

Keys to Resilience, Healing & Trauma Informed Practice

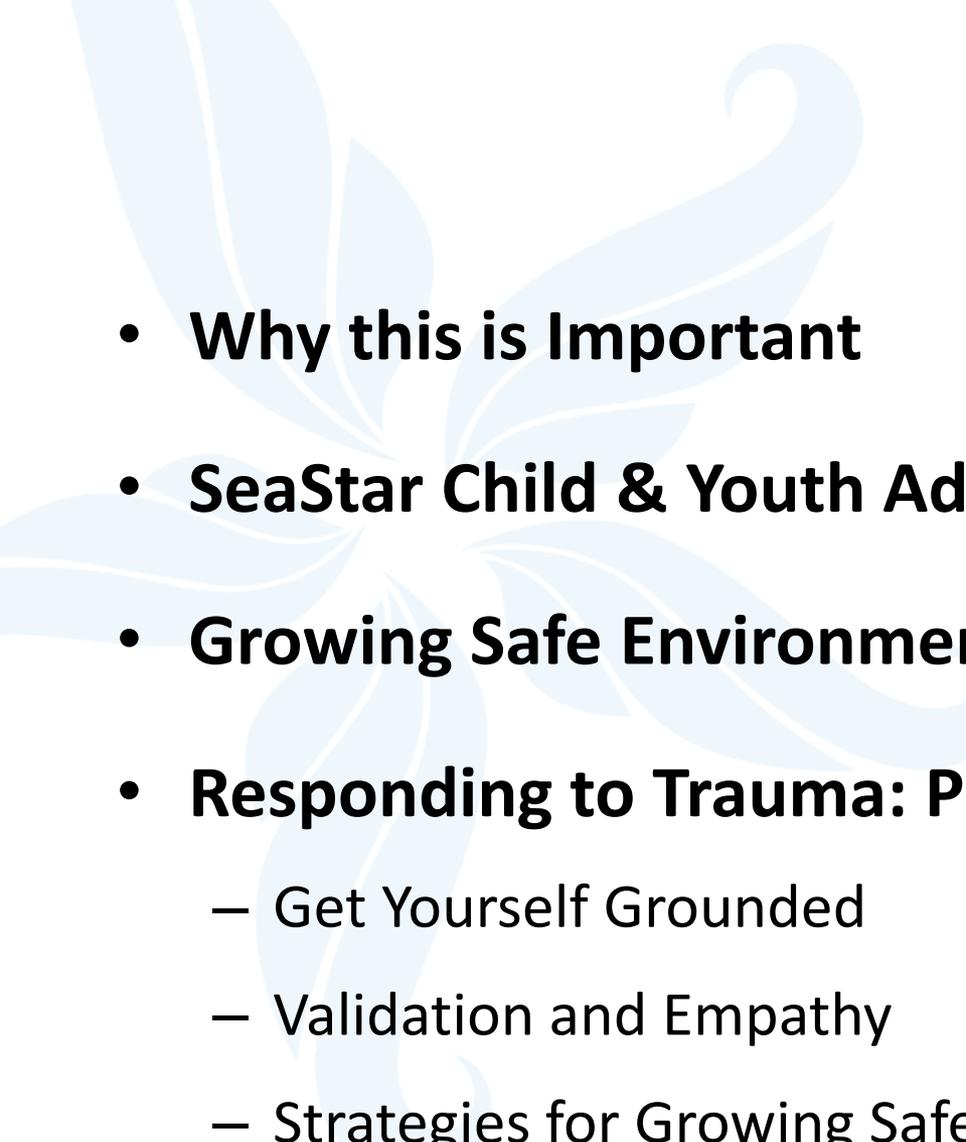
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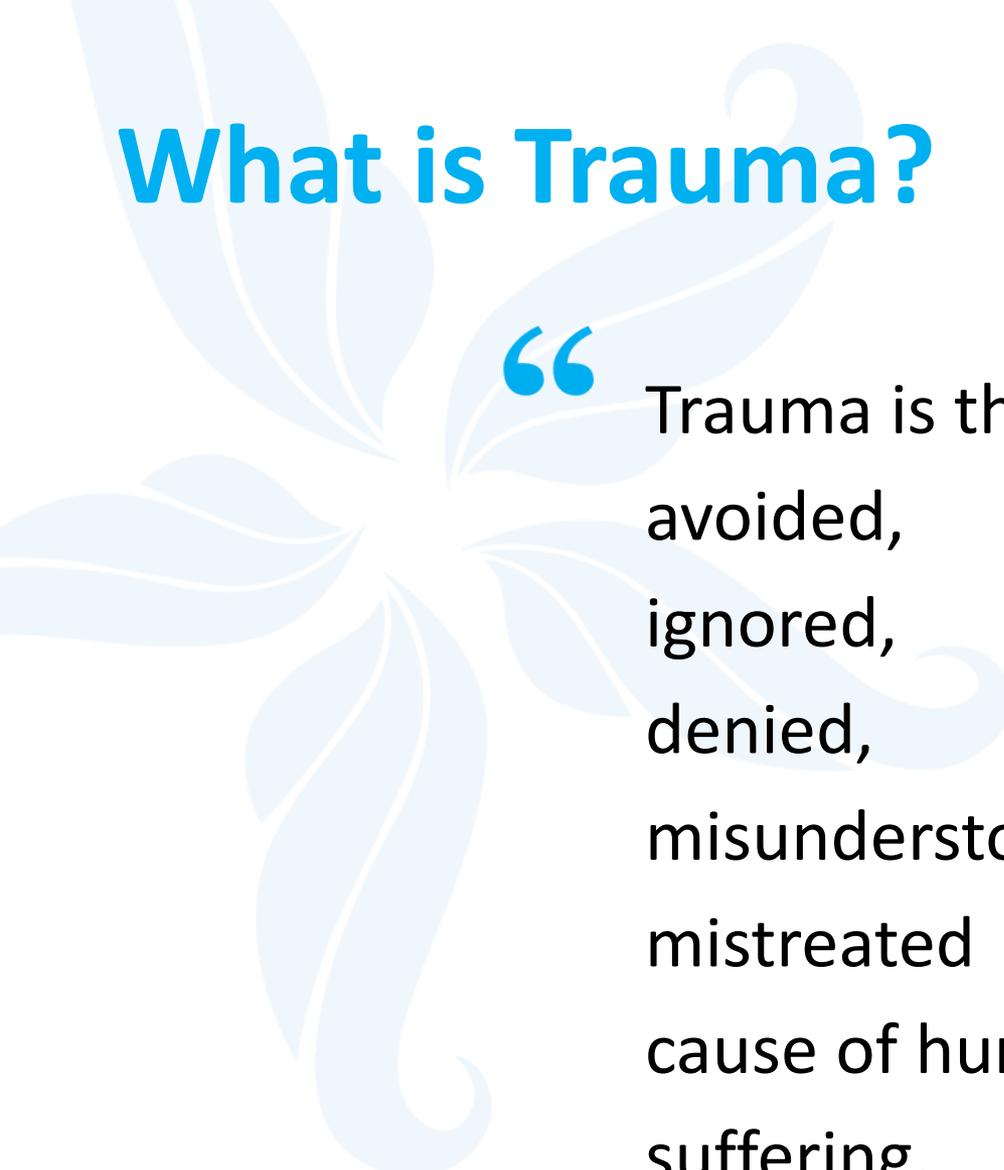


