



Trauma Healing Project

Survivor Voices: Creating a Movement for Policy and Practice Change through Community Action Research and Engagement (CARE)

IVAT Conference

San Diego, CA

September 12, 2010

www.healingattention.org/presentations/ivat2010.pdf

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Our Working Understanding of Trauma

"Trauma is a concrete physical, cognitive, affective, and spiritual response by individuals and communities to events and situations that are objectively traumatizing. On a simple level, for the most part, people feel traumatized or wounded because they *have been* wounded."

~ *Bonnie Burstow*

The Trauma Healing Project: Our Vision Promoting Liberation and Justice Through Healing

We work to ensure that anyone in our community who has experienced violence or trauma will be supported to heal and recover through caring and support that is:

- culturally, developmentally, and gender appropriate;
- empowerment and strength-based; and
- respectful and effective.

We will not use psychiatric labels or diagnosis, nor will we support or promote the medicalization of people's experiences of or responses to trauma.

Our Core Assumptions

Within supportive communities and relationships people can and do completely recover and heal from even the most severe trauma.

When survivors of trauma heal, we have the capacity to positively transform our own lives, our families, our communities, and the world.

The Trauma Healing Project: Who We Are

- A community based effort led by survivors that includes activists, advocates, counselors, students, researchers, academics and social service providers
- We share the belief that in order to reduce and ultimately end abuse and violence in all its forms we must provide enough effective support and attention for true healing from past trauma (including historical trauma and oppression)
- We support healing through direct attention to survivors, community engagement and outreach, and research and evaluation

Healing Attention – Our Work

- Direct attention to survivors
 - Support Groups, DST, Workshops
- Community engagement and outreach
 - Forums, Provider Trainings
- Research and evaluation
 - Program Evaluation
 - Survivor Voices

Our Research Agenda

In partnership with survivors the purpose of our research is to:

- 1) Amplify the voices of survivors of trauma to influence and improve policy & practice
- 2) Inform, develop and validate our healing work with survivors

"Remember that survivors of trauma are the experts on their experience not the 'system' that purports to know more about a person than the person themselves."

- *Oregon Trauma Survivor (2007)*

Participatory Action Research

Community-based participatory research is a *"collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR...has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change to improve health outcomes and eliminate health disparities."*

-- WK Kellogg Foundation Community Health Scholars Program

Participatory Action Research

PAR is about radically rethinking who initiates and undertakes the process, and who learns or benefits from the findings.

- Institute of Development Studies, 1998

- Identify relevant questions
- Planning the evaluation design
- Select and develop measures and data collection
- Gather and analyze the data
- Reach consensus about findings, conclusions and recommendations
- Develop and implement dissemination plans; strategize community impact

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
<http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/commbas.html>

The Survey: An Opportunity for Deep Listening and Co-Learning

Survey Purpose: To better understand the experiences, strengths, concerns and needs of survivors of trauma living in Lane County, Oregon.

Our Pledge to Respondents: We will use what we learn from this survey to guide the work of the Trauma Healing Project (THP), to educate caregivers and service providers, and to raise awareness in the larger community about what helps, what hurts, and about how to promote and support healing from trauma.

Survivor Voices - Our Survey

Telephone Survey

- Survivor Involvement
- Generalizable
- Rare/Not been done before

Inclusive Survey

- Survivor Involvement
- Reflect the voices and experience of people otherwise excluded

Telephone Survey

- Development – TCs Voice here

Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

A computer aided telephone interviewing system – a random sampling of all working phone numbers in the metropolitan Eugene/Springfield area. All residents of Eugene/Springfield had an equal chance of being selected.

July 27th-August 25th, 2009.

78 items; 68 closed, 10 open-ended

What Happened, What Helped, What Hurt, What Do You Recommend



Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

Inclusion Criteria

1. 18 or older.
2. And 'yes' to the following question: *Have you ever experienced or witnessed any form of abuse or violence as a child or adult?*

Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

Age range: 19 – 92
Gender: 70.7% Female; 28.5% male
Language: 97% English as 1st language
Race: 87.2% Caucasian
Ed & \$: widely dispersed across education & income
Gov't \$: 24.5% currently receiving govt. income support
Disability: 29.3% identified as a person with a disability.

Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

Physically assaulted: 82.6%
Sexually assaulted: 47%
Verbally abused: 82.3%

88.6% witnessed someone being verbally violent in their household

Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

Average # of trauma items endorsed was 5.99 (SD = 2.32).

The more exposure to trauma the less likely one believed he or she could heal ($r = -.18, p = .001$).

Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

What age were you when you first experienced any of the violence or abuse just mentioned?

0 - 6 years old	47.9%
7 - 12 years	20.5%
under 18	77.2%

Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

During the period of time when you first experienced any of the abuse or violence just mentioned, *how often did anyone try to help or protect you?*

Never	47.6
Rarely	19.4
Sometimes	12.8
Often	11.7

Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

During the period of time when you first experienced any of the abuse or violence just mentioned, *how often did anyone try to help or protect you?*

Males reported significantly greater help than females

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Often</u>
Male	39.1	23.9	16.3	20.7
Female	57.5	19.9	12.8	9.7

Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

79.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following statement:

Overall, the general public understands how trauma impacts people – they get it.

80.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following statement:

Overall the general public knows how to help people heal from trauma.

Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

If a person felt that they people listened to their experience with compassion (people1) they were 2.9 times more likely to report that they were mostly or completely healed ($p = .002$).

If a person felt that they people understand the impact of trauma on their life (people2) they were 2.2 times more likely to report that they were mostly or completely healed ($p = .002$).

Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

If a person felt that people knew how to help them heal (people3) they were 2.3 times more likely to report that they were mostly or completely healed ($p = .003$).

Open Ended Questions

- Survivor/Researcher Collaboration
 - CITI Training



THE THE TRAIN-ING IS JAM-
PACKED BY QUESTIONS THAT,
FOR THOSE OF US WHO R
CHALLENGED BY THE
EXCLUSIVE USE OF SEQUENTIAL
THINKING,
R MUCH 2 COMPLEX TO
PROCESS W/ OUT THE HELP OF
A COLLEAGUE.

AND
I THOT THAT ROSE & I
STUMBLED ON THE JUST THE
RITE THING 2 ACCOMMODATE
MY LEANING STYLE BY OUR
TEAMING UP TO DISCUSS THE
HEART & SPIRIT OF THE TEST,

I THOT THAT IT WAS A MUCH
MOR COMPASSIONATE
APPROACH.

***EVEN AS WE MANAGED TO
RESPECT THE RULES ABOUT
NOT SHARING ANSWERS.***

***I FOUND THAT IT WAS
ESSENTIAL TO BE ABLE TO
DISCUSS THE COMPLICATED
INFORMATION W/ ROSE IN
ORDER FOR ME TO WRESTLE W/
CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE
INTENT OF THE QUESTION SO
THAT I COULD GRASP THE
CONCEPTS & NO HOW TO
ANSWER THEM.***

**THOS OF US THAT HAV PROBS
W/
READING COMPREHENSION
NEED THE KIND OF HELP ROSE
WAS CAPABLE OF TO POWER
THRU W/ ME.
I M WUNNERIN IF WE MITE
CREATE A TUTORIAL TRAINING
DUN W/ THE NEW DIJ LAB TO
GO THRU LIKE I DID W/ ROSE
ABT THIS SUBJ.**

**MY FANTSY IS THAT WUT ROSE
& I DID CUD BE FILMED 4
FUTURE USE N HELPING
OTHERS WHO HAV A DIFF.
LEARNING STYLE!
JUST A THOT!**

SHARON~PETERS

Survivor/Researcher collaboration

- “Theme Pulling” Process
 - Collaborative Teams
 - Adopting a researcher position:
“Their words” versus “my interpretation”
based on our experiences
 - Listening to the survey participants voices +
each other in the process...

Survivor Voices: What Hurt

Doctors who don't talk to me in depth, but just prescribe medication with only [a] 5 minute discussion.

