Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience: A framework for addressing and preventing community trauma
What’s Trauma Got to Do with it?

How the Environment Affects Wellbeing
Fires in northwest Oregon
Heat detected by satellites in previous 24 hours only
September 10, 2020

- Riverside Fire: 120,000 acres
- Beachie Cr. Fire: 182,000 acres
- Lionshead Fire: 109,223 acres
- Echo Mtn Fire: 2,297 acres
- Holiday Farm Fire (McKenzie Fire)

Portland, Salem, Corvallis, Eugene, Bend

Wildfire Today / NASA
MY NEIGHBORHOOD IS KILLING ME
It is unreasonable to expect that people will change their behavior easily when so many forces in the social, cultural, and physical environment conspire against such change.

- Institute of Medicine
We are still standing on the bank of the river, rescuing people who are drowning. We have not gone to the head of the river to keep them from falling in.

That is the 21st century task.”

Gloria Steinem
Context for a Community Trauma Approach to Substance Misuse Prevention and Harm Reduction

Developing a community-trauma informed approach to the opioid epidemic in Ohio
Ohio: Plans to Create Resilient Communities

Develop a Community-Level Prevention Plan that:

• Addresses the community environment, underlying to community conditions and/or norms contributing to OUD

• Potentially impacts other issues, such as mental health and chronic disease

• Sees the issue as complex and multi-faceted, with multi-sectoral partners
Factors Impacting the Substance Use Epidemic

- Substance use risk factor conversations cannot be addressed in isolation
  - Broader social context is key
- Upstream causes of opioid crisis
  - Rural social & economic instability
  - Loss of living-wage jobs
  - Underfunded schools
  - Criminalization of substance use
  - Limited health/social services access
  - Structural racism
  - Intergenerational poverty
  - Social isolation

Moving Upstream

“We spend so much of our time trying to teach people to swim or pulling them out of the river. We all knew that if we got out in front to find out why they’re falling in the first place, we’d keep people out of the river all together... If we don’t invest in prevention, whoever takes over for me will be taking on the exact same issues and trying to implement the same efforts....We have to look at our efforts as comprehensive. It can’t just be about overdose. It can’t just be about addiction.”

- Miriam Walton, executive director of the Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board
Comprehensive Solutions

• An ecosystem approach to engage new multi-sector partners and implement new multi-faceted solutions
  • Parks and recreation
  • Faith communities
  • Local transportation agencies
  • Housing providers and developers
  • Businesses and employers

• A single, integrated response to the opioid epidemic

• Creating space for coordination and alignment of existing efforts for collective impact to address opioids and potentially other issues (e.g., mental health and chronic disease)
The Power of Connection

“Community connectedness is the opposite of addiction.”

- Susan Heald, Coalition Coordinator, Lawrence County

Lessons Learned

• It is time to address community trauma
• Every community is different
• Primary prevention efforts that address the social determinants of health also support recovery from addiction
• Funding that prioritizes prevention and collaboration across sectors makes change possible
• Data matters—and we need more of it

The Best Thing We’ve Done

“In all the years I’ve worked with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, this is the best thing we’ve done. People were just reacting, reacting, reacting. [This work] gave the community a way to feel like they were helping the issue.”

- Susan Heald, Coalition Coordinator, Lawrence County

THRIVE Factors

**People**
- Social networks & trust
- Participation & willingness to act for the common good
- Norms & culture

**Equitable Opportunity**
- Education
- Living wages & local wealth

**Place**
- What's sold & how it's promoted
- Look, feel, & safety
- Housing
- Parks & open space
- Air, water & soil
- Getting around
- Arts & cultural expression
What can be done to prevent the problem from occurring in the first place?
What is Community Trauma?
Trauma: What We Know

- Trauma is the impact of experiences or situations that are painful.

- There is growing understanding about trauma, particularly its prevalence and impact.

- Trauma-informed care is becoming a standard in a growing number of places.

- The predominant approach to dealing with trauma is screening and treatment, consistent with an individual medical model.
Community Trauma: What We’re Learning

• Trauma also manifests at the community level, and is not just the aggregate of individuals in a neighborhood who have experienced trauma.

• Community trauma is the impact of chronic adversity (e.g., violence and structural violence) across a community.

• There is an understanding that trauma serves as a barrier to effective solutions to promote health, safety and well-being.

• There are manifestations, or symptoms, of community trauma in the social-cultural, physical/built and economic environments.
Violence Contributes to Trauma

- Violence is the **intentional use** of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of **resulting in injury, death, psychological or emotional harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation**

- Violence contributes to trauma
Structural Drivers Also Contribute to Trauma

- Structural drivers are the **inequitable distribution** of power, money, and resources
- Structural drivers create the conditions that harm communities and also contribute to trauma
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<th>Structural Violence – associated examples</th>
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<td>What’s inflicting the harm?</td>
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<td>• Displacement</td>
<td>• Homelessness</td>
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<td>The market economy</td>
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<td>• Unsustainable, poverty level wages and work arrangements</td>
<td>• Widespread job loss</td>
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<td>• Underemployment</td>
<td>• Shift to automation/technology</td>
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<td>• Flight of businesses</td>
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<td>• Failing schools and school systems</td>
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<td>Justice system</td>
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<td>• Over/oppressive policing, under policing, and unconstitutional policing</td>
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<td>• Criminalization of mental illness and substance abuse</td>
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<td>• Travel bans</td>
<td>• Courthouse raids</td>
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<td>• Refugee restrictions</td>
<td>• Family separation</td>
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Housing Market
Market Economy
Community Development and Design

