



Screening & Assessment for Trauma in Drug Courts

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What is Trauma?

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

SAMHSA 2013



What is a “Trauma-Informed” Drug Court?

A trauma informed drug court:

- realizes the widespread impact of trauma
- understands potential paths for healing
- recognizes the signs & symptoms of trauma in staff, clients, & others involved with the court
- responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, & settings.



Advantages to Being Trauma Informed

Increase safety

Avoid re-traumatization

Make appropriate treatment referrals

Decrease recidivism

Key component
Screening & Assessment

<http://gainscenter.samhsa.gov>



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TRAUMA IS PERVASIVE

Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE)

ACE Scale Item	%
Abuse	
Physical abuse	15
Emotional abuse	18
Sexual abuse	7
Household instability	
Household mental illness	28
Household substance abuse	17
Parental separation or divorce	41
Parent lost job	20
Other	
Peer victimization (non-sibling)	48
Exposure to community violence	63
Someone close died from illness/accident	49
Disaster	11



Community Samples

National Co-morbidity Study:

61% of men & 51% of women reported at least one traumatic event.

Detroit Area Survey of Trauma:

90% reported lifetime exposure to trauma; 5.3 events for men, 4.3 events for women



Women & Trauma

Lifetime Exposure to Trauma:

- 55-99% with substance abuse problems
- 50-70% with psychiatric hospitalization history
- 70% seen in emergency departments
- 40-60% in psychiatric outpatient programs
- 80% in criminal justice system

Harris & Fallot, 2001



Jail Diversion Study (TCE)

Women

- 96% lifetime trauma experiences
- 74% current trauma experiences

Men

- 89% lifetime trauma experiences
- 86% current trauma experiences



Mental Health Courts

Abuse (self report)	% Women	% Men
Sexual abuse or rape (prior to age 20)	70	25
Parents hit or threw things at one another	46	27
Parents beat them with belt whip or strap	61	68
Parents hit them with something hard	43	36
Parents beat or really hurt them with their hands	42	36
Parents injured them enough to need medical attention	22	8



Trauma Treatment in Drug Courts

4 Drug Courts in San Diego:

Women who received gender-responsive (trauma informed) treatment:

- had better in-treatment performance
- more positive perceptions of treatment experience
- reduction in PTSD symptoms
- all groups had reduction in substance use, arrests, & increased psychological well-being

2012, Messina et al.



Trauma in Veterans


2012 – OEF/OIF Veteran Study:

Factors Associated with Arrest:

- Young age
- Male
- History of arrests
- **Witnessing family violence**
- **Substance misuse**
- **PTSD with high anger/irritability**
- (TBI was close to significant)

2012 – Elbogen et al.





WHAT IS POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)?

Transition from DSM IV to V

Major changes:

- New category – “trauma and stress-related disorders”
 - No longer considered an anxiety disorder
- Separate diagnostic criteria for children younger than 6 years
- New PTSD Diagnostic Criteria:
 - A. Stressor (1 required)
 - B. Intrusion (1 symptom required)
 - C. Avoidance (1 symptom required)
 - D. Negative alterations in mood or cognition (2 symptoms req)
 - E. Alterations in arousal & activity (2 symptoms required)
 - F. Duration
 - G. Functional significance
 - H. Attribution



Specific Populations & PTSD

General Population:

- 52% (men) & 28% (women) with PTSD develop AUDs
- 35% (men) & 27% (women) with PTSD develop SUDs

Military Veterans:

- Approximately 20% of current OEF/OIF veterans have PTSD
- Nearly 40% of incarcerated veterans screen positive for PTSD
 - Greater number of types of trauma
 - More serious current legal problems
 - Higher lifetime substance use
 - More psychiatric symptoms



GAINS Center Selection Process

Work with Queens Treatment Courts

Extensive literature review

Experiences of other courts/programs

Familiarity with types of populations in drug, mental health, & veterans' treatment courts



Program Goals

- ✓ Confirm PTSD Symptoms?
- ✓ Gather a brief history of traumatic events?
- ✓ Gather detailed information on traumatic experiences?
- ✓ Conduct a diagnostic assessment?



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SCREENING FOR TRAUMA

Trauma Symptom Screening

PTSD Checklist-Civilian Version (PCL-C) ★

- 17-item, self-administered
- Corresponds to key PTSD symptoms
- Severity score
- Quick, easy, free – English & Spanish

Impact of Events Scale (IES)

- 22-item, self-administered
- Results in 4 PTSD subscales
- Quick, free, available in many languages



Trauma History Screening

Life Events Checklist (LEC)

- 17-item, self-administered, English-only
- Brief history of traumatic events

Trauma History Screen (THS) – modified

- 13-item, self-report, asks about 11 events
- Yes/no – # times, details such as age, distress

Life Stressors Checklist-Revised (LSC-R)

- Self-administered, provide details, rate each
- Choose 3 most upsetting events



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ASSESSING FOR TRAUMA

Trauma Assessment

Post-traumatic Diagnostic Scale (PDS)

- 49-item, self-administered
- PTSD symptoms related to single event
- Tracks PTSD criteria
- Proprietary, MH professionals or researchers

Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS) ★

- 30-item, structured interview, “gold standard”
- Assesses symptoms, functioning, improvement, & severity/frequency of PTSD symptoms
- Free, available in many languages



Conclusion

Do your homework

Know your population

Know your program goals

Know what trauma treatment options exist
& how to refer/link

Get help: GAINS Center & NCPTSD





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