

What is Trauma-Informed Counseling

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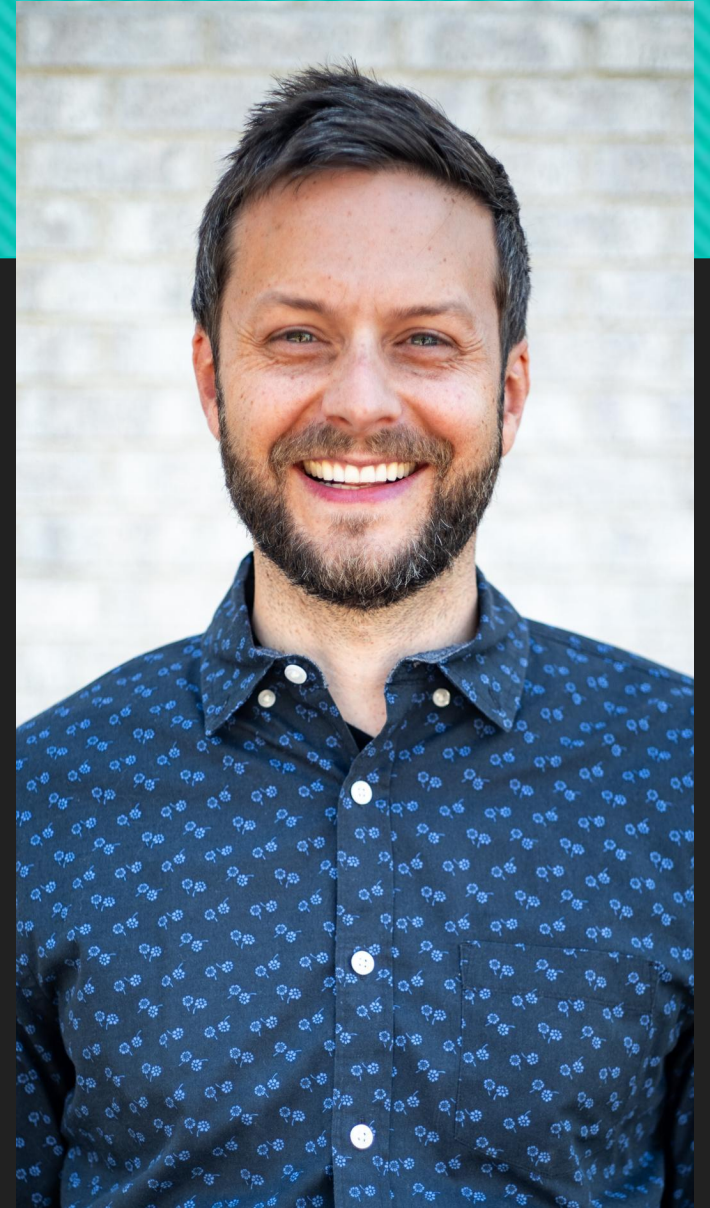
THE TRAUMA INFORMED
Counseling Center of Grand Rapids



HEALTH FOR LIFE
— GRAND RAPIDS —

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Brittani Decess is a Licensed Professional Counselor at Health for Life Counseling in the Grand Rapids Area. Brittani is a Trauma Informed therapist. Brittani's areas of expertise are domestic violence, sexual assault, abuse, neglect, relationship issues, relationship dynamics, sexuality, non-monogomy, and lgbtq+ experiences.

Brittani has made several relationship programs to fill in the gaps for LGBTQ+, non-monogamous and kinky folx.



What is Trauma?

- **Trauma.** “Trauma results from an 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 lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being” (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 7²).

What do we mean when we talk about “trauma”?

Trauma can be understood as any extraordinarily stressful experience in life that has a lasting negative impact on someone.

Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

- In 1995, Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began a breakthrough study on the overall health effects of people who had experienced adverse childhood experiences.
- For two years, researchers gathered comprehensive medical information from over 17,000 patients at Kaiser's Health Clinic in San Diego, CA.

