Organizational Trauma and Resiliency

Kris Bein and Valerie Davis
The Resource Sharing Project, IowaCASA

Participants will:

- Identify the ways organizations are traumatized and how trauma manifests itself.
- Describe strategies to mitigate trauma and build resiliency.
- Create strategies to respond to trauma within their own agencies.

Organizational Trauma and Healing
by Pat Vivian & Shana Hormann

This presentation adapted from Pat Vivian and Shana Hormann, 2014
Organizational Perspective

Individual-Work-Culture Connection

What do we know about how sexual violence affects individuals?
Lifecycles, Crises,...

...and Trauma

Organizational Trauma

- Organizations, like individuals, can be traumatized, and the result of the traumatic experience can be as devastating for organizations as it is for individuals.

- Organizational trauma can be a barrier to building a culture of trauma-informed care.
Sources of Organizational Trauma

- Single catastrophic event
- Ongoing wounding (internal or external)
- Redemptive nature of the work
- Empathic nature of the work

Characteristics of a Traumatized System

- Closed boundaries
- Stress and anxiety contagion
- Worldview and identity erosion
- Depression, despair and loss of hope

Characteristics of Persistent Traumatization

- Inadequate emotional containment
- Cumulative discouragement
- Cyclical burnout of staff and leaders
- Continuing lack of trust
Characteristics of Persistent Traumatization

- Regularity of re-traumatizing triggers
- Trauma-inured or accepting culture
- Ongoing instability
- Anxiety-based conversations and decisions

Exacerbating Factors

- Limiting attitudes and worldview
- Organizational amnesia
- Unproductive relationships between organization and environment
- Unrecognized wounding from trauma

Resiliency Factors

- Strong core identity
- Organizational esteem
- Facilitating structures and processes
- Positive connection to peer agencies
- Hopeful and energetic leadership
Responding to Organizational Trauma

- Recognize and acknowledge trauma
- Ensure safety, contain anxiety, and normalize experience
- Create process for organization-wide dialogue
- Integrate trauma in affirming and meaningful ways

Responding to Organizational Trauma

- Build on strengths and bolster organizational esteem
- Institute facilitating structures and processes
- Set priorities to move forward

Leadership in Building and Supporting Resilience

- Act as a role model
- Identify suffering and trauma
- Contain impacts of traumatization
- Offer optimism, confidence, and energy
Leadership in Building and Supporting Resilience

• Provide frameworks for meaning making
• Champion organizational strengths
• Model kindness and compassion
• Ask for outside help when necessary

How will you open a productive and kind dialogue about organizational trauma?

Our doors are always open... please contact us with any additional questions!

Kris Bein
kris@iowacasa.org or 515.401.8722
Valerie Davis
valerie@iowacasa.org or 515.330.6175
Thank You OVW!

This project was supported by Grant No. 2009-TA-AX-K011 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this program are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

Learn more!

Materials and resources available at www.nsvrc.org/SADI or http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/sexual-assault-demonstration-initiative