SF Chronicle. Fire tears through Oakland’s city-backed homeless camp.
Lifetime Likelihood of Imprisonment of U.S. Residents Born in 2001

All Men

1 in 9

White Men

1 in 17

Black Men

1 in 3

Latino Men

1 in 6

All Women

1 in 56

White Women

1 in 111

Black Women

1 in 18

Latina Women

1 in 45


Criminal Justice System
Immigration Policy
Symptoms of Community Trauma
Symptoms of Community Trauma

Community trauma symptoms are the manifestations of the impact of experiencing adversity (structural violence and/or violence) across a community.

Examples include:

• damaged social networks
• a low sense of social and political efficacy
• deteriorated built environments
• intergenerational poverty
Sample Symptoms of Community Trauma

- Intergenerational poverty
- Long-term unemployment
- Relocation of businesses and jobs
- Limited Employment
- Disinvestment
- Deteriorated environments and unhealthy, often dangerous public spaces with a crumbling built environment
- Unhealthy products
- Disconnected/damaged social relations and social networks
- The elevation of destructive, dislocating social norms
- A low sense of collective political and social efficacy
Adverse Community Experiences and Community Trauma: Mutually Reinforcing

Trauma gets in the way of us doing what we need to do. When it is chronic and not episodic, it is really damaging.

-Susan Neufeld, Vice President, Resident Programs and Services, Bridge Housing
Focusing on Resilience
Community Resilience

- Community resilience is the ability/capacity of a community to adapt, recover and thrive, even in the face of adversity.

- It’s rooted in community factors, such as social networks and trust; willingness to act for the community good; living wages/local assets and wealth; healthy, equitable community design and infrastructure; and healthy products and services.
## Elements of a Resilient Community

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<th>THRIVE Community Factors</th>
<th>Examples of THRIVE</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Social networks &amp; trust</td>
<td>• strong social networks and trust</td>
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<td>2. Participation &amp; willingness to act for the common good</td>
<td>• community engaged in solutions</td>
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<td>3. Norms &amp; culture</td>
<td>• norms supportive of healthy relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. What’s sold &amp; how it’s promoted</td>
<td>• access to healthy food/products</td>
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<td>5. Look, feel &amp; safety</td>
<td>• perceived safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Parks &amp; open space</td>
<td>• safe parks/accessible open space</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Getting around</td>
<td>• reliable ways to get around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Housing</td>
<td>• safe, affordable housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Air, water, soil</td>
<td>• safe/clean air, water, soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Arts &amp; cultural expression</td>
<td>• thriving arts /cultural expression</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Education</td>
<td>• high quality education (pre-K-on)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Living wages &amp; local wealth</td>
<td>• living wages, local ownership</td>
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Pillars of Wellbeing

Belonging/Connection
Safety
Trust
Dignity
Hope/Aspiration
Control of Destiny/Self-Determination
Simultaneous Community Solutions

Prevention Institute. Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience: A Framework for Addressing and Preventing Community Trauma

Note: The systems listed are examples of the types of systems across which we need to work to address community trauma.
Healing: A Starting Point for Community Agency

- Healing circles
- Vigils
- Restorative justice practices
- Acknowledgement/reconciliation
- Arts and engagement in the arts

- Community dialogues
- Practices that are culturally and community rooted and acknowledge harm and promote resilience
Creatively Voicing Collective Emotion

Strategies Among People

- Increase **civic engagement and participation**
- Supporting **multigenerational relationships**
- Coming together to **build community efficacy**
- Advancing **positive norms**
- Uplifting **positive narratives of hope and resilience from within the community**
- Enhanced **community engagement and advocacy**
- Trauma informed **community building**
- Reconnecting with **cultural identity**
Creating Space for Being/Doing/Connecting
Strategies within the Community (Place)

- Reclaiming **land, spaces and public places**
- **Arts and cultural reflection/expression** in the community
- **Focus on ensuring stable housing with dignity**
- Creating **safe and supportive places** for regular gathering/coming together
Establishing informal gathering places for networking, resource connection and support that also strengthen life skills and community/civic opportunities.

Engaging in Placemaking

Images: Kalihi Valley Instructional Bike Exchange (Honolulu, HI)
Strategies within the Community (Equitable Opportunity)

• Workforce and economic development
• Restorative justice in schools
• Resident ownership of businesses
St. Louis Area Council on Restorative Justice
Strategies Across Systems

- Trauma informed systems transformation
- Public health solutions to police-community violence
- Power-sharing (e.g., participatory budgeting, shared leadership and decision-making)
All people have strengths and gifts they can contribute to their community.
Working on community determinants is both scary and reassuring. If we don’t do this level of prevention, we will always be chasing the problem.

-Ohio Community Collective Impact Model for Change Learning Community Partner