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TRAUMA HANDOUT

TRAUMA IS A FORM OF ANXIETY

- **Anxiety**
 - a mood state characterized by apprehension and physiological/biological (body) symptoms of tension in which we anticipate impending threat, danger, catastrophe, or misfortune
 - threat may be real or imagined
 - threat may be internal or external
 - threat may be identifiable situation or vague fear of the unknown

EXPANDED TRAUMA frame

- **PTSD**
 - traditional PTSD: personal extreme trauma we have experienced or witnessed when thought self or someone close to us was going to die or be seriously injured
 - traditional PTSD: based on combat war veterans
 - is only form of trauma that is officially recognized by licensed mental health professionals
- **Complex trauma**
 - an answer to viewing trauma ONLY as an extreme or one-time trauma experience
 - context to look at continued abuse as traumatic: neglect, verbal and emotional, physical, and sexual abuse
 - abuse as children
 - abuse as adult
- **Multiple losses**
 - trauma experience of losing people repeatedly due to death
 - for example: AIDS epidemic in the late 80s/early 90s impact
 - for example: community violence impact
- **Intergenerational/historical trauma**
 - trauma and its ensuing coping skills that are developed as a result of trauma that is passed down the generations

- first applied to communities that have been historically, systematically prosecuted, colonized, and oppressed, such as Jews, Native Americans in U.S., African Americans in U.S., Japanese Americans in U.S.
- **Sociocultural trauma**
 - trauma related to the continued experience of and living with oppression as part of an historically disenfranchised community, group, or identity that is given less privilege than others in this society
 - for example: living with racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ageism, able-bodism, religious persecution/discrimination on a daily basis, whether conscious of or not
 - oppression happens on 4 levels: personal, interpersonal, institutional, and structural/systemic (reminder: people make the laws, regulations, policies, rules, procedures that govern and become implicit in institutional or structural oppression, so it always goes back to the first two levels: personal and interpersonal)
- **Secondary trauma/vicarious trauma**
 - trauma that is experience “2nd” hand or indirectly from other sources
 - experiences with others (e.g., children/youth in after-school programs, co-workers, family, friends, strangers on a bus)
 - experiences with the media (e.g., print or online news, movies, tv shows)
 - secondary trauma’s “double whammy”
 - cause its own trauma response
 - stir up previous personal traumatic experiences

THE BIG “3” – SYMPTOMS OF ALL FORMS OF TRAUMA

- **re-experiencing**: **intrusive, unwanted** feelings, thoughts, memories, dreams/nightmares, behaviors, people, places/events/experiences/situations that remind us of the trauma that get replayed over and over again in our minds and make us hurt (mental experiences/symptoms)
- **avoiding**: remove ourselves from the feelings thoughts, behaviors, memories, people, places/events/experiences/situations, dreams/ nightmares, behaviors that remind us of the trauma in order to make ourselves feel better; nihilism, apathy, and emotional numbness are examples of avoiding as they to cut off feelings (mental experiences/symptoms)
- **physiological responses**: body’s response to anxiety – muscle tension, heart pounding/increased heart rate, difficulty breathing, head feels hot, headaches, sweaty, stomach acting up (nausea), guts acting up (diarrhea), increased startle response/more jumpy, hypervigilant (very watchful of self in surroundings) (physical symptoms)

5 F's: FLIGHT, FIGHT, FREEZE in response to **FEAR** can lead to **FUZZY** brain: impairments/difficulty in focus, concentration, attention, abstract thinking, reasoning, insight, judgment, planning, organizing, memory, following steps in a task, impulse control, emotional regulation, sense of self/identity.