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- A light blue, stylized floral graphic with multiple layers of petals, centered on the left side of the slide. The petals are layered and have a soft, ethereal appearance.
- **Why this is Important**
 - **SeaStar Child & Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC)**
 - **Growing Safe Environments**
 - **Responding to Trauma: Practical Strategies**
 - Get Yourself Grounded
 - Validation and Empathy
 - Strategies for Growing Safety



GROWING TRAUMA INFORMED SPACES
Why is this important?

What is Trauma?



“

Trauma is the most avoided, ignored, denied, misunderstood and mistreated cause of human suffering.

-Peter Levine, PhD

How is trauma different from other mental health issues?

- Trauma can be prevented and healed
- Trauma is a function of a healthy brain trying to take best care of itself
- Trauma does not fit neatly into the medical model
- Trauma impacts the vast majority of people
- Helping professionals and caregivers are at high risk of accumulated trauma
- Most health and human service organizations are structured in a way that grows trauma responses

What is Trauma?

Three “E’s” of Trauma:

- **Event**
An event or series of events that overwhelms a person.
- **Experience of the Event**
The person’s reaction to that event. Not everyone who is exposed to a traumatic event will actually have a negative response to that event.
- **Effect**
When we experience an event as traumatic, its effects are not necessarily linear. In other words, we cannot draw a straight line from the event to one specific effect. Instead there are a range of effects that happen on a broad array of the human experience.

What is Trauma?

