

# TRAUMA ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

SARAH BRUBAKER, SHAWNA FUGATE, CIERA GOODLOW

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**INTRODUCTION**

**PRESENTING ISSUES**

**STATE OF SERVICES**

What does it look like now?

**RESEARCH & ANALYSIS**

**ADVOCACY**

Current efforts focus on the following:

- Federal Stimulus Loans to the local system
- Training volunteer staff in the mental health system
- Home
- Children
- Welfare
- National Disaster
- National Emergency

**ACTIVITY**

**REFERENCES**

**HANDOUT AND QUESTIONS**



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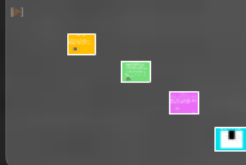
# INTRODUCTION

## What Is Trauma?

- A direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person or learning that unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury has happened to a family member or other close associate.
- The person's response to the event must include intense fear, helplessness, or horror. In children, the response must include disorganized or agitated behavior.
- Not all negative traumas are more prone to have physical health issues.

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## Trauma & The Brain



## Symptoms of Trauma

- Trouble sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Problematic behavior
- Dissociation
- Aggressive behaviors
- Regressive behaviors
- Hyper arousal
- Irritable
- Anxious
- Withdrawn
- Poor appetite
- Frequent headaches/stomach aches
- Remembrance of the event
- Poor memory
- Poor verbal skills
- Screams/cries excessively
- Difficulty trusting others
- Fear of separation from those who they trust

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## Trauma Is Likely to Occur When People Have Experienced...

- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Violence
- War/Terrorism/Torture
- Historical Trauma
- Natural Disasters
- School Violence
- Neglect
- Interpersonal Violence
- Hostile Fire
- Accidents
- Sudden Death of a Loved One
- Sudden Parental Separation
- Community Violence
- Medical Trauma
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional/Mental Abuse

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## Types of Trauma





# What Is Trauma?

- A direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate.
- The person's response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror— in children, the response must involve disorganized or agitated behavior.
- Those who experience trauma are more prone to have physical health issues.

# Trauma & The Brain

1. Trauma is a psychological injury that can be caused by a single event or a series of events. It can be caused by physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, natural disasters, war, or other stressful events. Trauma can have a profound impact on a person's mental health, leading to a range of symptoms including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Trauma can also affect a person's physical health, leading to a range of medical conditions including heart disease, diabetes, and chronic pain. Trauma can be a complex and challenging experience, and it is important to seek professional help if you are struggling with the effects of trauma.

**The Brain Continued:**

- Experiences in childhood affect the brain's growth
- Early traumatic experiences can influence its adult growth
- Negative experiences - learned and toxic coping
- Positive experiences - thoughts, sensations, & growth learning



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**Trauma & Development**

- Our Limbic system helps identify to what we respond.
- The Limbic system controls emotions and drives our reactions.
- Our Cerebral Cortex is responsible for abstract thinking.
- Our Frontal parietal lobe is a trauma hub and links the
- The Prefrontal Cortex helps us learn, regulate, & regulate emotions.

- When a trauma is experienced our body "sounds the alarm"
- The "alarm" activates our amygdala, hypothalamus, & pituitary in the brain.
- This is often understood as a fight-flight-freeze response which happens in the Hypothalamus.



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**Effects of Trauma**

- People who experienced chronic or complex trauma are 1.5 times more likely to have an alcohol problem, 2.5 times more likely to smoke, a 3.5x more attempt, they were 4x to 5x more likely to overdose. They had a greater chance of having more than 50 sexual partners and STDs. They were also more likely to be overweight.



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**Important Factors to Consider:**



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# The Brain

- The brain is continually changing. The synapses in the brain are continually being pruned and by the time one is about 16 the pruning is complete.
- There is a “use it or lose it” principle in effect with our synaptic connections. This is typically a good thing because our body creates far more connections than it needs.
- It can also be the case that through neglect, a child may lose connections that would be beneficial to them.

