



**H**OMELESS &  
**H**OUSING  
**R**ESOURCE  
**C**ENTER

# Trauma Informed Outreach and Engagement Learning Community

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Session #1

Trauma-Informed Care: Responding to the Trauma  
of Homelessness

June 7, 2022

# Disclaimer


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- We have arranged for ASL interpretation services during this meeting. The ASL interpreters are:
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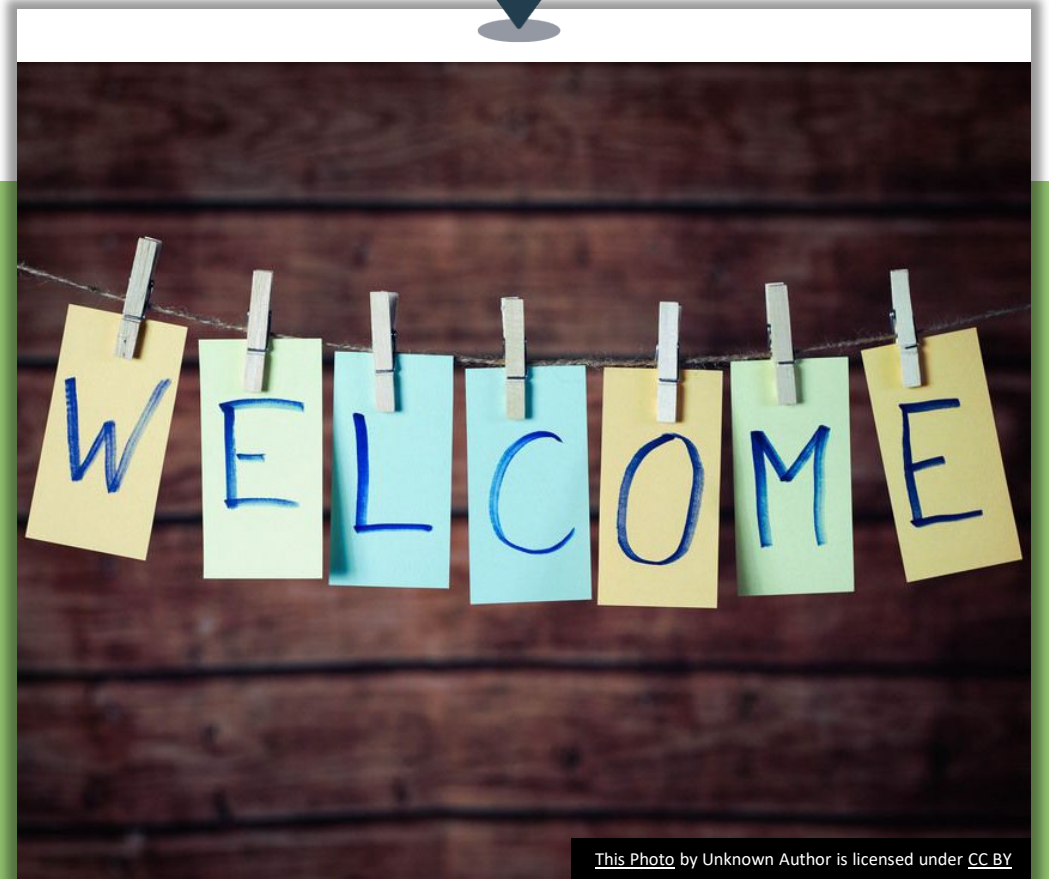
# Webinar Instructions

- All participant lines will be muted and the chat feature is disabled
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- **Questions:** Please submit your questions using the Q&A feature
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- **Certificate of Participation** (no CEUs are offered): Provided after evaluation is completed

# Introduction to the Learning Community



- This learning community will focus on trauma-informed outreach and engagement practices to serve individuals with serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbances, substance use disorders, or co-occurring disorders.
- In this four-part series, you will learn best practices in trauma-informed care and person-centered outreach, how to connect people with services and housing, and how to provide behavioral health care assessments in unsheltered environments.



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# Learning Community Series



Session 1

Trauma-Informed Care: Responding to the Trauma of Homelessness

Session 2

Best Practices for Person-Centered Outreach

Session 3

Making the Connection to the Homeless Response System

Session 4

Providing Behavioral Health Care in Unsheltered Environments

# Today's Learning Objectives



- Build foundational knowledge of trauma and trauma-informed care
- Understand the relationship between trauma and the experience of homelessness
- Explore best practices in trauma-informed care
- Highlight examples of incorporating trauma-informed care into work with people experiencing homelessness in different settings



# Today's Presenters



**Gillian Morshedi**  
Homebase



**Tiffany Juarez, LCSW**  
Battling Minds, LLC



**Alicia Lehmer**  
Homebase



# Poll #1: Tell Us About Yourself!

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- Which would best describe the focus of your work?
  - Behavioral health care
  - Physical health care
  - Homeless services
  - Housing
  - Social services
  - Outreach
  - Other (please share in the chat)



## Poll #2: Working with People Experiencing Homeless



How much of your work is with people experiencing homelessness?

- **100%** dedicated to serving people experiencing homelessness
- **Most** of our clients are experiencing homelessness
- **Some** of our clients are experiencing homelessness
- **A few** of our clients are experiencing homelessness



# Introduction to Trauma and Homelessness

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# What is Trauma?

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Trauma results from exposure to an incident or series of events that are threatening to a person's physical, mental or emotional well-being.

These incidents or series of events have lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and well-being. Trauma can be overwhelming, result in intense feelings of fear and lack of control, and leave people feeling helpless.



