



## **Ethical and Professional Considerations in Trauma Psychology: Psychotherapy**

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## Prevalence of Trauma

- **Exposure to trauma is not rare**

National Center for PTSD estimates 50% men and 60% women have experienced at least one traumatic event in their lives

- **Higher prevalence in clinical populations**

Studies have found 51% - 98% public mental health clients report childhood victimization

Incarcerated women: 80%





## Trauma Informed Care

- Recognition of prevalence of traumatic events
- Appreciation of impact of trauma
- Avoidance of re-traumatization
- Use of an empowerment model
- Symptoms viewed as adaptation
- Cultural competence





## Asking About Trauma

- Move from general to specific
- Behavioral and descriptive questions
- Open ended questions
- Avoid labels
- Avoid assumptions
- Assess area of strength and resiliency
- The “Thumbnail Sketch”





## Sequencing of Treatment

- Stage 1: Safety and Stabilization
- Stage 2: Remembrance and Mourning
- Stage 3: Reconnection

Herman, J.L. (1992)





## Ethical Dilemmas

- Informed Consent
- Confidentiality
- Involuntary Hospitalization
- Mandated Reporting
- Record Keeping
- Touch





## Professional Considerations

- Treatment frame
- Boundaries
- Therapy interfering behaviors
- Communication with other professionals
- Self-Injury and suicidal behaviors
- Safety planning





## Vicarious Traumatization

- Self Care/Balance
- Spiritual renewal
- Knowing and honoring our limits
- Peer Consultation/Supervision
- Training and education

Pearlman, L.A. & Saakvitne, K.W. (1995).





## Thank You

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