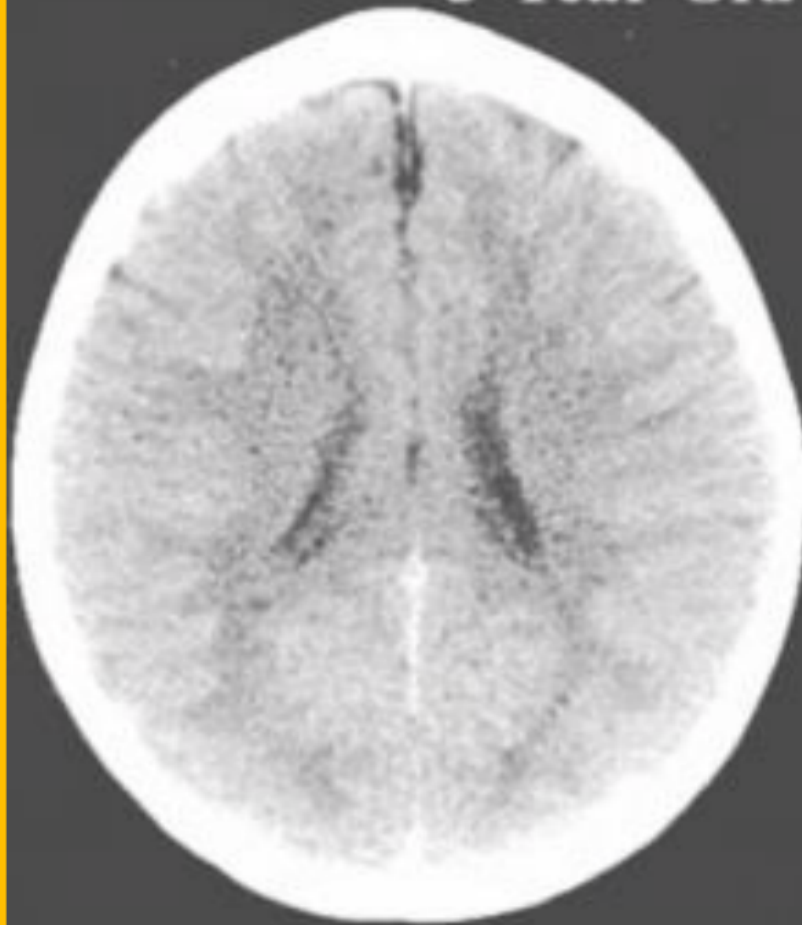
Perry, 2004

# The Brain Continued...

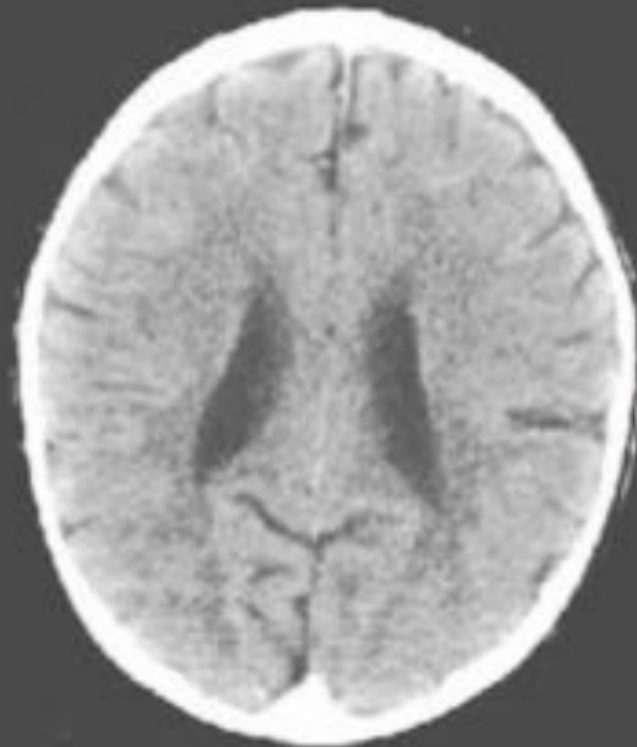
- Experiences in childhood affect the brain's growth.
- Gene transcription: neurons are activated for brain growth.
- Negative experiences = hormonal and brain delays
- Positive experiences = strengths connections & promote learning.



### 3-Year-Old Children



Normal



Extreme Neglect