# The Three “E”s of Trauma



EVENT



EXPERIENCE



EFFECT



# Effects of Trauma

*May include:*

- Increased physical and mental stress
- Impacts on cognitive processes (memory, attention, thinking)
- Inability to cope with the stresses and strains of daily living
- Difficulty trusting others and forming close relationships (personal, professional, with service providers)
- Fear or concern about safety
- Difficulty regulating behavior and expressing emotions
- Lack of belief in self-worth and capabilities

# Trauma and Behavioral Health

## Substance Use

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- Many people who have substance use disorders have experienced trauma as children or adults
- People who abuse substances and have experienced trauma have worse treatment outcomes than those without histories of trauma

## Mental Health

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- People who are receiving treatment for severe mental disorders are more likely to have histories of trauma
- Traumatic stress increases the risk for mental illness, and findings suggest that traumatic stress increases the symptom severity of mental illness

# The Trauma of Homelessness

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*The experience of homelessness itself is traumatic*

Lack of safety and control

Dangers, indignities, threats, and stigma

Circumstances that can exacerbate and compound symptoms of mental health and substance use disorders

Disconnect from social supports and community at large

Fragmented, unresponsive systems

Re-traumatization





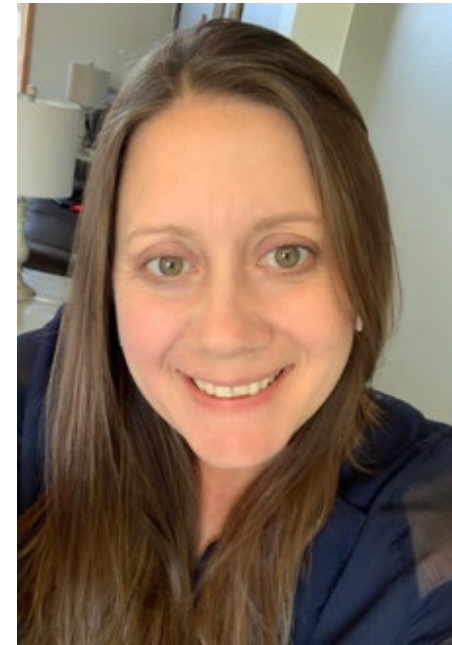
# Survival Strategies



Trauma survivors often develop a set of survival skills that help them to manage past trauma, such as substance use, withdrawal, and aggression.



# Community Presentation and Conversation: Trauma of Homelessness



**Tiffany Juarez, LCSW**  
Battling Minds, LLC



# Trauma-Informed Care

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# What is Trauma-Informed Care?



A strengths-based service delivery approach grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

# Trauma-Informed Care in Action

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## Realize

the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery

## Recognize

the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system

## Respond

by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices

## Resist

re-traumatization of clients and staff

# Framework for Providing Trauma-Informed Care



1

Creating safe physical and emotional spaces

2

Supporting control and choice

3

Integrating trauma-informed care across services and systems



# Trauma-Informed Care in the Homeless Response System



## Outreach

Meeting people where they are; addressing basic needs; building trust/rapport; showing respect for personal space and property



## Assessment & Intake

Strengths-based; open-ended questions; only ask what is needed; avoid duplicate questions and making people retell their story



## Program Design

Client input in design and structure; elements of privacy and personalization; open areas; natural light; comfortable furniture; adequate access to services and staff



# Trauma-Informed Care in the Homeless Response System



## Service Delivery

Strength-based; trauma-informed counseling; safety planning; wraparound services; client-driven service plan; continuity and consistency of care



## Staff & Training

Peer support specialists; mental health professionals; ongoing training on trauma-informed practices; education on signs of secondary trauma; staff check-ins and support for self-care activities



# Trauma-Informed Care & Harm Reduction

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- Harm reduction focuses on meeting people where they are to help them minimize the risks associated with behaviors that can cause harm, such as substance use.
- Success is measured by positive behavior change, no matter how big or small.
- Harm reduction honors a person's autonomy (control and choice) in defining their path and timeline while still promoting greater health and safety.

# Trauma-Informed Care & Peer Supports



- **Peers** refer to individuals with shared lived experiences, which may include trauma, homelessness, mental health or substance use disorders, and other shared identities or experiences.
- **Peer support workers or specialists** are trained to use their lived experiences skillfully in supporting others on their journeys.
- Peer support is key for establishing safety and hope, building trust, enhancing collaboration, and exploring options and problem-solving challenges.

# Trauma- Informed Care & Housing First



- Housing First prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life.
- For people with histories of trauma, ending homelessness is crucial for healing trauma and building resilience.
- Housing First prioritizes strengths, respect, choice, and safety for persons experiencing homelessness.



## Community Presentation and Conversation: Trauma-Informed Care in Practice



**Tiffany Juarez, LCSW**  
Battling Minds, LLC



# Question?



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# Closing Poll

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What is one thing you will take into your work based on what was shared today?



# Series Overview & Future Sessions



Session 1

Trauma-Informed Care: Responding to the Trauma of Homelessness

Session 2

Best Practices for Person-Centered Outreach

Session 3

Making the Connection to the Homeless Response System

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# Next Session



## Best Practices for Person-Centered Outreach

Jun 21, 2022  
2:30 - 4pm (EST)



# Thank You!

*SAMHSA's Homeless and Housing Resource Center provides high-quality, no-cost training for health and housing professionals in evidence-based practices that contributes to housing stability, recovery, and an end to homelessness.*

## Contact Us:

<http://hhrctraining.org/>

[info@hhrctraining.org](mailto:info@hhrctraining.org)

518-439-7415x4

