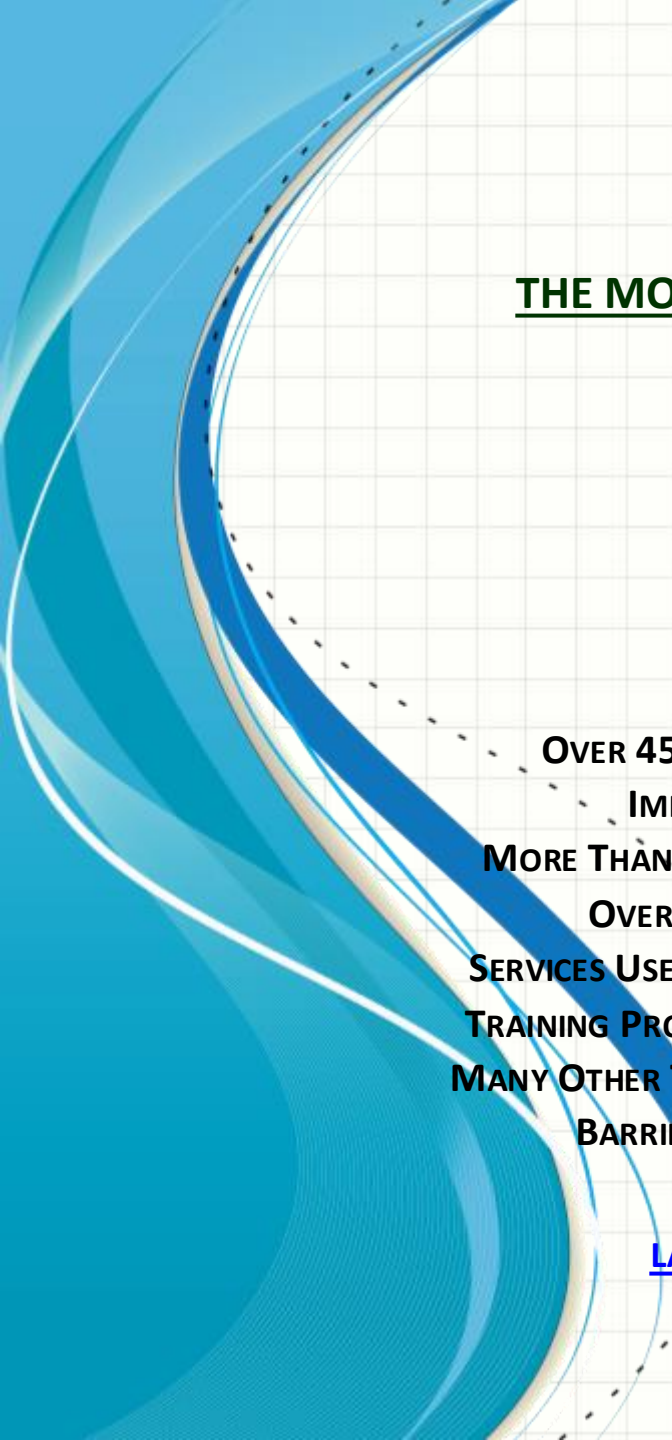




WELCOME TO TODAY'S WEBINAR!

TRAUMA!

THE MOST POWERFUL HIDDEN BARRIER TO EMPLOYMENT!

**HOW TO HELP PEOPLE IN REENTRY HEAL
AND MAKE EMPLOYMENT PROGRESS**

**PRESENTED BY
LARRY ROBBIN**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ROBBIN AND ASSOCIATES

OVER 45 YEARS OF NATIONAL EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH PROGRAMS TO

IMPROVE THE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES OF PEOPLE IN REENTRY

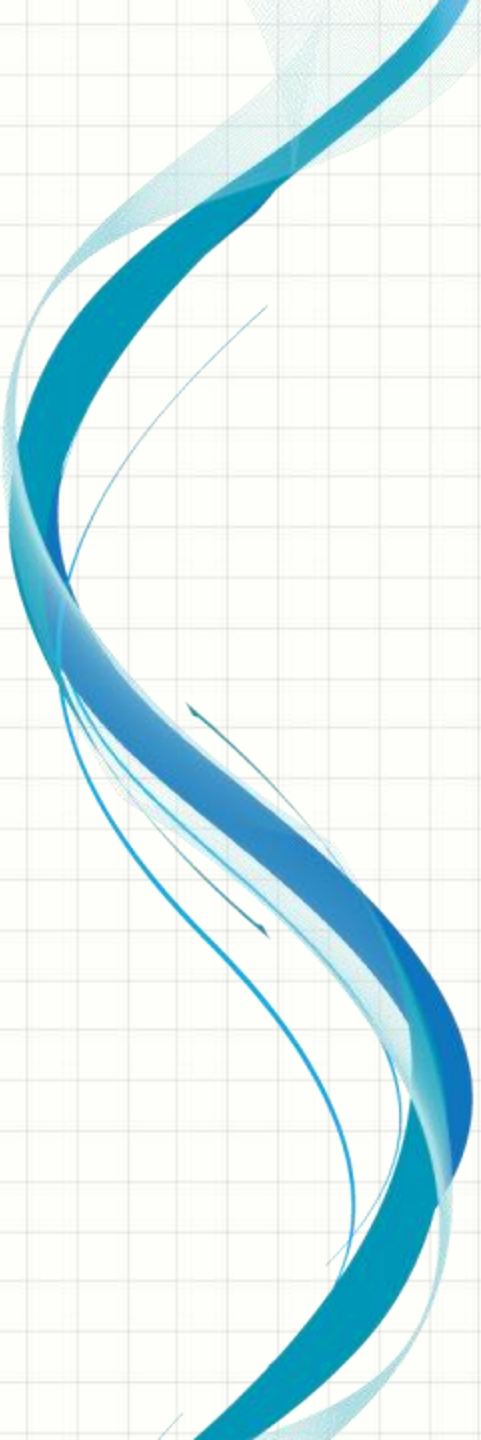
MORE THAN 100,000 PEOPLE TRAINED! OVER 500 CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS!

OVER 300 WEBINARS! MORE THAN 1000 ORGANIZATIONS SERVED!

**SERVICES USED BY AMERICA'S JOB CENTERS, REENTRY PROGRAMS, SOCIAL SERVICES,
TRAINING PROVIDERS, NONPROFITS, SCHOOLS, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAMS AND
MANY OTHER TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS SERVING PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE AND SEVERE
BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT INCLUDING JUSTICE INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS**

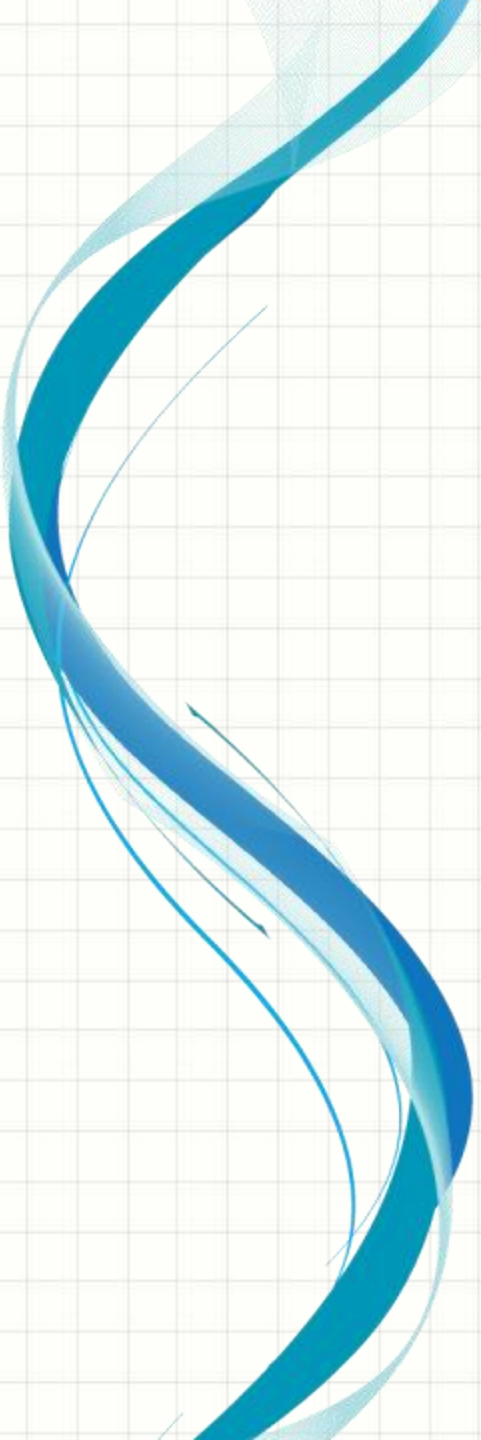
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WHAT WE WILL COVER TODAY