Adverse Childhood Experience Study

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse



Divorce

- ACE study researchers found that the presence of **any** of these harmful experiences in childhood was **predictive of lifelong problems with health and well-being (including negative physical symptoms and outcomes, more likely to suffer from an addiction, and severe mental health problems).**

NOT Trauma informed Care

- Many of our counseling and therapeutic techniques were developed over the last 120 years, and many were
- unintentionally “ego-based”,
- have a built in power dynamic (the patient is “ill” and the clinician is “healthy”),
- focus on engaging the prefrontal cortex (logic center) when the person is experiencing a nervous system reaction (trauma) that has rendered the prefrontal cortex “offline”,

Interventions that are NOT trauma informed

- Advice giving
- “Behavioral Modification”
- Confrontation
- Exposure Therapy
- Most Cognitive Behavioral Therapies (excluding Trauma-Focused CBT)
- “Psychoeducation” on the consequences of behaviors
- Punishment (By way of the caregivers or institutions that the therapist is in contact with)
- Moving too quickly with Trauma-Specific Interventions such as EMDR or Somatic Experience Therapy—before the client is adequately “resourced” and is able to emotionally regulate.

What healthcare professionals have said:

(Paraphrased Quotes from People I've met)

- “Just don’t think about it anymore.”
- “If you just forgive them, you’ll stop being angry about what he did to you.”
- “God gave us a brain: that means you need to use it or lose it. You need to think about the consequences so that you stop doing that bad stuff.”
- “Just say no! (to drugs)”
- “It seems like you aren’t working hard enough in therapy.”
- “Sometimes I wonder if you really want to get better.”
- “Well, I’ve done all I can do for you--you are probably going to have to keep repeating the coping skills you learned or stay on medications for the rest of your life.”
- “You need to man up and take responsibility.”

Trauma-Informed Care

- **Trauma-informed care (TIC).** A trauma-informed approach to the delivery of behavioral health services includes an understanding of trauma and an awareness of the impact it can have across **settings, services, and populations**.
- It involves viewing trauma through an ecological and cultural lens and recognizing that context plays a significant role in how individuals perceive and process traumatic events, whether acute or chronic.
- TIC involves vigilance in anticipating and avoiding institutional processes and individual practices that are likely to retraumatize individuals

Trauma-Informed Care: Adaptation

- Trauma Informed Care recognizes the biological and behavioral foundations of **human Adaptation**.
- Our nervous system is constantly adapting to the underlying nervous system responses:
 - **Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn and Collapse.**
- Many behaviors of those experiencing trauma happen at a preconscious level and only later (after the shock has worn off) do we humans make up a story regarding “why” something happened.

Trauma-Informed Treatment Principles

- 1. Promote Trauma Awareness and Understanding
- 2. Recognize That Trauma-Related Symptoms and Behaviors Originate From Adapting to Traumatic Experiences
- 3. View Trauma in the Context of Individuals' Environments
- 4. Minimize the Risk of Retraumatization or Replicating Prior Trauma Dynamics
- 5. Create a Safe Environment
- 6. Identify Recovery From Trauma as a Primary Goal

Trauma-Informed Treatment Principles (2)

- 7. Support Control, Choice, and Autonomy
- 8. Create Collaborative Relationships and Participation Opportunities
- 9. Familiarize Clients With Trauma-Informed Services
- 10. Conduct Universal Routine Trauma Screening
- 11. View Trauma Through a Sociocultural Lens

Trauma-Informed Treatment Principles (3)

- 12. Use a Strengths-Focused Perspective To Promote Resilience
- 13. Foster Trauma-Resistant Skills
- 14. Show Organizational and Administrative Commitment to Trauma-Informed Care
- 15. Develop Strategies To Address Secondary Trauma and Promote Self-Care
- 16. Provide Hope—Recovery Is Possible

Most survivors, including those who are functioning well—even brilliantly—in some aspects of their lives, face another, even greater challenge: reconfiguring a brain/mind system that was constructed to cope with the worst. Just as we need to revisit traumatic memories in order to integrate them, we need to revisit the parts of ourselves that developed the defensive habits that helped us to survive.

Bessel van der Kolk

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