

Rape Trauma Syndrome & Trauma Informed Care

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**SASHA
CENTER**

SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES FOR
HOLISTIC HEALING AND AWARENESS



Ground Rules

- Respect
- Honor
- Listen
- Open
- Honesty
- Confidentiality
- Self Care
- Participation!!!!!!



Workshop Goals

- Provide information/education regarding ***sexual assault***.
- Encourage a paradigm shift in service provision from a ***culturally competent*** perspective.
- To identify techniques and resources available to survivors from a ***trauma informed*** perspective.
- Explore topic from a ***gender specific perspective*** with ***substance abuse considerations***.
- Review and discuss ***alternative modalities*** for working with traumatized survivors of rape.

Specific Tasks...

- Define **Sexual Assault**
- Remember the **Voices of Survivors**
- Identify and define **Rape Trauma Syndrome**
- Identify and define **Trauma Informed Care**
- Explore **Alternative Treatment Modalities**
- Identify **Resources for Professionals**

Quotes from Survivors



- "I was molested by my older brother, and even when I confronted him and told my parents, he said I was lying, and nothing was really done."

Comedienne Monique

- Kids when they're five don't make up stories like that.
- "Oprah had a show about what to do in case you're a victim of a violent crime, and immediately I went on auto pilot; it was like Oprah was in my ear telling me what to do to stay alive."

Actress Gabrielle Union

- You feel you must have done something wrong.

What have you heard survivors of rape say regarding the trauma related to the sexual assault(s) which have occurred in their lives?

Sexual Assault Defined

Sexual Assault is a Crime

Any Unwanted Sexual Contact is Sexual Assault

It's important to understand the definition of sexual assault. Any sexual contact that you do not want is sexual assault. Sexual assault is any forced or coerced sexual intercourse or contact. It is a crime of violence in which assailants, whether known to the victim or not, are motivated by a desire to humiliate and have power over the victim.

<http://www.uwlax.edu/StudentLife/sa.html>

Rape is a Crime.



- In Michigan, Rape is against the law and is any form of sexual assault or contact that a victim has not initiated or agreed to which is imposed by using threat, physical violence or deception and usually committed by someone the victim knows. Also referred to as sexual assault.

Sexual Assault Laws...



- Michigan law defines sexual assault by the action of the perpetrator not the victim. In fact, there is specific law that says that the victim need not have resisted the perpetrator in order for it to be considered rape.

Trauma Conceptualized...



- A traumatic event or situation creates psychological trauma when it overwhelms the individual's ability to cope, and leaves that person fearing death, annihilation, mutilation, or psychosis. It is the sharing of this experience to a caring/listening advocate that causes additional trauma to the caregiver.
- The advocate in turn may feel emotionally, cognitively, and physically overwhelmed. Especially if the advocate has to struggle with the environment to get the help a client needs.

PTSD-Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- anxiety disorder
- triggered by a traumatic event
- **experience** or witness an event that causes intense fear, helplessness or horror.
- period of difficulty adjusting and coping.
- healthy coping methods work, but if not implemented
- disrupt your life.

Getting treatment as soon as possible after post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms develop may prevent PTSD from becoming a long-term condition.

SOURCE:<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/DS00246>

Cultural Competency Considerations



- Culture shapes an individual's experience and response to trauma.
- Culture shapes the advocate's response to survivors and themselves regarding acceptance and responsibility.
- Culture shapes access to other services that might be crucial for the survivor.
- Your own culture will impact the extent to which you seek healing alternatives and how well you respond to the client.

Gender Considerations



Men and women are socialized with **strict** gender role expectations.

Women are expected to be **emotional, caretakers, mothers, and nurturers.**

Men are expected to be **providers, the head of the family, the disciplinarian, detached,** and un-emotive.

More men commit rape on **both men and women** who more than likely identify as **heterosexual.**

More women in the U.S. are victims of rape.

Most men are non-offenders.

However, non-offending men are usually quiet about violence against women and girls.

Substance Abuse Considerations

- Research proves that there is a strong relationship between trauma experience and substance use disorders.
- Persons of both genders who have been traumatized are more likely to abuse alcohol and/or drugs.

The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. (2001).

Substance Abuse



- Adolescents who have been sexually assaulted are...
- **4.5 times** more likely to abuse alcohol
- **4 times** more likely to abuse marijuana abuse
- **9 times** more likely to abuse hard drugs.

The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. (2001).

The Addictions Connection

- Women reportedly begin abusing drugs or alcohol after a traumatic event.
- Violent and abusive relationships are strong contributors to female substance abuse.
- A major study on adult women found there is a direct relationship between the number of times a woman has been victimized and the likelihood that she will become alcoholic.
- Women who abuse drugs or alcohol have a greater risk of repeated assaults than do other women.

Substance Abuse and Trauma

- Women who have repressed memories of traumatic events experience significant increases in drug or alcohol use when such memories re-emerge.

The National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource. The Source. Women and Addiction: Treatment Issues and Innovative Program Models. 2003.

Substance Abuse and Trauma

- **70% of women in substance abuse treatment report a history of physical or sexual abuse.**
- **40% of alcoholic women report a history of incest or rape.**
- **90% of women with drug abuse problems have been sexually abused at least one time in their lifetime.**
- **Half of these women report the sexual abuse prior to age 18.**

Substance Abuse and Trauma

- The relationship between prior sexual trauma & addiction often follows women into adulthood, as they may engage in sexual acts to support their drug habits.
- This interplay between drugs and the sex trade can put women at further risk for entering the criminal justice system.