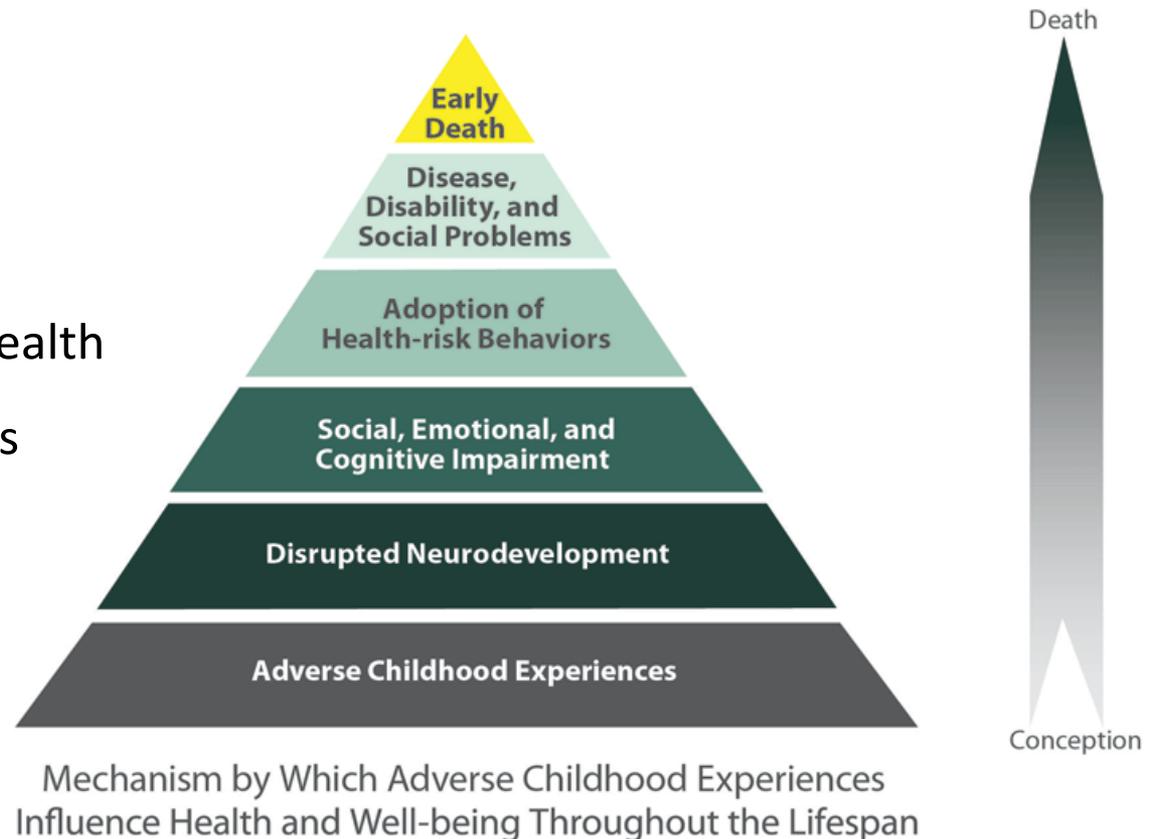
Traumatizing events contain three common elements:

- It was **unexpected**
- The person was **unprepared**
- There was **nothing the person could do** to prevent it from happening

	Parasympathetic <i>Body at rest</i>	Sympathetic <i>Emergency situations</i>
Eyes	Constricts pupils	Dilates pupils
Heart	Beats more slowly	Beats faster and stronger
Lungs	Relaxes airways, which lets you breathe more deeply	Constricts airways
Digestion	Stimulates digestion	Inhibits digestion
Muscles	Reduces blood flow to skeletal muscles	Increases blood flow to skeletal muscles

Impact of Unresolved Trauma

- Emotion regulation
- Relationships
- Cognitive functions
- Physical & Mental Health
- Perceptions & beliefs



Center for Disease Control (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>

Accumulated Trauma

Special considerations for people working with or supporting persons who have experienced trauma



Trauma happens when...

- Our bodies read that there is a threat, or emergency, and we are unable to fight our way out or to otherwise remove ourselves from the situation.
- Even after we are safe, our brains and our bodies do not know that we are safe. So all of the physical, hormonal, and cognitive elements of dealing with the emergency keep on working.

Healing of trauma happens when...

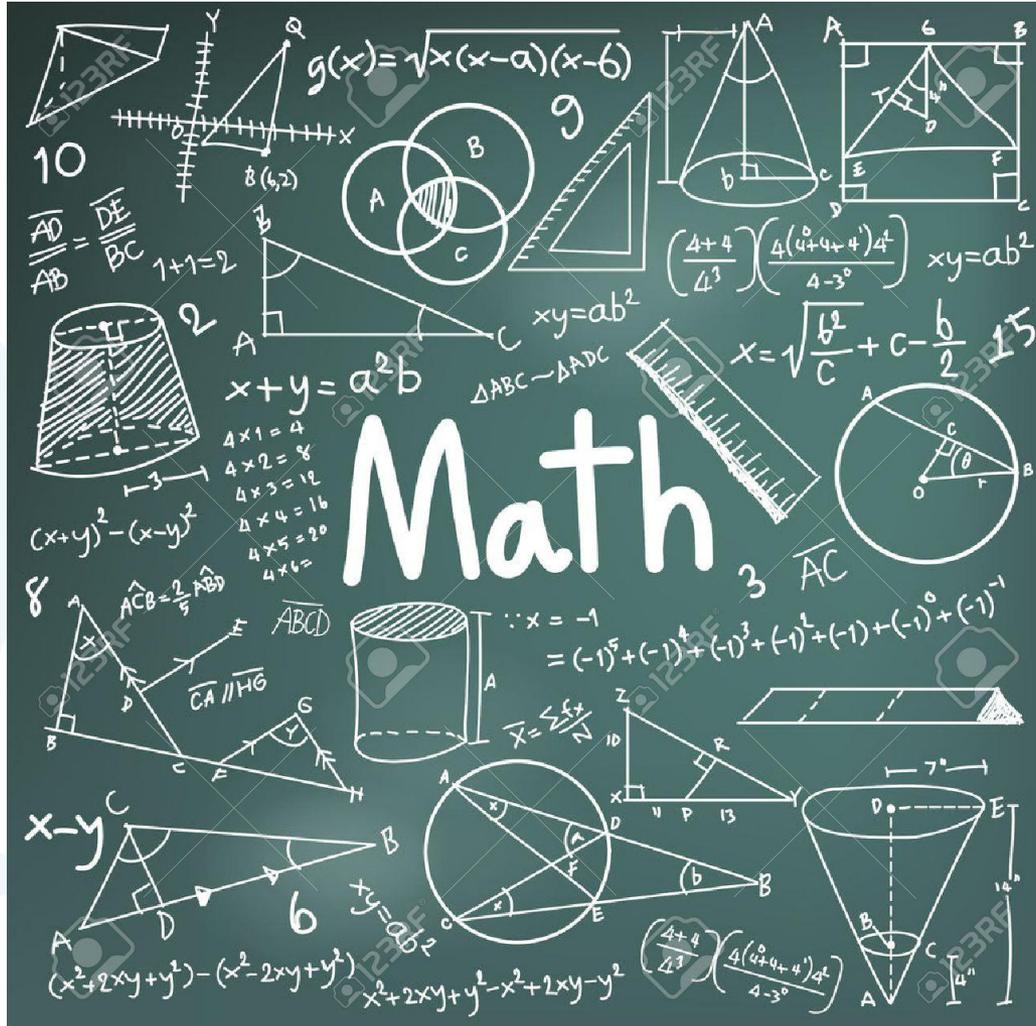
We are able to allow ourselves to feel those stuck emotions, without attaching the storyline, when our bodies are safe and our brains know we are safe.