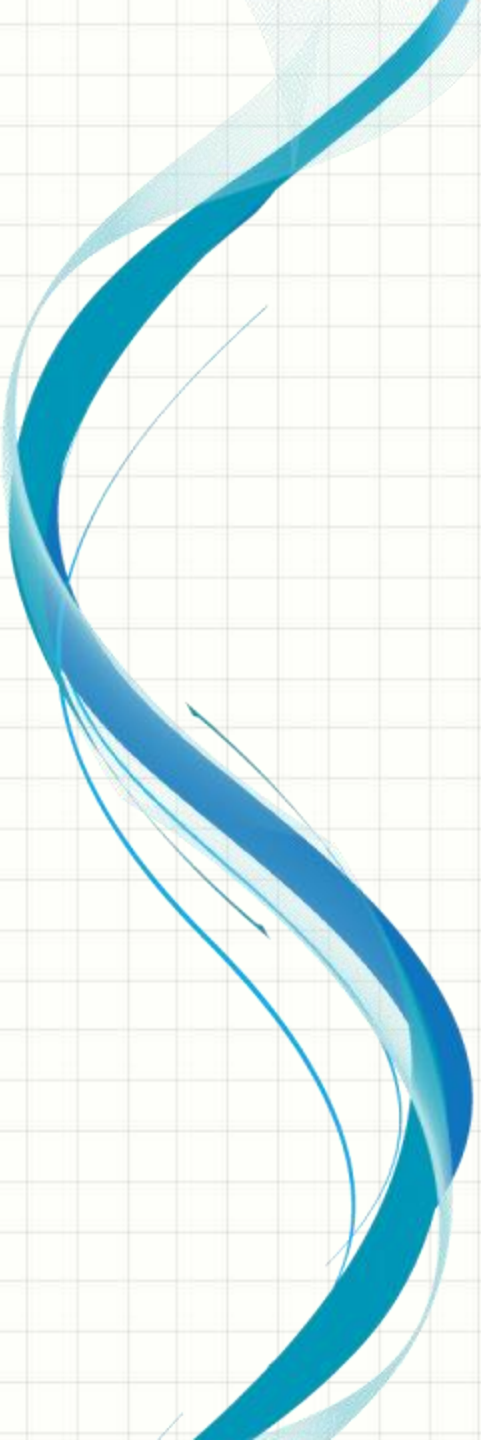
- 1. We will learn the definition of trauma, the causes of trauma and its impact on employment and on people in reentry.**
- 2. We will identify the behaviors that may indicate the presence of trauma.**
- 3. We will become trauma aware so we can avoid retraumatizing people.**
- 4. We will learn how people heal from trauma and our role the healing process.**



DEFINITION OF TRAUMA

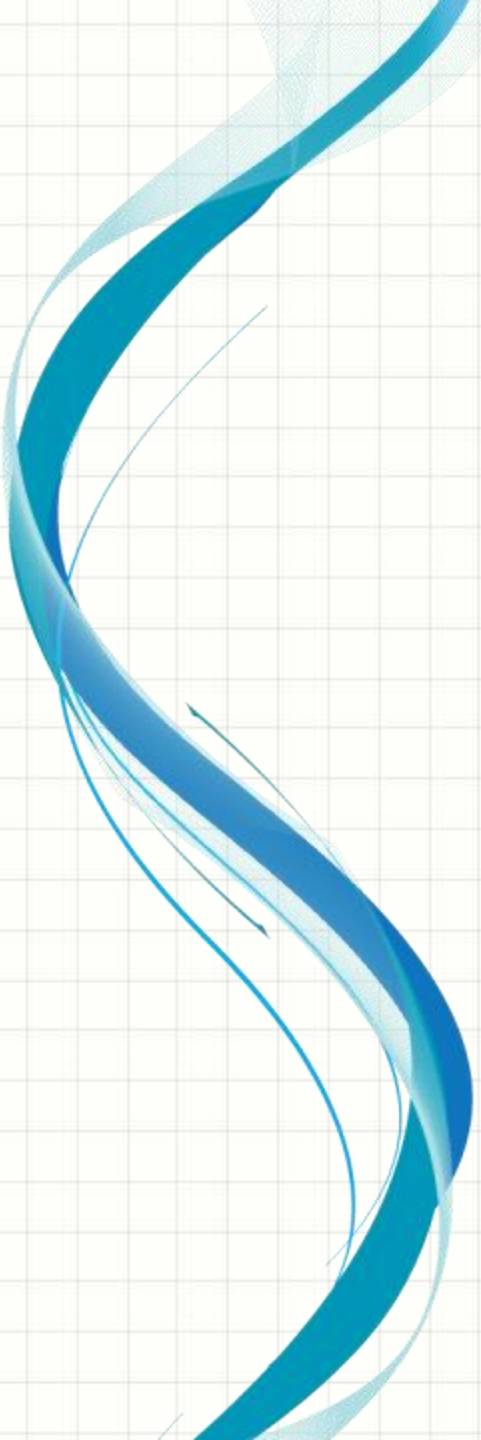
This definition comes from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration.

Trauma results from a severe event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has long lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.



OPENING COMMENTS

- 1. Trauma is a complex and a difficult experience for all types of people. The road to recovery from trauma is a struggle that can be made particularly challenging when people are retraumatized. This often happens from people and programs that are well meaning, but not trauma aware.**
- 2. Trauma interferes with employment in many ways. It can make it difficult for people to become motivated to go to work. Trauma can cause severe stress that will make it difficult for people to make decisions about job search, employment goals and other aspects of employment. The fear of rejection and the stress of job search and interviewing can be made much worse from trauma. Working in a toxic work environment can easily retraumatize people. Trauma can create problems with job retention.**
- 3. This webinar will help to make you more trauma aware. Work closely with your local government and nonprofit mental health agencies can help make your program and services truly trauma informed. Becoming trauma informed and not only trauma aware should be the goal of your program.**



OVERVIEW OF TRAUMA

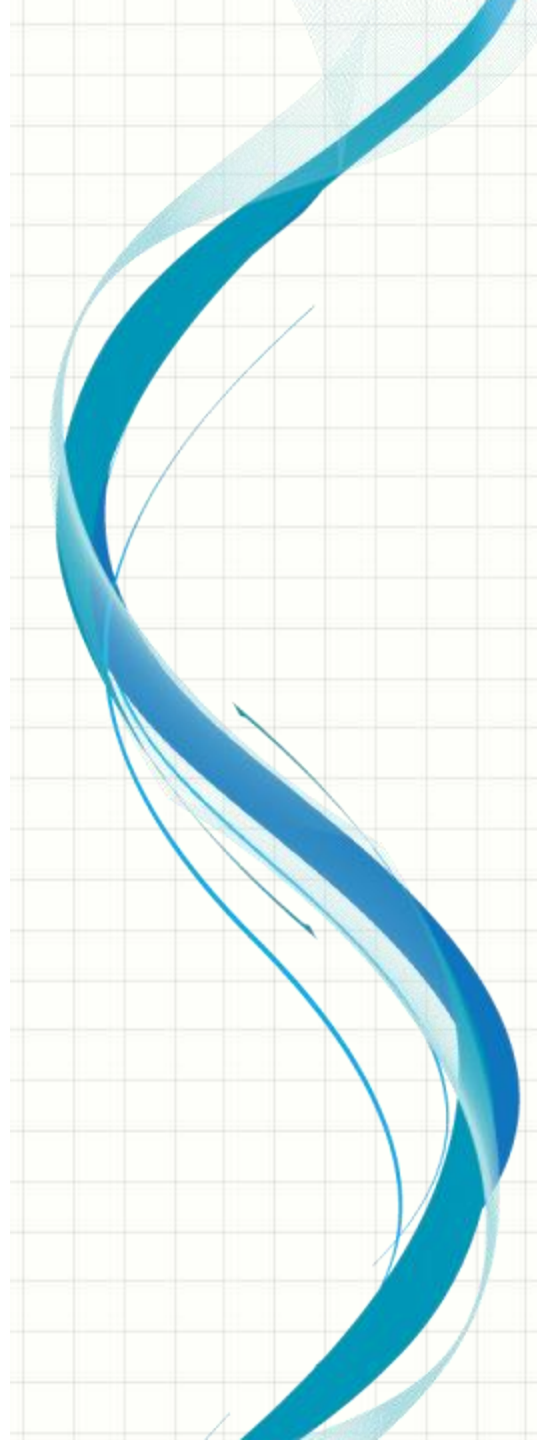
- 1. Estimates of the percentage of the overall population in the United States that has experienced trauma is generally thought to be between 40% and 60%. The severity of the trauma can vary a great deal. |**

Some of the people taking this webinar are trauma survivors or are family members or friends of trauma survivors. The percentages of people with trauma can be much higher in some groups. In people in reentry levels of trauma can reach 80 to 90 percent of the population.

Not everyone in these groups is a trauma survivor, but the odds of being a trauma survivor are higher for people in these groups. If someone in reentry is also in one or more of these groups it will significantly raise the risk of them having trauma.

