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3-4-5 Program Course

Introduction to Childhood Trauma

Medical and psychological professionals are becoming more familiar with the phenomenon of childhood trauma (or “complex trauma”). Early violence and parenting problems can result in a host of damaging physiological effects that can last through the child's entire adult life. The current theory is called “attachment theory” - it says that faulty parenting can harm a child's ability to develop proper trust and relational capacities. Experiencing neglect and emotional and verbal abuse are as damaging as physical beatings and sexual abuse in many ways. All of these violent and negative experiences can give a person serious problems coping with common life stressors. We develop afflictions like anxiety, depression, on-going relationship troubles, anger problems, obesity, health problems. We can also develop ugly coping strategies like alcoholism and other chemical addictions, gambling, stealing, bullying, cutting, other self-harm, lying, cheating on spouses, etc.

Formal definitions of childhood trauma:

“Childhood trauma is often described as serious adverse childhood experiences. Children may go through a range of experiences that classify as psychological trauma, these might include neglect, abandonment, sexual abuse, and physical abuse, parent or sibling is treated violently or there is a parent with a mental illness.” *Wikipedia*

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Childhood_trauma

“Children who suffer from child traumatic stress are those who have been exposed to one or more traumas over the course of their lives and develop reactions that persist and affect their daily lives after the events have ended.” *National Child Traumatic Stress Network*

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/>

C-PTSD

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-complex-ptsd-2797491>

Complex-Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD) is becoming more recognized as a serious condition. It is “complex” due to the fact that it is not the result of one event. It is the result of a long period of bad treatment, or exposure to bad conditions over a long time span. It also comes from the fact that the person is captive and has no way to leave and doesn't have the freedom to leave the bad situation. Those who lived in cult-like settings can have this condition as well. And finally, it is catastrophic **when a child is consistently hurt by the very people they rely on to protect them.** Those are negative lessons that will last a lifetime.

It is now theorized that traumatic memories stay locked in the brain:

<https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2015/08/traumatic-memories-hide-retrieve-them>

It is becoming very clear how traumatic memories are strongly formed in the brain through a process of chemical bonds and other processes. These memories are then stored (and tend to grow) in the unconscious where they drive behaviors and beliefs.

Things happened to us that we may not even clearly remember but are stored in the unconscious. These memories and trauma responses then drive our behavior in ways we may not even understand.

The goal now is to make the unconscious conscious – look at it, figure it out and make it less negative and less damaging.

How does it effect us into our adulthoods?

Psychology Today has this:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mindful-anger/201706/4-ways-childhood-trauma-impacts-adults>

Trauma and memory from the Mayo Clinic:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mindful-anger/201706/4-ways-childhood-trauma-impacts-adults>