BECOMING TRAUMA INFORMED
Shifting the Way We Work

Let's be inspired by...



The Trauma Informed Workplace

- More than the physical space
- Considers trauma impact on staff as well as clients

Becoming a Trauma Informed Workplace

- Organizational shift that requires the traditional hierarchy to flatten
- Paradigm shift from “What is wrong with you?” to “What has happened to you?”
- Dependent on safety, ongoing evaluation, and capacity to adapt for staff/client need
- Slow – true organization change can take 3 - 5 years

Grow Organizational Health

- Foster open communication
- Cultivate “mistakes” as “areas for growth”
- Incorporate process for revisiting/revising “the way we do things” to adjust for ongoing staff/client need
- Fold rituals allowing for emotion into your organization’s practice
- Where possible, make team-based decisions

Becoming a Trauma Informed Workplace

“Transparent communication with opportunities for workers to provide feedback and have their concerns addressed will assist in increasing the organization/ system’s readiness for change.”

Some Characteristics of Healthy and Unhealthy Organizations

From: A Board/Staff Handbook for Women's Organizations

UNHEALTHY	2008 Overall Score: 3.8					HEALTHY
1. Little personal involvement in organizational objectives except at top levels.	1	2	3	4.0	5	Objectives are widely shared by the members and there is a strong and constant flow of energy toward these objectives.
2. People in the organization see things going wrong and do nothing about the situation. Nobody volunteers. Mistakes and problems are hidden or shelved. People talk about office troubles at home or in the halls, not with those involved.	1	2	3	4.0	5	People feel free to say they are aware of difficulties because they expect the problems to be dealt with and they are optimistic that they can be solved.
3. Members at the local level feel alone in trying to get things done. Somehow decisions, policies and procedures don't get carried out as planned.	1	2	3	4.4	5	There is a noticeable sense of co-operation in planning, performance and in discipline – in short, a sharing of responsibility.
4. The judgment of all people in the organization is not respected outside the narrow limits of their jobs.	1	2	3	3.7	5	The judgment of all people in the organization is respected.
5. Personal needs and feelings are side issues.	1	2	3	4.3	5	The range of problems tackled includes personal needs and human relationships.
6. People compete when they should get together. They are very jealous of their area of responsibility. Seeking or accepting help is felt to be a sign of weakness. Offering to help is not thought of. People don't trust each other and they speak poorly of one another.	1	2	3	4.4	5	People readily ask the help of others and are willing to give in turn. A system for helping one another is highly developed. Individuals and groups compete with one another, but they do so fairly and towards a shared goal.

Healthy Organizations for Women's Organizations

quickly band together and solved.

decision-making and with effectively, in the that they want and expect

ne.

growth and change.

take?"

and a joint solution is

cedures and policies are b done and to protect the on, not to give each procedures are also readily

1

organization.

Old methods are questioned and often give way to new ones.

1 2 3 4 4.7 5

Assess Quality of Service Client/Staff Needs



SeaStar Child and Youth Advocacy Centre

A coordinated response for children and youth
who may have experienced trauma



What is a CYAC?