Evaluation of a Trauma-Informed and Gender-Responsive Intervention for Women in Drug Treatment. Covington. 2008.

Substance Abuse Statistics

- In a study by **John Hopkins University** on the relationship between homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse 79% of the participants reported a history of physical or sexual trauma.
- Of this population, **100%** of the homeless women (27/27) with co-occurring disorders had experienced a life-altering traumatic event while 68.6% (35/51) of the homeless men also reported trauma histories.

Homeless, Mentally Ill and Addicted: The Need for Abuse and Trauma Services.
Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved. 2005. John Hopkins
University Press.

Sexual Assault and Substance Abuse

- Many chemically-dependent trauma survivors use alcohol and drugs to medicate symptoms of anxiety or depression because they know no better ways to comfort themselves.
- Teaching women self-soothing activities such as walking, meditation, music etc. can help them feel safe internally.

Women and Addiction: A Trauma-Informed Approach. Covington. 2008.

Rape Trauma Syndrome

- During the Attack
 - Fight, Flight or Freeze
 - Disorientation
 - Focus on Survival
- Acute Reactions
 - Shock, Pain, Numbness, Soreness, Tension, Emotional, Withdrawn
- Reorganization Reactions
 - Trying to understand the impact on ones life
- Resolution or Integration Phase
 - After a time, the trauma moves from a memory that totally take over their lives to an experience that has changed their lives but no longer controls it.

Trauma Informed Care

- Rape Survivors represent the largest non-combat group of individuals with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Campbell and Wasco, 2005). When rape victims disclose their assault(s) they often risk disbelief, scorn, shame, punishment and refusals of help. (Kilpatrick and Seymour, 1992).

Defining Trauma Informed Care

- “Trauma Informed” services are not specifically designed to treat symptoms or syndromes related to sexual or physical abuse or other trauma, but they are informed about, and sensitive to, trauma-related issues present in survivors. It is a system in which all components of a given service system have been considered and evaluated in the light of a basic understanding of the role that violence plays in the lives of adults, children, and adolescents and families or caregivers seeking mental health and addictions services (Harris and Fallot, 2001).

Key Elements

- Cultural Competence
- Trauma Competence
- Safety
- Collaboration



Elements of Trauma Informed Care

- Whole Individual
- Trust and Safety
- Trauma knowledge, **awareness/sensitivity** instilled at all levels of the system
- Prevention-Oriented
- Strengths Based, **Resilience and Healing** oriented
- Collaborative-use of **non-traditional** and expanded community supports
- Facilitates **Growth, Resilience, Healing** and Empowerment
- Culturally Competent/Sensitive Services
- Seeks to minimize re-victimization/re-traumatization in all aspects of service delivery
- Victim choice and control/maximize individualized service delivery

Treatment Considerations

- Be aware that survivors may know very little about the criminal justice system and may find it intimidating, confusing and frightening;
- Let survivors decide when and where they want to talk;
- Provide as much information as possible regarding the investigative process;
- Give survivors information to help them make informed decisions;
- Have a list of community referrals readily accessible.



The SASHA Center Story

- Founded in 2010
- Culturally Specific Programming
- Exchange between Advocate and Survivor-IMPORTANT!
- **Survivor Focused**
 - Listen and let them teach you-the Advocate
- **Survivor Lead**
 - If it works for them, who are we to deny them?
- **Survivor Informed**
 - Provide opportunities for criticism and feedback
- **Non-Traditional and Alternative Modalities**
 - Practice, Leadership, Methodology

Programming

- Non-Traditional Support Groups
- Primary Prevention
- Poetry Performances/Spoken Word Events
- Wall of Hope-Art Project
- Healing Tent-Space Creation
- Drumming Circles
- Urban Farming in Detroit





SASHA
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Alternative Modalities at SASHA CENTER

- Ancestor Reverence
- Meditation/Chanting/Drum Circles
- Massage/Safe Touch Therapy
- Crystals, Water and Sage
- Eating A Well Balanced Diet-Urban Farming
- Exercise-Cycling the City with Survivors
- Art Projects

Comments, Questions...



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Closing



- This is an **exploratory** workshop-in progress.
- It's an introduction to how trauma informed care can be dynamic and involves practice, process, interaction, universal energy and guidance.
- There are opportunities to continue this work by taking information back to your organizations, agencies and local community activism, but more importantly I hope you remember to take care of yourself...**first** and **foremost** and **guilt free**.



Closing Exercise

- Hold Hands
- Look at each other
- Listen to these words, feel them, internalize them and be inspired by them.
- You are Special, an original work of art, delicate yet strong, unbreakable, but flexible, and worthy of time spent. I am so glad we are here today, present, together. You are courageous, caring, and calm. You are a reflection of perfection, just as you are. You are a healer, a motivator and warrior. Together we are safer, stronger, and able. I honor you today and for this moment, I am thankful.

Resources for Professionals

MCEDSV

www.mcedsv.org

Arte Sana-

www.arte-sana.com

SASHA Center

www.sashacenter.com

National Resource Center

www.nsvrc.org

Joyful Heart Foundation

www.joyfulheartfoundation.org