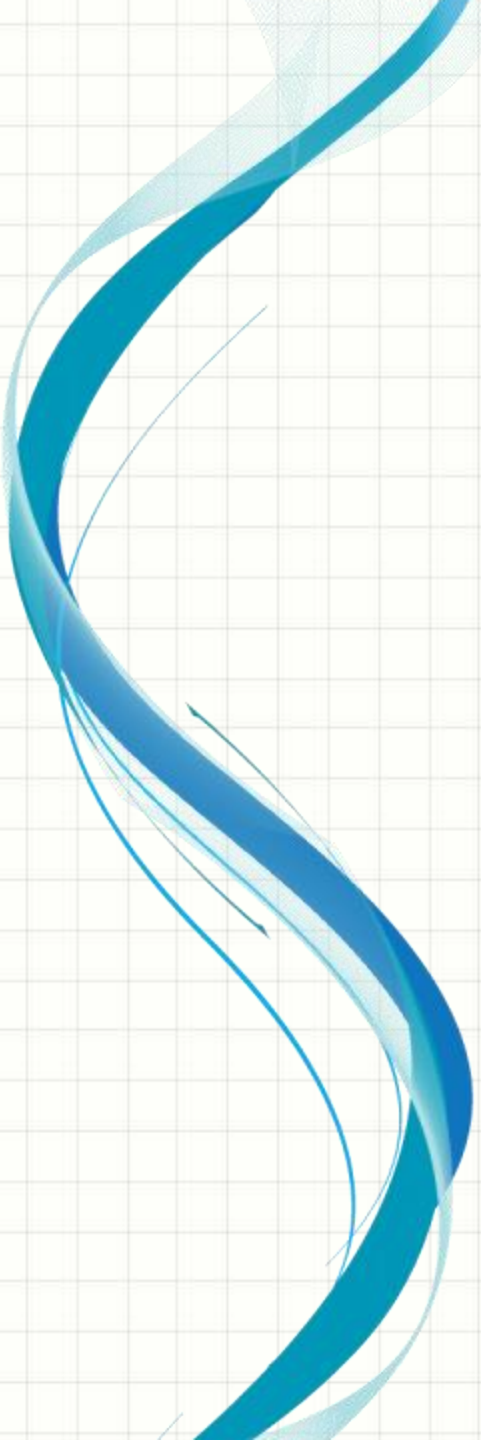
- 2. Survivors of sexual, physical, emotional or mental abuse**
- 3. People from highly dysfunctional families including children that go into the child protective and foster systems.**

Children with a lot of ACE factors (adverse childhood experiences) are at high risk of trauma.



OVERVIEW OF TRAUMA

4. **People who have been homeless.**
5. **People who have been the victims of violence or witnessed a lot of violence and death. This can include violence and death prior to incarceration and/or during and after incarceration.**
6. **People who have been in natural or human caused disasters**
7. **People from groups that have experienced high degrees of discrimination, genocide, slavery, violence and other forms of severe oppression. This is called collective and historical trauma. The trauma reaches across generations and will often have an impact on people that did not experience the actual original trauma.**
8. **People that have experienced war as veterans, their spouses, children, their families and civilians living in war zones**
9. **People who experience bullying and harassment from the general population**

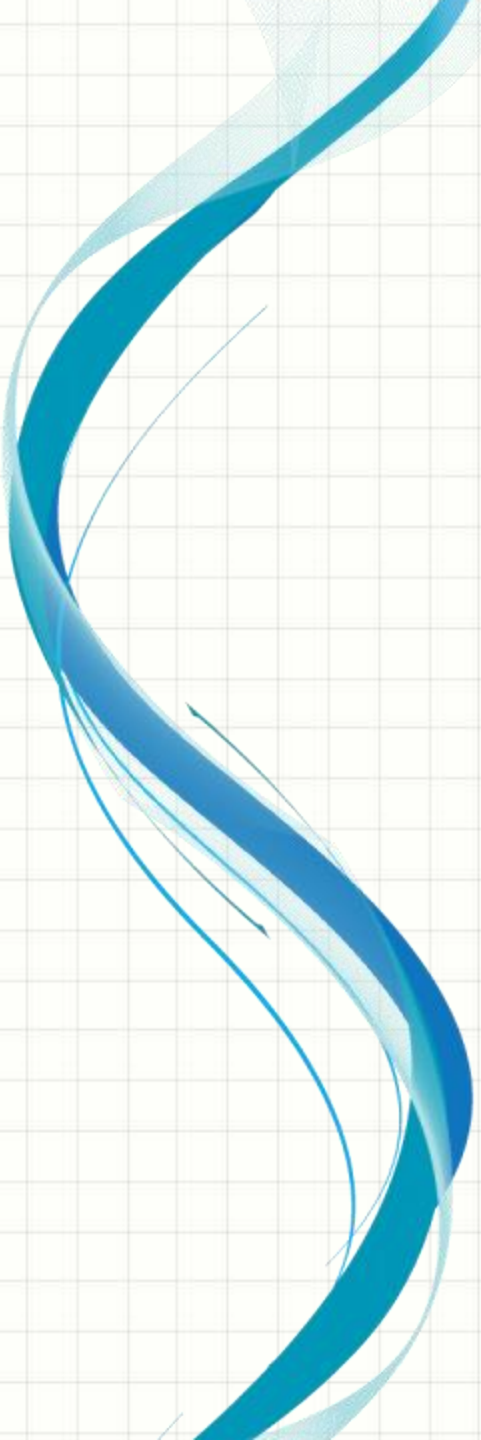


OVERVIEW OF TRAUMA

10. The more you work with trauma survivors, the more you risk the impact of you getting second hand or vicarious trauma. The trauma of the people you serve can become your trauma. To reduce the risk of secondhand trauma, it is important to take good care of your mental, emotional and physical health when you work with people who are trauma survivors. Google secondhand trauma to learn more about how to avoid it.
11. There is a danger that the more you learn about trauma, the more you may feel apprehensive about working with trauma survivors.

You have already encountered many trauma survivors in your work, but you may not have known about their trauma situation.

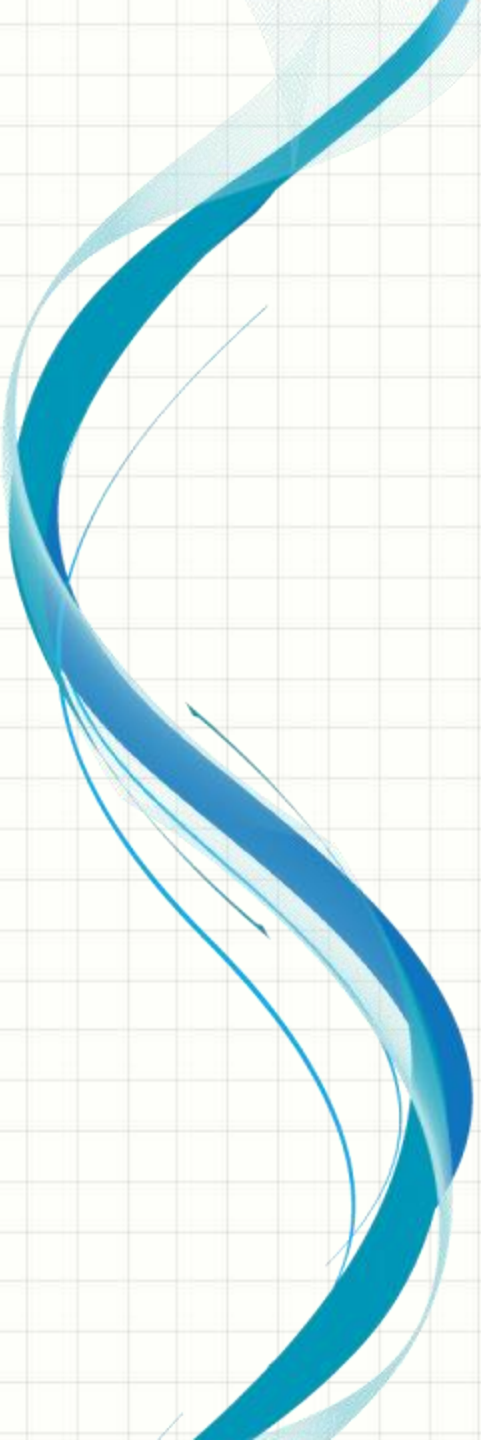
So be very careful not to be hesitant about working with people who are trauma survivors.