2010

- Established
- Pilot
- Developing



SeaStar

Child & Youth Advocacy Centre





Accredited Facility Dog, Dorado

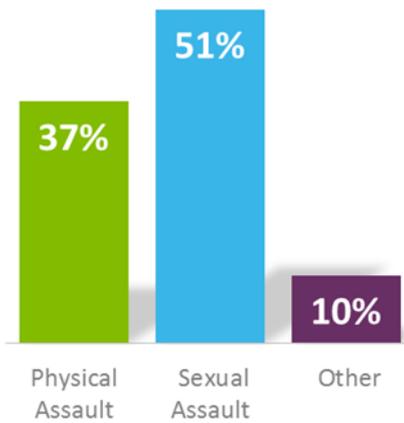
- Trauma prevention
 - Support
 - Comfort
 - Choice
 - Accompaniment during forensic interview



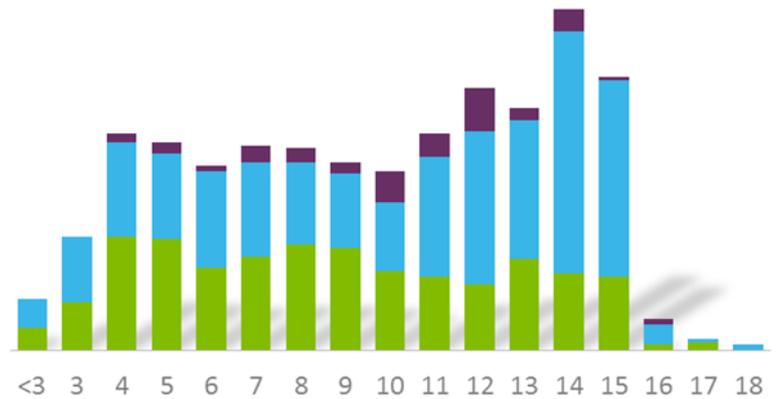
1,300+

Clients to date

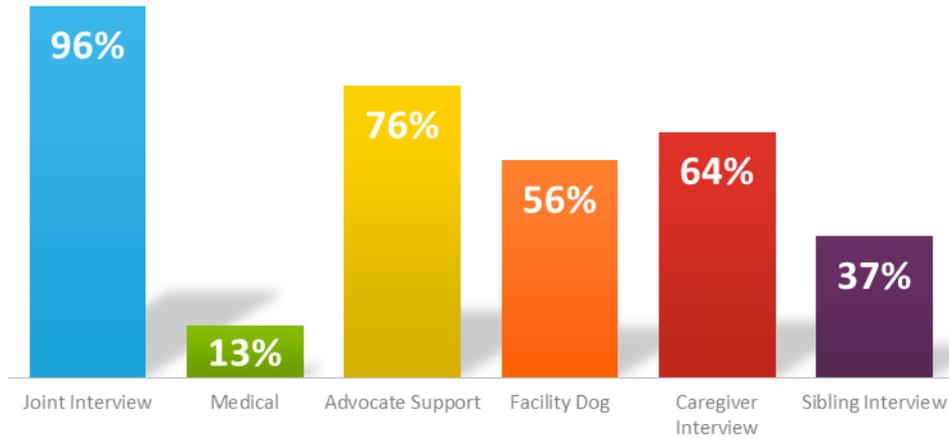
Type of Referral



