



TIHC Network Meeting

Thurs April 11, 2024 on zoom 1-2 pm

Present: Laurie L (NWDA); Ariane K (CSO); Erika M (18 Degrees); Christine D (HR consultant); Sheila M (Literacy Project); Lisa G (SPIFFY); Heather W (HFTFP), Heather C (community member), Ruth E (staff).

This meeting was a discussion of 2 articles, primarily one about the limitations of the original ACE study as a diagnostic tool, but also one that studied the [impact of trauma on twins](#), and a 10-minute clip from the *Wisdom of Trauma* interview series that TIHC has access to and showed during the meeting. It was an interview with [Dr. Diane Poole Heller](#) and [Dr. Gabor Mate](#) discussing the importance of attachment theory, the impact of trauma. If you would like to watch the interview, please email Ruth directly for the link and password at TIHC@wmtcinfo.org

Grounding/DEIC exercise: after a grounding moment, we each shared something beautiful we had seen or experienced recently.

DISCUSSION

The article highlights the limitations of using the original ACE survey questionnaire to diagnose and assign people ACE scores. The questionnaire doesn't capture the more complex pieces of trauma, so if one person experienced only 1 traumatic event, but it went on for years (like an abusive relationship) they only have an ACE score of 1 which doesn't reflect the impact that kind of trauma can have on a person for the rest of their life. It can't capture those kinds of factors like timing of exposure, length, etc. And it notes that complex health conditions are not usually caused by any one thing. This can all lead to over or underestimating impact of trauma and subsequent treatments or lack thereof.

We discussed how the ACE study is a great way to see general population info, but if you narrow the scope to a diagnostic tool, it might not be helpful. It's important to question what the info is actually telling us. Ariane pointed out that in fact, hundreds of thousands of people actually took the original ACE survey although data from 17,000 was used in the study. She said the ACE study has been conducted in all 50 states and many local Dept of Public Health offices have done the survey with clients too. So it's important for us to question how it's being used, if it's being misappropriated or how the data is being interpreted or used to set policies or treatment plans, etc.

We can't necessarily prevent trauma, but how do we shore people up to manage it better? How can we support others around managing resiliency, identifying strengths and assets, etc?

We talked about different kinds of trauma—how some impact how you feel about yourself, can bring on shame and secrecy vs something that happens externally or to a whole community like a climate disaster. What can we do to create communities that can hold people's trauma, allow room for it and the ability to heal from it.

The pandemic was both a universal experience and also incredibly isolating for many of us, and there are still effects rippling out from that, and we might not even realize how we are still being affected. And the idea that we “should be over it” by now.

The video clip touched on the importance of Repair and how it helps to build relational resilience, which so few of us had growing up or modeled for us. And how much of the mainstream culture works against parents and their ability to connect and parent with support. Gabor commented on how 75% of new mothers have to go back to work in this country after 2 months. Repair is a skill to learn and using it can build consistent connection in relationships. How putting a child in time out when they express strong emotions or reactions is counter to what is needed (more connection, not less!) and it forces the child to make the repair.

Dr. Heller talked about how connection IS what regulates us. Having social connections is essential to being pro-social. If we are born into trauma and stress, we often end up scanning for and expecting threat and a dangerous world. But if we are raised in pro-social environment with connection, we learn to read social cues, and that part of our brain gets developed in pro-social ways.

We discussed adding more in our roadshow trainings about attachment. And how we need to be careful about what norms we are perpetuating if we generalize in ways that puts Eurocentric and white/middle class norms at the center of how we view parenting. And that it's worth clarifying the difference between picking up a child/being attached to a child so they don't have to feel any strong emotions vs staying connected to them WHILE they have their strong reactions/feelings. Dis-attachment is part of trauma. Other things mentioned: how the army teaches officers to recognize when they did something wrong, admit it and then say how they will fix it; how Indian boarding schools where children were removed from their homes and families was all about dis-attachment, and how we reinforced dis-attaching and created historical trauma in this country with things like public lynchings and public humiliations. If we want to promote healing and connection as a country, look for the most disconnected people.

Submitted by Ruth Ever