OVERVIEW OF TRAUMA

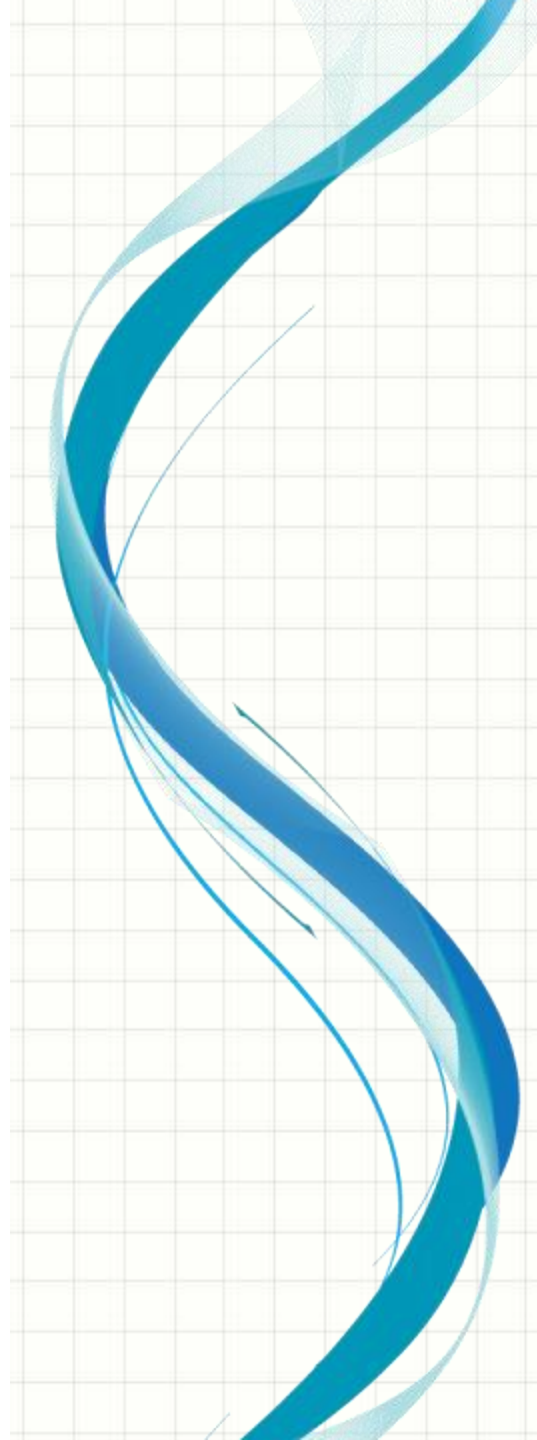
- 12. People can be incredibly resilient. While trauma is serious and damaging, many people are able to recover from trauma, so it does not continue to disrupt their lives.**

It is entirely possible that you have already helped trauma survivors heal without knowing about it. You and your program can play a very positive role in the healing of trauma survivors!



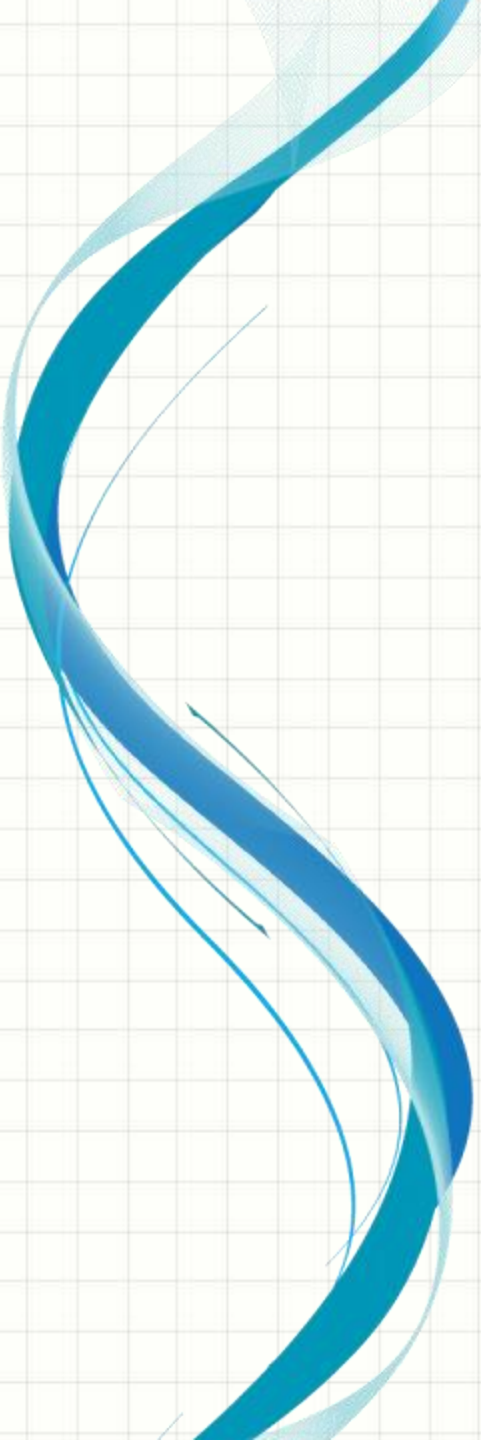
HOW BEING INCARCERATED CAN CAUSE TRAUMA

- 1. People have no control over their lives.**
- 2. Violence and the threat of violence are ongoing.**
- 3. People (including staff) often play mind games, control and power games that can confuse and disorient people.**
- 4. Sleep deprivation is a constant especially in solitary confinement.**
- 5. Food (which is usually not good) and exercise are at a minimum.**
- 6. There is a lack of privacy, adequate and clean living space.**
- 7. Noise, yelling and screaming are commonplace.**
- 8. Bullying is an ongoing dynamic.**
- 9. People often survive by learning how to make the mind/body split**



SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT TRAUMA

- 1. Trauma will often cause changes in how the brain functions. When people who are not trauma survivors experience an intense emotion like fear, in a possibly threatening situation, their brain sorts out the degree and type of threat. This helps them to determine whether or not they are actually being threatened and to what degree and what if anything they should do about it.**
- 2. The intensity of the trauma experience can change the brain pathway for dealing with information. A stimulus like fear can bypass the thinking stage and go into a heightened emotional response and the analysis of the fear goes unchecked by the other parts of the brain.**



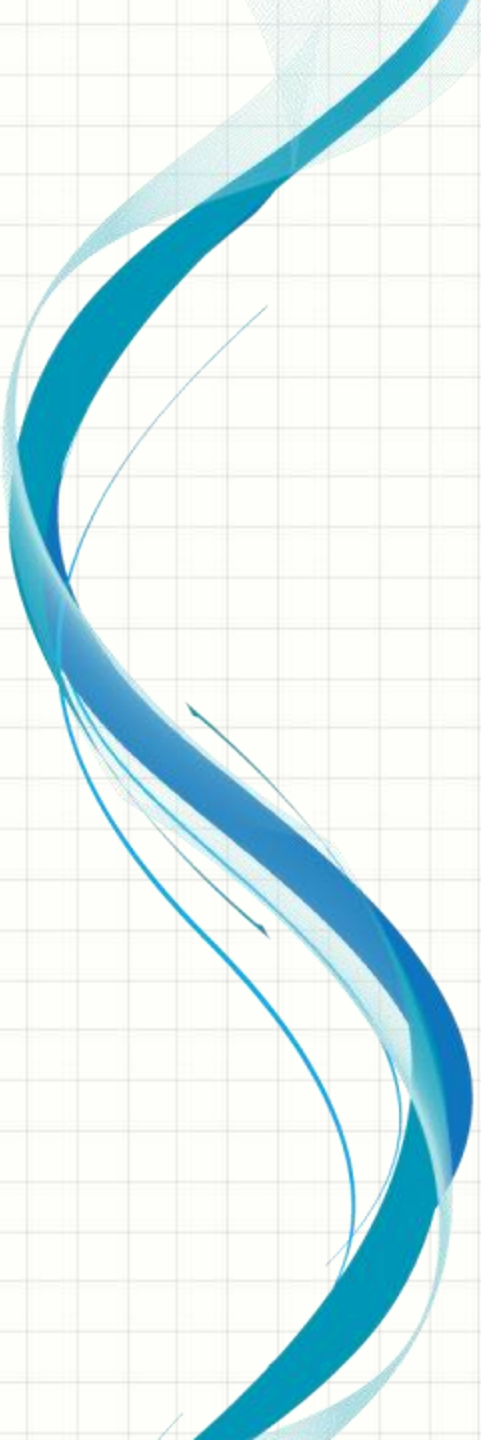
SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT TRAUMA

- 3. The result of the rewired brain pathway for responding to things is a sense of hyper vigilance that can cause trauma survivors to immediately react to a stimulus.**

This can easily cause them to overreact in some situations. When they overreact, they often relive the trauma. Trauma can make it very difficult for people to forget the trauma.

Damage to the hippocampus which stores information in the brain can cause people to not be able to get rid of the memory of the cause of the trauma. In other cases, the hippocampus can wipe out good memories that would be helpful to an individual.