Client Age and Type of Referral



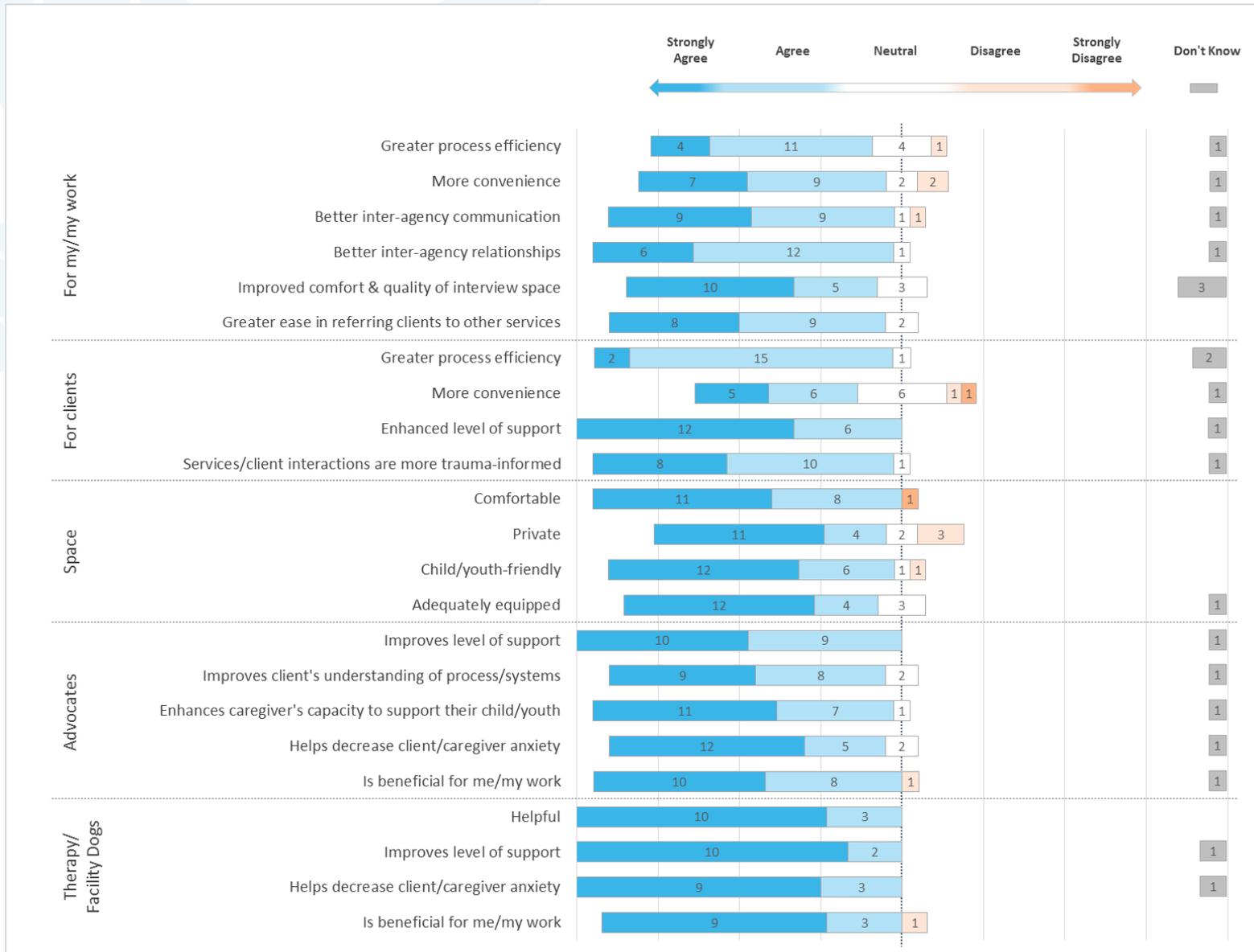
Services Accessed



Coordination

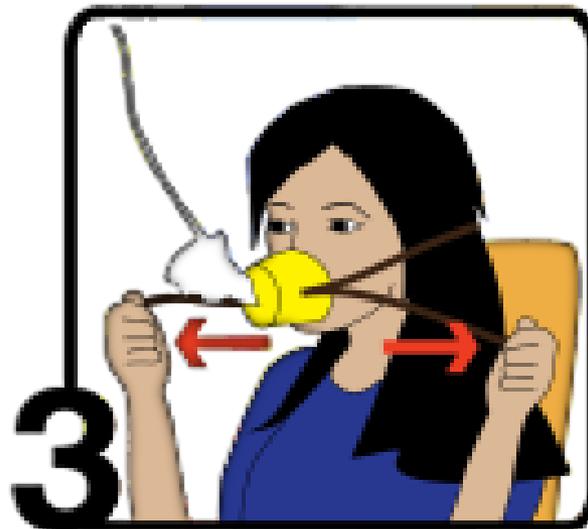
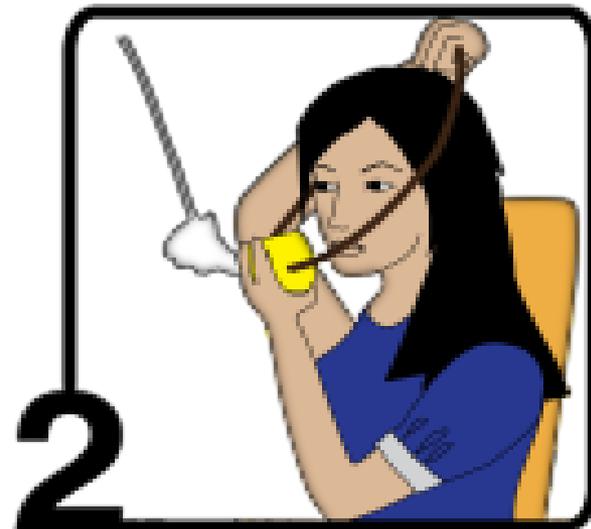
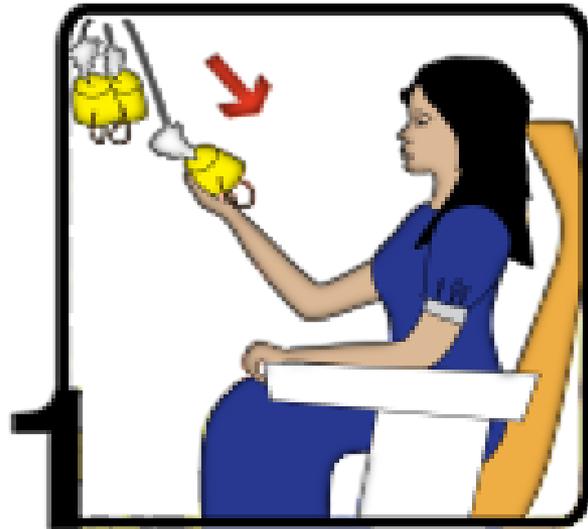


Thinking about how cases were handled prior to the start of SeaStar CYAC, what (if any) differences have you noticed for cases that now come to SeaStar?





