OF THIS TRAINING

• Define trauma
• Know how trauma can impact someone for life
• Learn ways to incorporate the knowledge of past trauma into caring for someone with dementia
• Learn to change our mindset to improve communication and support of the person with dementia
• Learn tools to assist in improving communication
POOR COMMUNICATION CAUSES PROBLEMS

The American Psychiatric Association Practice Guidelines Show:

Poor interpersonal relationships can cause increased agitation and aggressive behaviors in people with dementia.

Teaching caregivers interpersonal communication skill can reduce the need for psychotropic medication in people with dementia.

Can you think of a time that you had a disagreement with someone over something that now does not even matter?
Making a Connection

- Behavior issues occur when we have not connected to the person.
- Knowing the person and their history makes connecting easier.
  - Job History
  - School History
  - Hobbies, sports, and other activities that they enjoyed
  - Family History
  - Places they have lived
  - Things that made them happy
  - Past trauma
Past trauma increases a person’s risk of dementia

Additional trauma can be added as a person ages

“In general, trauma can be defined as a psychological, emotional response to an event or an experience that is deeply distressing or disturbing.”

“Complex trauma happens repetitively. It often results in direct harm to the individual. The effects of complex trauma are cumulative. The traumatic experience frequently transpires within a particular time frame or within a specific relationship, and often in a specific setting.”

“Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can develop after a person has been exposed to a terrifying event or has been through an ordeal in which intense physical harm occurred or was threatened. Sufferers of this PTSD have persistent and frightening thoughts and memories of their ordeal.”

- Centers for Anxiety Disorders
Being “trauma-informed” is realizing that people have many types of trauma in their lives and that trauma may have a life long impact on them. Because of this realization we change how we look at the situation and add empathy into our responses.

- It is a mindset and a way of approaching people, not a formal set of rules to follow

Types of trauma that people with dementia may have suffered:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- PTSD-Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- The Holocaust
- Systemic Racism
- Disaster
- Grief/Loss
- Transfer Trauma
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

• https://www.ncjfcj.org/sites/default/files/Finding%20Your%20ACE%20Score.pdf

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

How ACEs Influence Health

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Healthy Brain
This PET scan of the brain of a normal child shows regions of high (red) and low (blue and black) activity. At birth, only primitive structures such as the brain stem (center) are fully functional; in regions like the temporal lobes (top) early childhood experiences wire the circuits.

An Abused Brain
This PET scan of the brain of a Romanian Orphan, who was institutionalized shortly after birth, shows the effect of extreme deprivation in infancy. The temporal lobes (top), which regulate emotions and receive input from the senses, are nearly quiescent. Such children suffer emotional and cognitive problems.

Figure 5
ACE score and relative risk of a range of disturbances, USA, 2006

Source: using data from (10)

Note: These odds ratios were adjusted for age, sex, race and educational attainment. Full definitions for each of the areas are given in the full article.
**ACES-IMPACT ON SOMEONE WITH DEMENTIA**

- It helps to know that people with dementia may have past trauma that is still impacting them.
- Unresolved past trauma may impact the behaviors or reactions that someone has.
- Past trauma results in coping methods that are used life long
- Understanding leads to empathy and a connection

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**EXAMPLES OF TRAUMA INDUCED BEHAVIOR**

- Need for new items
- Hording
- Fear of loud voices - becomes agitated or hides/runs away
- Not wanted to be naked or exposed
- Addiction
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Make risky choices
- Poor relationships with people and families
- Sleep Disorders

**Thinking of these behaviors...**

- How might they be manifested in someone with dementia?
- What "behaviors" might someone demonstrate?
- What are some ideas to help with these needs and to minimize the environmental triggers?
UNCOVERING ACES

- Interview family members
- Look for clues
- Sometimes you may not learn the actual ACES, but knowing how trauma impacts people can help us to look differently at the situation
- Understanding brings compassion and compassion brings solutions.

PTSD — POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

- Veterans with PTSD have a two fold risk of developing dementia
- Someone with PTSD and dementia has a risk of reliving the traumatic experience over and over again.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bu_dOPVdXLM
PTSD – SYMPTOMS AND SOLUTIONS

- PTSD and Dementia – Case Example
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5N5JemRkHo

Many survivors suffered PTSD
- Withdrawal from life, relationships and activities.
- Life-long fear
- Lack of trust
TRANSFER TRAUMA

- Moving can induce trauma to a person no matter if they have dementia or not.
- Staff and families should be trained that any move is almost guaranteed to cause trauma in a person with dementia.
- Be prepared for increased confusion.
- Transfer trauma can also bring up symptoms of older traumas, such as if a person had been homeless they may relive those feelings.

BE FLEXIBLE

- Imagine that you are a routine person, doing the same thing every morning. Now imagine how you would feel in this scenario: you are going to take a shower, eat breakfast while drinking a hot cup of coffee and watch the morning news. When you went to take your shower only cold water came out of the faucet. Disappointed that you had a two minute cold shower instead of the hot shower you planned on, you go to have breakfast. Your family finished off your favorite cereal and the coffee pot refuses to turn on. While eating your toast with water, you turn on the morning talk show to see they are showing a news conference instead.

- What would your mood be at this point?
Dementia changes people – not just memory

- Dementia changes personalities, routines, and a person's ability to remember. Often dementia is referred to as memory impairment, but it affects more than memory. One of the areas that dementia affects is a person's ability to keep track of time. Their days and nights are often mixed up.

- Caregivers must learn to be flexible to be trauma informed.

**Be Flexible – Swedish Storytelling Game**

- Pair up with someone
- One of you is the storyteller, and the other is the word giver
- Have the word giver give the storyteller a made-up title of a story to tell. The storyteller begins telling the story. During the story, the word giver will call out random words that have nothing to do with what the storyteller is talking about. For instance, if the story is about a trip to the beach, the word giver avoids helpful words like “sand”, “waves”, “surfboards”, etc. Instead you give completely disassociated words like “pudding”, “dinosaur”, and “Sean Connery”
- The storyteller has to instantly incorporate the random words into the story. The word giver must wait until the word just given is incorporated into the story before calling out a new one
- After a while, the storyteller finds an ending to his/her story and then the players switch roles
GAME DEBRIEF

• How did it feel to have to change your story?

• What is one thing you can do to Be Flexible or More Trauma Informed in the next 30 days?

CHANGE YOUR THOUGHT PROCESS

Stop thinking: “She’s confused. She has dementia.”
Start thinking: “I’m confused. I don’t know what she’s trying to tell me.”

Instead of: “How can I control this person?”
Think “How can I accommodate this person?”
QUESTIONS?
Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire
Finding your ACE Score

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often …
   Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?
   or
   Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
   Yes No
   If yes enter 1

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often …
   Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?
   or
   Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
   Yes No
   If yes enter 1

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever…
   Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?
   or
   Try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?
   Yes No
   If yes enter 1

4. Did you often feel that …
   No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?
   or
   Your family didn’t look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
   Yes No
   If yes enter 1

5. Did you often feel that …
   You didn’t have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?
   or
   Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
   Yes No
   If yes enter 1

6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
   Yes No
   If yes enter 1

7. Was your mother or stepmother:
   Often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?
   or
   Sometimes or often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?
   or
   Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
   Yes No
   If yes enter 1

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?
   Yes No
   If yes enter 1

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide?
   Yes No
   If yes enter 1

10. Did a household member go to prison?
    Yes No
    If yes enter 1

Now add up your “Yes” answers: _______ This is your ACE Score