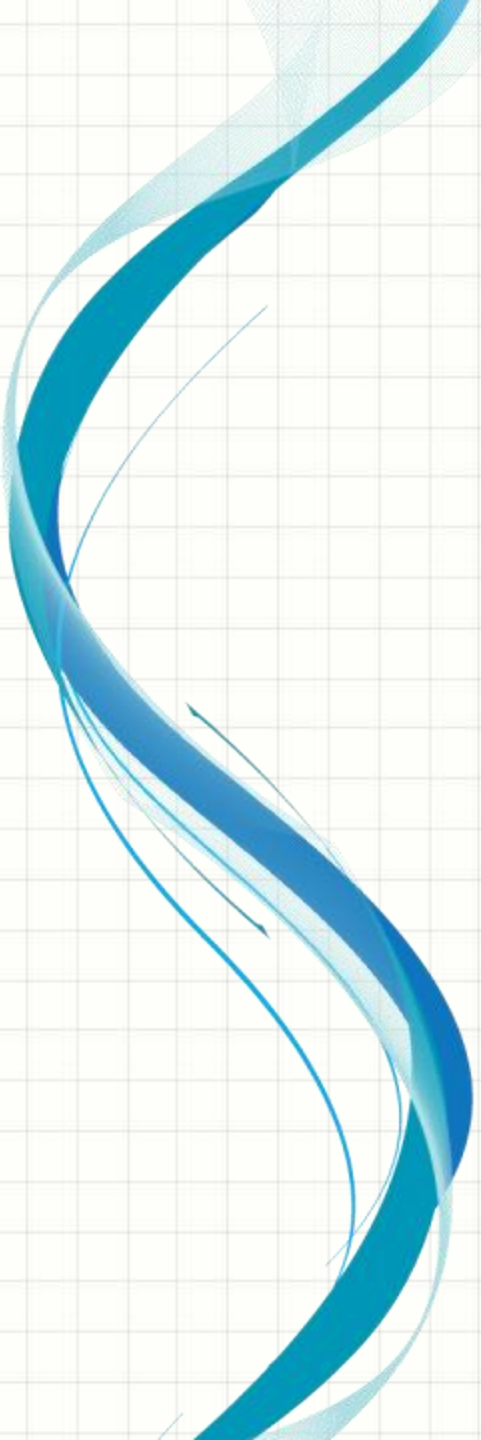
Trauma causes reactions that are not typical of the way most people would react to a given stimulus.



WHAT KIND OF THINGS CAN INDICATE THE PRESENCE OF TRAUMA?

You need to see strong, frequent and multiple behaviors from this list to indicate the possibility of trauma.

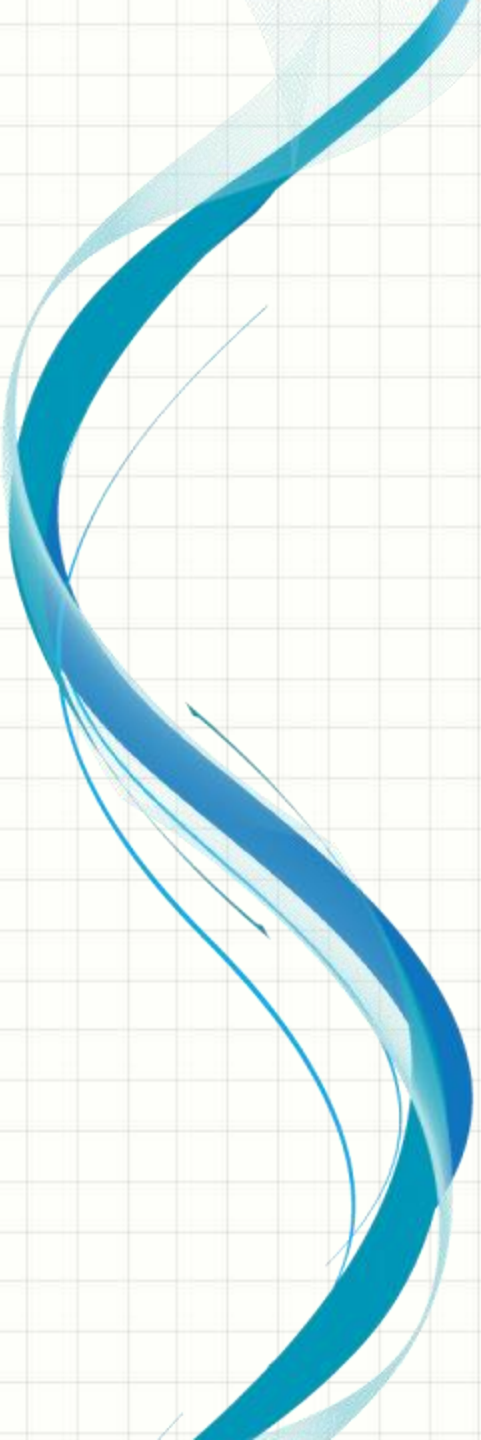
- 1. Rejecting attempts to become engaged – being cold and distant**
- 2. A pattern of intense engagement rapidly followed by intense disengagement**
- 3. Suspicion and paranoia – doubting of motives**
- 4. Fear of disclosure by you or the trauma survivor**
- 5. Constantly in fight, flight or freeze mode**



WHAT KIND OF THINGS CAN INDICATE THE PRESENCE OF TRAUMA?

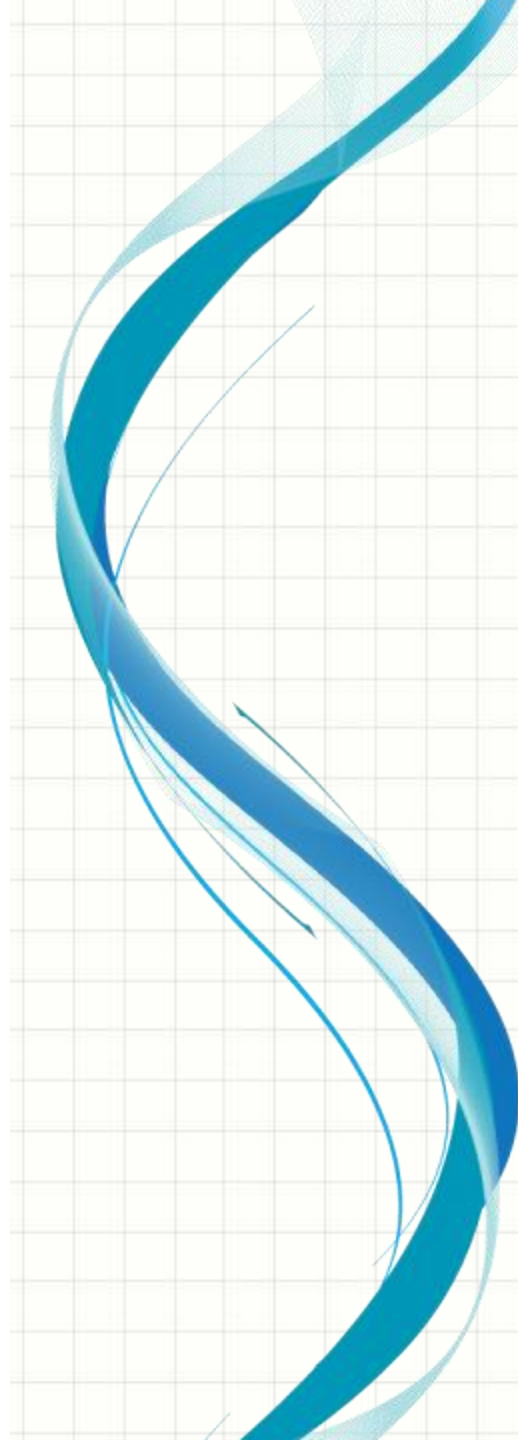
You need to see strong, frequent and multiple behaviors from this list to indicate the possibility of trauma.

- 6. Shutting down completely in communication and emotion**
- 7. Dissociation between actions and feelings**
- 8. Anxiety and fear**
- 9. Anger, irritability and mood swings**
- 10. Inability to sleep and concentrate**
- 11. Self-destructive behaviors**
- 12. Flashbacks and acting out from them**
- 13. Substance abuse**



HOW DO PEOPLE HEAL FROM TRAUMA?

- 1. Some people are helped by mental health therapy. Medication may be used along with therapy.**
- 2. When people get into positive strong engaging relationships it can help them heal. This includes relationships with people, organizations and a relationships with a healthy way of thinking.**
- 3. Some people learn practices that help them calm down, get in touch with their feelings and learn how to anticipate and reduce the triggers associated with trauma. This helps them live in the reality of present and not in the trauma of the past.**



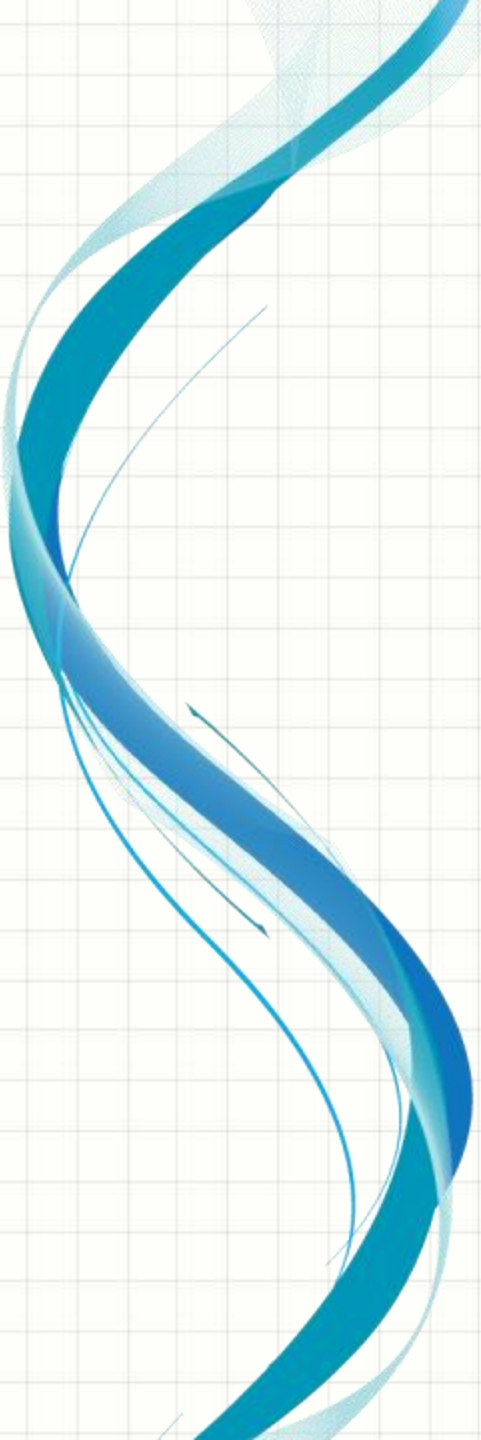
ACTIVITIES THAT CAN HELP PEOPLE HEAL FROM TRAUMA

These activities can include getting involved with the arts, yoga, meditation, exercise, mindfulness, breathing techniques and involvement with spirituality.