PRACTICAL STRATEGIES
Get Yourself Grounded



Identifying Your Triggers:

Questions to ask Yourself

- Are there behaviors that are particularly hard for you to deal with or that “push your buttons”?
- Are there emotions that you find particularly difficult to cope with or respond to, or which lead to a strong emotional response in you?
- What types of expressed feelings or behaviors that have been the hardest or highest risk in the past?
(e.g., led to feeling overwhelmed, a family crisis, danger or self or other)
- Are there situations that you know you find particularly hard because they remind you of hard times in your own life?



There is a battle of two wolves inside us.

One is evil. It is anger, jealousy, greed, resentment, lies, inferiority and ego.

The other is good. It is joy, peace, love, hope humility, kindness, empathy and truth.

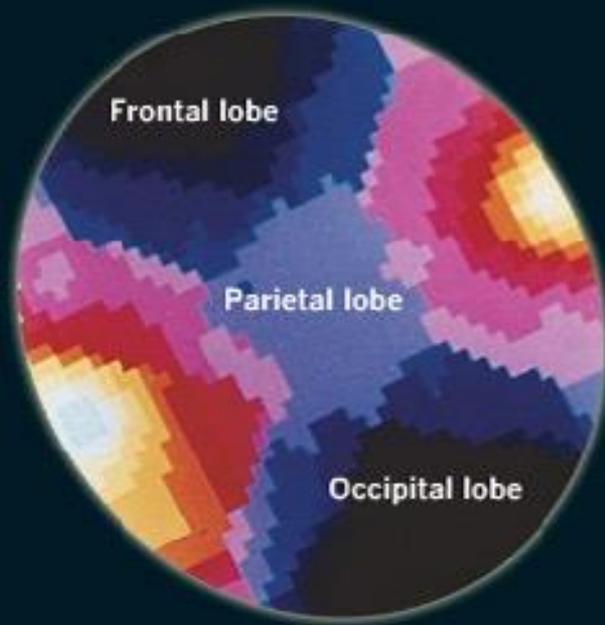
The wolf that wins is the one you feed.

~ Native American Proverb, Cherokee

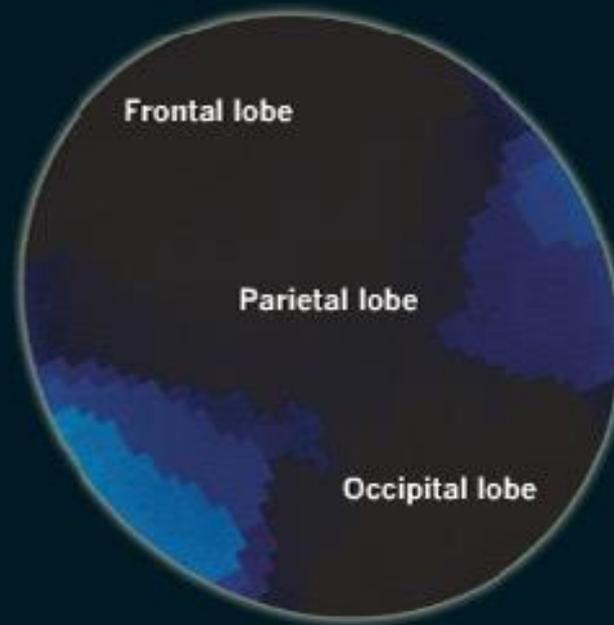
Cultivate 'Mindfulness'

- 'Mindfulness' is always 'mindfulness' of something. It puts into application the focus skills cultivated during concentration meditation.
- Mindful **thinking**, mindful **eating**, mindful **walking**, mindfully experiencing **emotions**, mindful **parenting**.
- Moment to moment awareness. Paying attention, on purpose, to whatever is happening in the present moment.

Before meditation...



After meditation...



Develop Mind-Body 'Attunement'

- Yoga
- Belly breathing exercises
- Take walks in nature
- Connect with movement
- Connect with the food you are eating
- Dance
- Music (sing, play an instrument, listen to music during your day)
- Laugh
- Cry

What Helps?

- Understand your own needs
- Take time off
- Find educational resources for new skills
- Take advantage of supervision/consultation
- Identify strengths – others' and your own
- Accept reality of stress and strain
- Nurture your sense of humour

What Helps?