Other people find having pets, doing sports, writing in a journal, playing with babies and children, volunteering, playing music, cooking and gardening to be helpful.

Trauma is not the same for everyone and people need to find what works for them help them reduce the impact of trauma on their lives.

Getting into an environment that is free of trauma and healthy and caring, can give people the space and distance from trauma to heal. This can help to repair the damage that has been done to the brain.

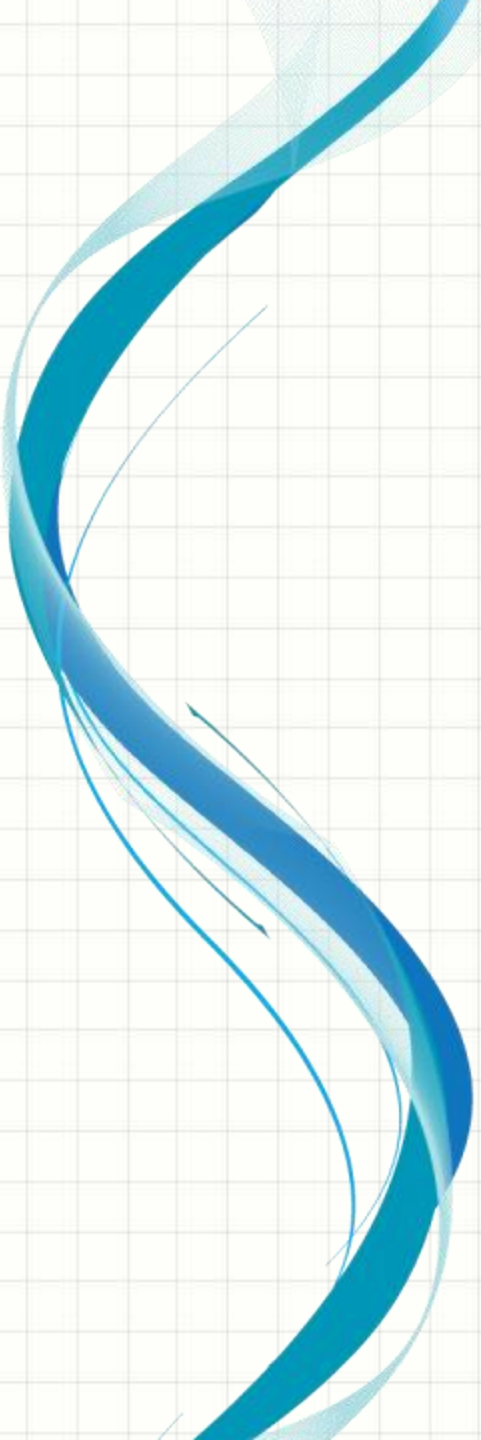


TALKING WITH PEOPLE ABOUT TRAUMA

If you see behaviors that may indicate the presence of trauma, you may want to initiate a conversation immediately naming the behavior and using the word trauma. This could be a bad idea. You can retraumatize someone with this approach. How and when you raise the idea of trauma depends on the depth and strength of your relationship with the person and how open they are to having that conversation with you.

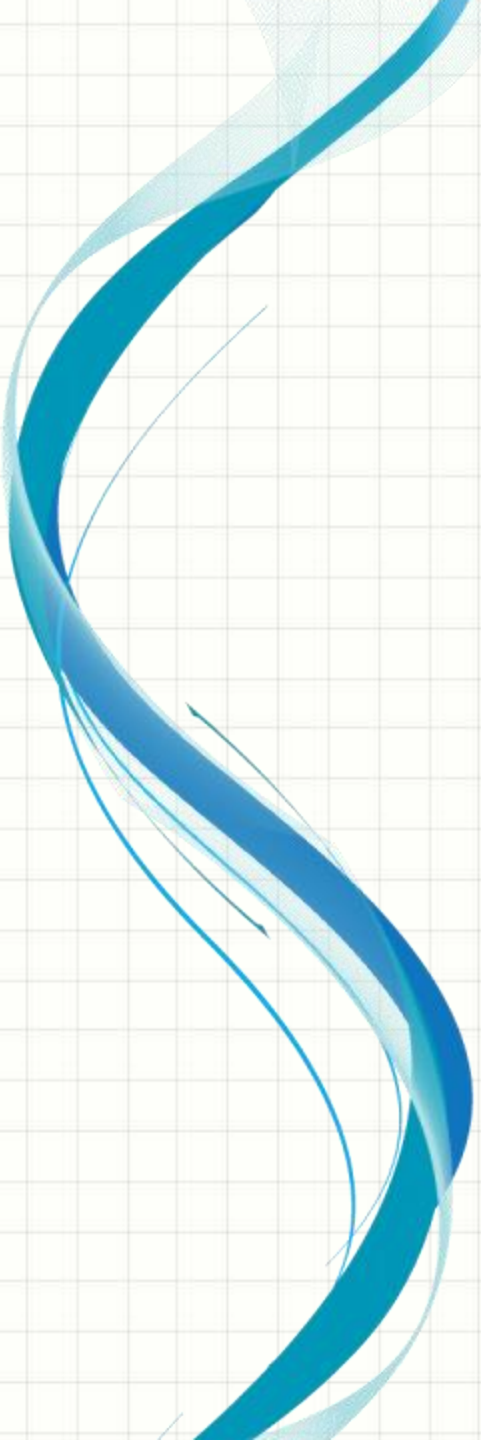
What you can do in initial conversations is express your concern for the individual and talk about the behavior you see in a compassionate way. If it is appropriate, at some point you may consider naming trauma, suggesting therapy, a trauma support group or healing practices used by trauma survivors.

**There is a lot of information on the Internet and YouTube about self-help strategies for trauma survivors such as
Practices to Help Promote Self-Care For Trauma Survivors
www.pesi.com/blog/details/1165/trauma-survivors-and-self-care**



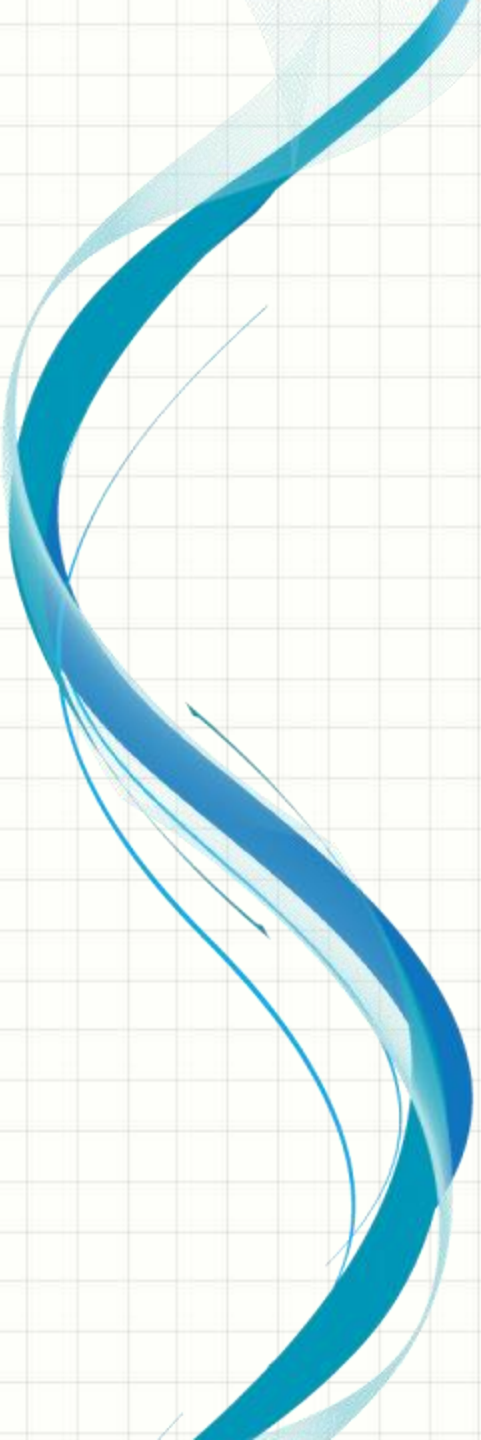
SOME THINGS YOUR PROGRAM CAN DO TO HELP PEOPLE WITH TRAUMA

- 1. Organize a joint committee with representatives from your program management, staff and people from a mental health program to make sure the program is offering the right services in the right way, that staff will have access to support and ongoing training and that the program is becoming more trauma informed on an ongoing basis. Program participants or other trauma survivors should be part of this group and the process.**
- 2. Discuss whether trauma information should be offered in a drop in group, a series of groups or if the trauma information should be given in one on one sessions or in all of these ways.**
- 3. Work out a referral relationship and process between your program and the mental health program for people who need on going more intensive therapy.**
- 4. Discuss how to make activities that will help people heal from trauma part of people's employment plans. Discuss the option of making some of these activities a part of the workforce program model. This could include group volunteer, hobby groups and other group activities.**