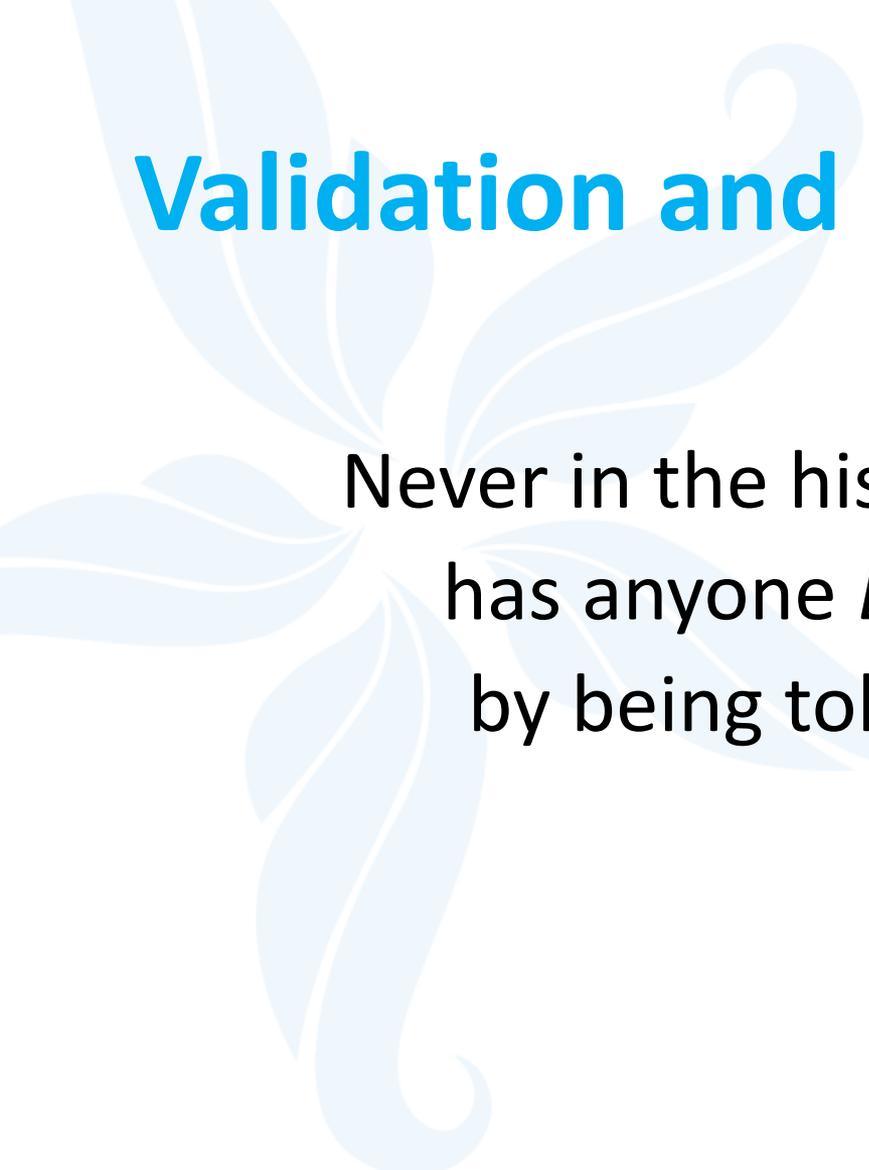
- Consciously discharge at the end of your work day
- Pace yourself, take breaks when possible
- Talk to someone else – someone helpful
(ask permission, do not “slime”)
- Develop your own list of self-soothing activities that fit with what you are doing – and use them
(breathing, relaxation, meditation, eating lunch outside, soothing self-talk)
- Monitor your body’s reactions to the day



PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

**Strategies for Growing
Safety in Others**

Validation and Empathy



Never in the history of calming down
has anyone *EVER* calmed down
by being told to “calm down.”

Why are validation and empathy important?

Validation

Recognition or affirmation that a person's feelings or opinion are valid or worthwhile.

Empathy

Understanding or relating to the feelings of another.

Adjusting for Someone who is Triggered

- Be mindful of that someone else's triggers are not always clear or appear rational.
- Notice when people seem to be struggling.
- Get grounded first. Breathe deeply. Slow down and tune in.
- Be willing to be present with the person and their emotions. Demonstrate you are listening. Validate the emotion. "Tell me more about that."
- Provide clear and consistent boundaries. Give choices.

Adjusting for Someone who is Triggered

In a Professional Environment

- Create a space that is welcoming and feels safe.
- Offer food, drink, to sit down.
- It is very helpful to give people a sense of what is going to happen next – people feel safer when they are able to predict their environments
- It can also be helpful to ask people they have any burning questions or worries at the beginning of your time together.

You, as a professional, then can address the fear and move on to whatever is next, instead of having the fear percolate in the background as you are speaking.

The Role of Routine

- Trauma is often associated with chaos and loss of control; predictability helps build feelings of safety
- Repetition is an important way that all people acquire skills
- Routines are used to support felt safety and emotional modulation through the establishment of predictability

Rituals

- The importance of rituals for kids and adults.
- Rituals of gratitude help to ground folks in the present.
- Rituals of letting go help folks to let go of emotions after a situation is resolved.
- Incorporate movement into your rituals (dance, music, yoga). Remember, emotions are a body-felt sense and movement helps to release them. Incorporating even a few yoga moves into a “welcome new day” or “let go and good night” ritual would have profound positive impact.
- The more senses the better!!

More Things to Consider

- Wherever possible, offer choice
- Choose your moments
- If applying consequences, don't do it in a punitive way. Explain the rationale behind the decision/guideline. Brain storm alternatives for future.
- Use your team! For consultation, and for de-briefing!!

A Word on Power

An environment that provides safety and predictability reduces the need to be rigid and over-controlling.

However, because limits have often historically been associated with powerlessness and vulnerability, clients may be reactive to and triggered by both limits/rules and praise.

Lack of control = DANGER!!

Danger = fight, flight or freeze

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