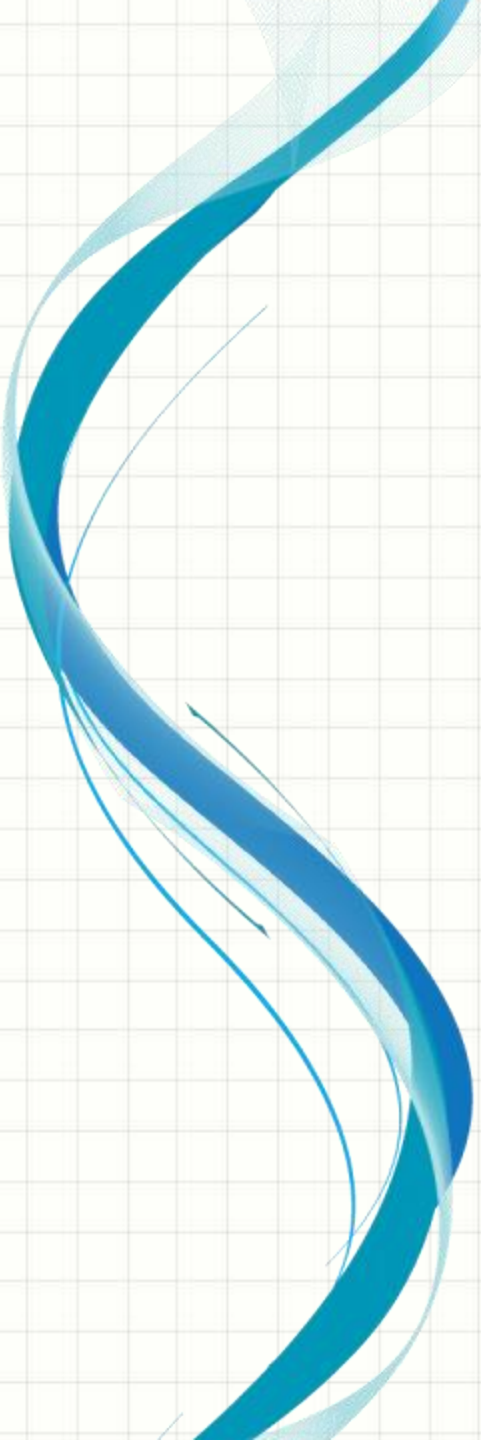
COMMUNICATION ENHANCERS WHEN PEOPLE ARE HAVING A TRAUMATIC EPISODE

- 1. As much as possible for the situation, try to find a way to express some degree of unconditional positive regard. In the trauma healing process, acceptance of the individual must come before we can expect them to change. “Thanks so much for talking with me about this. I know it must be challenging for you. I’m impressed that you want to discuss this.”**
- 2. Be aware of your body language, voice and physical space if you are meeting together. Trauma survivors are very sensitive and reactive to body language, physical space and voice in both positive and negative ways.**



THE DIFFERENCE IN RESPONSES IF SOMEONE YELLS AT YOU

A NON-TRAUMA AWARE RESPONSE	A TRAUMA AWARE RESPONSE
(Raises voice and moves toward the person) You can't yell at me like that. Stop it. You need to get control of yourself. Calm down.	(Calm voice and stays in place) I am really sorry you feel that way. I care about you. What do you think we need to do to get along better?



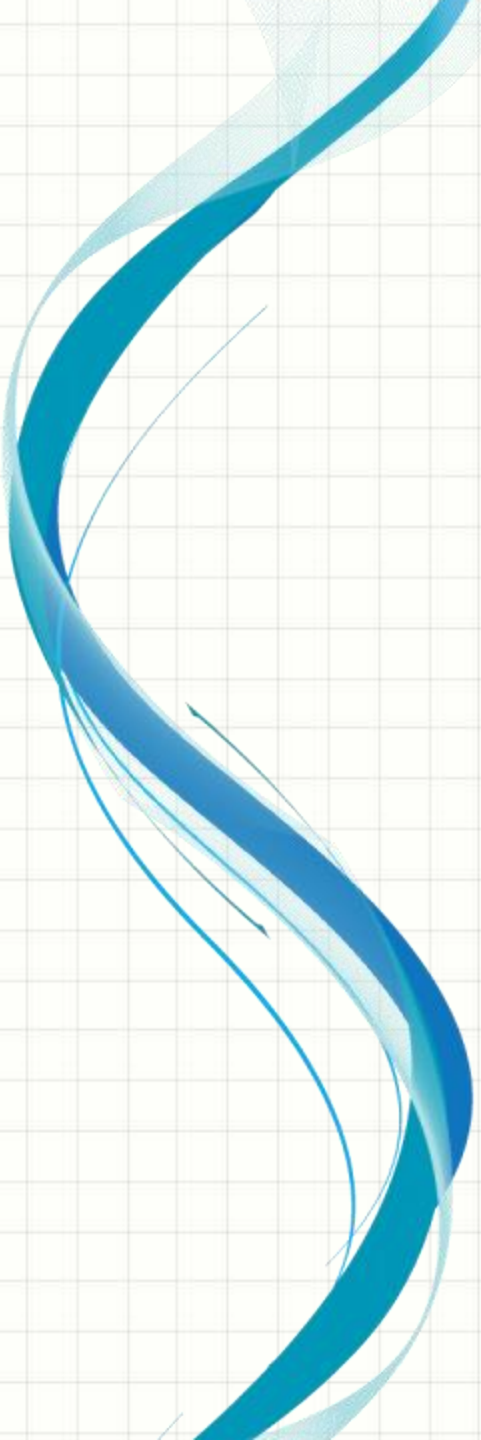
COMMUNICATION ENHANCERS WHEN PEOPLE ARE HAVING A TRAUMATIC EPISODE

- 3. Work from a partnership, not power approach. Try to avoid telling people what to do as much as possible. Help them develop options and sort through them.**
- 4. Maintain consistently high, but appropriate expectations. Do not become codependent to dysfunctional behavior but find a way to be supportive and understanding at the same time you empower the individual to find a way to improve things.**

Validate their feelings and show empathy.

Use “Yes and.....” statements and not “Yes but” statements.

- 5. Slow down the interaction. Put space in between responses. Help the trauma survivor avoid racing. Avoid racing yourself. Do what you can to help people be in the moment.**



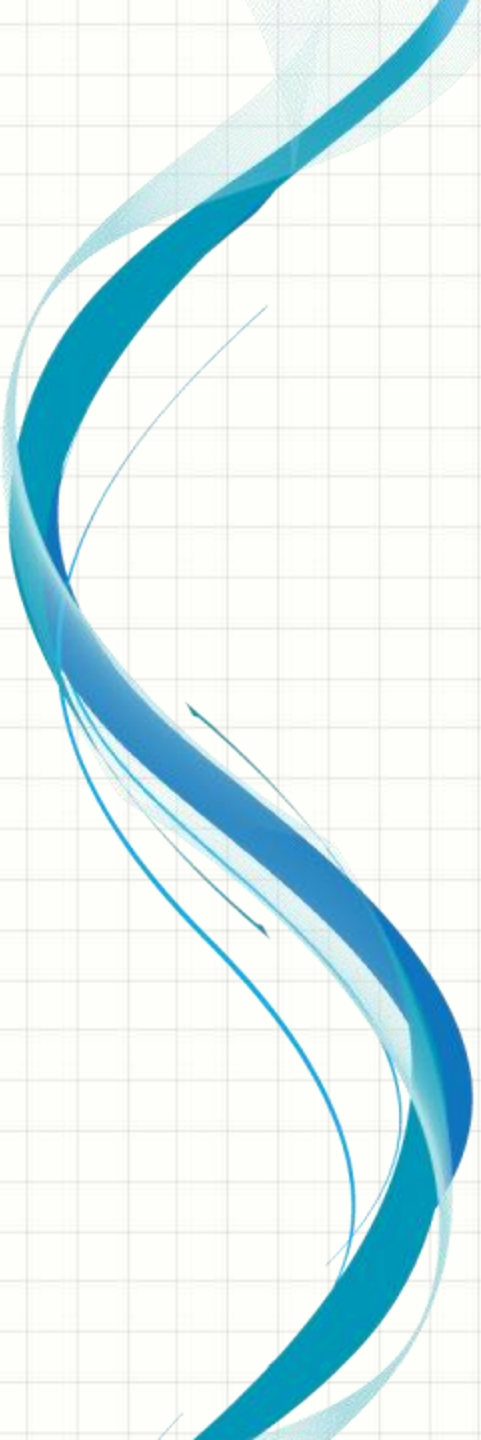
COMMUNICATION ENHANCERS WHEN PEOPLE ARE HAVING A TRAUMATIC EPISODE

- 6. Be careful about being judgmental. Sometimes trauma is talking through the person, but the person is not the trauma. They are more than the trauma.**

Remember trauma is most often something that happens to people and not something they do to themselves.

- 7. Help people recognize and accept greater responsibility for their successes than their failures using a strength based lens. Celebrate progress as well as the end accomplishment.**
- 8. Give people time to absorb what is being said and/or what is going on. Pause in communicating, but do not stare at the person.**

Explain why you are pausing. “I need a moment to think about what you just said because it is so important. Is it ok with you if we just pause for a moment?” Encourage them to tell you or indicate when they need a moment.



COMMUNICATION ENHANCERS WHEN PEOPLE ARE HAVING A TRAUMATIC EPISODE

9. Be patient about healing. Healing from trauma is a journey, not a point in time. It is also not a straight line. There are setbacks and recovery in the journey.

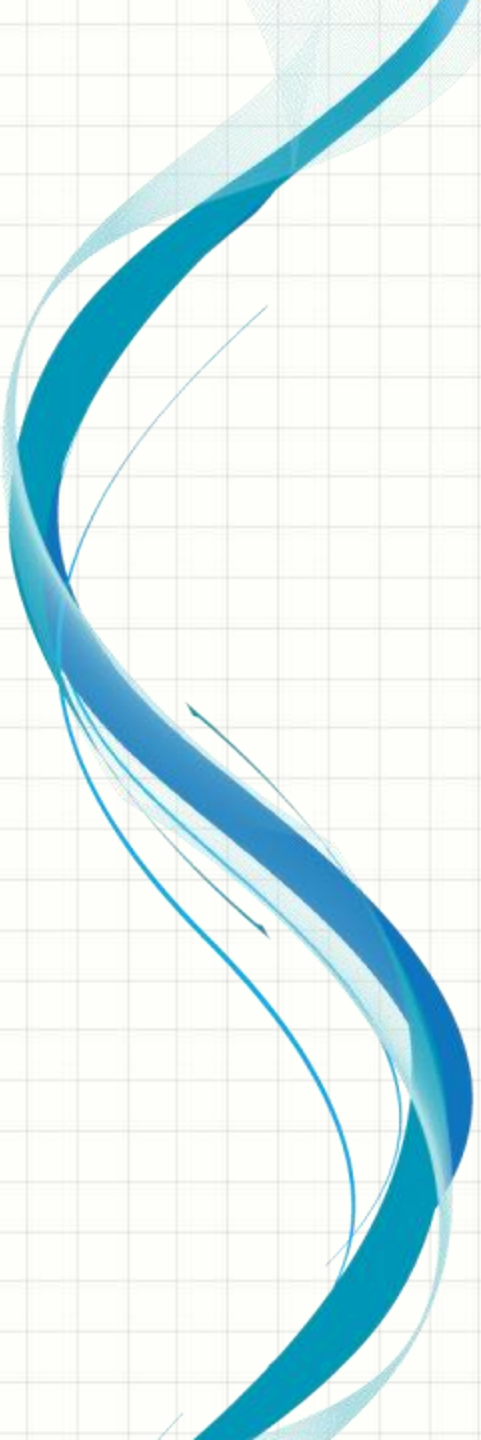
10. Try to end any interactions on as positive a note as possible.

Remember some trauma survivors will relive the interaction, especially if it is a hard one for them, and you want them to also remember a positive ending.

Being self-critical about something you may have done wrong in the interaction can be very helpful for trauma survivors to experience.

11. Be very careful not to overstep the boundaries of your role and your expertise. Avoid trying to be a therapist if you are not trained as a therapist. Be careful about “over helping” and becoming too involved and burnt by things that are way beyond your job and knowledge.

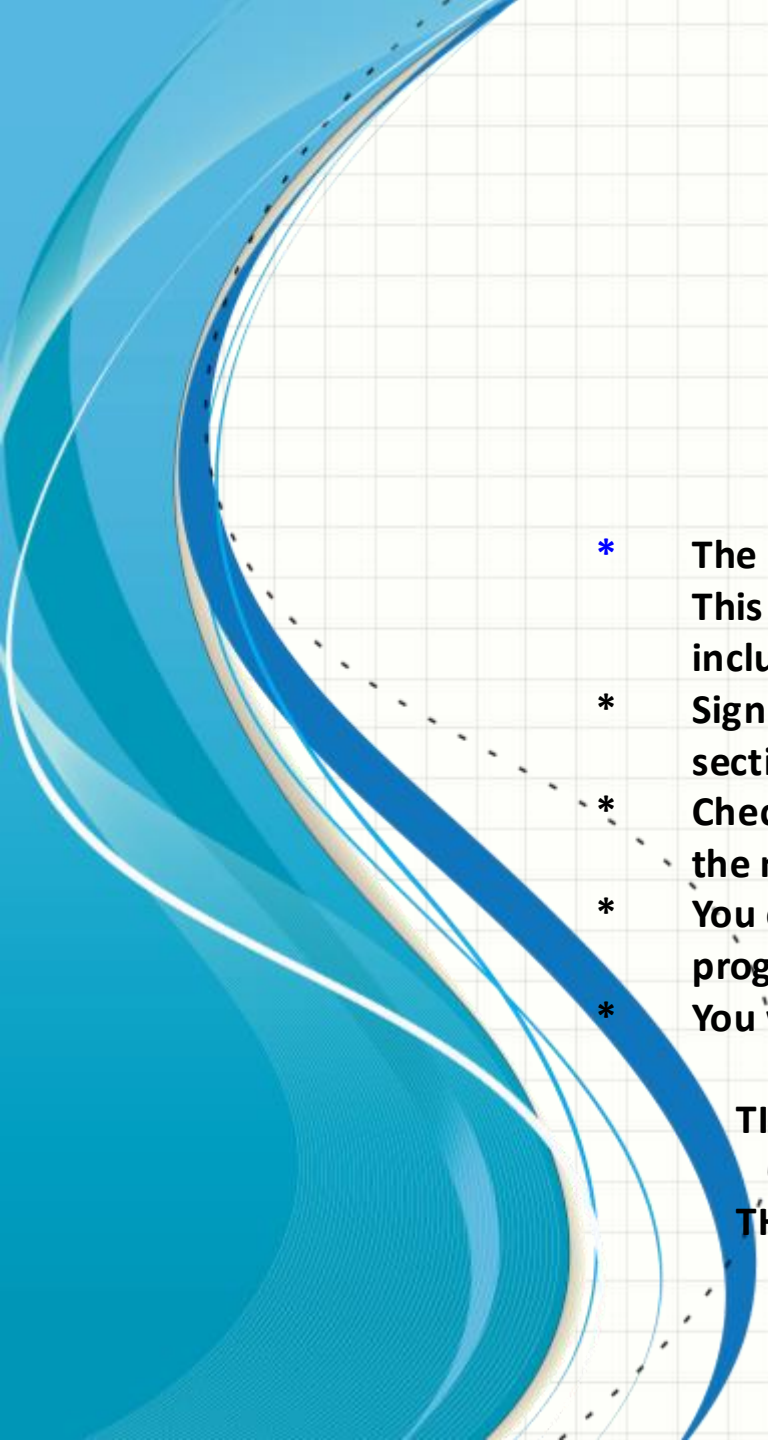
It is easy for well-meaning people to go too far to help people with trauma and this will inadvertently harm the trauma survivor.



SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

- 1. If the personnel in your program are trauma survivors, they may benefit from a confidential support group facilitated by a therapist or individual therapy to help them from getting secondary trauma as they work with trauma survivors.**
- 2. Trauma also includes Post Incarceration Syndrome, which is what happens when people relive and often continue to have trauma behaviors after being released. This will often interfere with job retention. Sometimes offering trauma informed services to people after they are working in the form of a Career Club can be a helpful program feature.**
- 3. When diagnosed by a clinician, trauma may be considered a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act. This may make it possible for people who are trauma survivors to request a reasonable accommodation from their employer. For further information go to <https://askjan.org/disabilities/Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder-PTSD.cfm>**

While working with trauma survivors can be challenging, never forget that if you can help them heal from the trauma it will change their lives and the lives of other people they are connected to for the better!



THANKS FOR TAKING THE WEBINAR!!

For a list by topic of Larry Robbin webinars go to

<https://larryrobbin.com/v2/about/>

GO TO WWW.LARRYROBBIN.COM

- * The home page of the website will list Larry's upcoming webinars. This includes two more webinars in this reentry series. It also includes a free youth recruitment webinar on June 12.
- * Sign up for the quarterly free workforce newsletter in the contact section of the site read by more than 25,000 people!
- * Check out over 500 articles related to employment in past issues of the newsletter!
- * You can download the job seeker handouts and use them in your program at no cost!
- * You will find useful reports and resources on the site!

TIME FOR QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND BEST PRACTICES!

THANKS FOR THE VERY IMPORTANT WORK THAT YOU DO!