Silence. Blaming. Doubt.

Being patronized or defined as mentally ill.

When people assume I am broken because of my past.

Survivor Voices: What Hurt

Reactions of shock and disgust when I have shared my experiences.

People not being able to hear it – and trying to fix me.

I think the least helpful thing was ignoring it – no one discussed it with me while I was being abused as a child.

What Do You Think Is Most Important For People To Understand About Trauma?

That people are strong, and can survive with the appropriate support. It does take time, but it is possible to heal.

I think that it makes you feel so alone and so ashamed... It would be helpful if someone actually reaches out and initiates the conversation. And just kind of allow space for a discussion about it. People try to hide it.

What Do You Think Is Most Important
For People To Understand About Trauma?

To listen and know that people are telling the truth. That these things happen. It happens to people that you never would imagine.

Understand that it's not enough to say 'it's not your fault.' You need to say it was something they *could not have stopped*. There was nothing they could do to stop it.

What Kind Of Support Do You Think Is Most Important To
Help Survivors?

Patience, let them talk it out. Don't comment. Don't give them your opinion, it has nothing to do with the person listening, but with the person going through it.

I just think having people around them that acknowledge it – their pain and what has happened to them.

If that type of particular trauma didn't affect you in that way (it doesn't matter). If someone says it affected them, then it has.

What Kind Of Support Do You Think Is Most Important To Help Survivors?

Letting the person vocalize without intrusions, not trying to solve the problem. Being able to listen. Not cut you off and interject their story. To just be listened to.

I just can't stress enough that they need people who have been through trauma.

Random Digit Telephone Survey (n=351)

Do you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree that...
Completing this survey has been helpful to me in some way

Disagree/Disagree Strongly 28.7

Agree/Agree Strongly 56.5

Don't Know/Neutral 12.8

Those who had greater exposure to trauma, received more services, were disabled, or been in jail found the survey more helpful. Those who had greater income found the survey less helpful.

Quotes re: taking the survey

Including People with Disabilities

There was a significant relationship between healed and reports of disability ($p=.001$). People without a disability reported being mostly or completely healed at a significantly higher rate than those who did report a disability (75.5% vs. 24.5%, respectively).

Self-Identified Disabilities

- Are you a person with a disability?
 - 103 out of 351 answered 'Yes' – 29%
- Respondents gave multiple answers

Self-Identified Disabilities

- 40 Reports of mental health challenges
 - “Mental disability”: 9
 - “PTSD”: 7
 - “Depression”: 5
 - “Schizophrenia”: 4
 - “Anxiety”: 4

Self-Identified Disabilities (cont'd)

- 114 physical/chronic illnesses
 - Unspecified “physical disability”: 14
 - Back: 14
 - Diabetes: 8
 - TBI: 4
 - Fibromyalgia: 7
 - Vision impairment: 6
 - Asthma/lung/COPD: 6

Self-Identified Disabilities (cont'd)

- Validated rationale to take the survey to communities of People with disabilities
- Known to have high risk for being targets of violence

Inclusive Survey

- Groups for outreach:
 - Recent Immigrants
 - Indigenous People
 - Veterans
 - Youth & Young Adults
 - People with Disabilities
- Making necessary accommodations
 - What we planned for

Conducting the Survey

- Recruiting – survivor partner
- Hosting the survey – agency/survivor support
- How it went

Preliminary Findings & Next Steps

- Quantitative
- Focus Group Experience
- Analysis - potential questions
- Outreach to different communities
- More integration of findings between surveys

Survivor/Researcher Partnerships Lessons & Challenges

- Training
- Language
- Relationship building
- Recruitment and Retention

What's Next for Survivor Voices?

- Continuing the process – Community Engagement
- Dissemination
 - Policy makers
 - Friends, family, community
 - Providers/professionals
- Developing of a healing model for THP and beyond

Acknowledgements

Survivors

- Tracey Dumas, Sharon Peters, Stacy Kaye, Hugh Massengill and the many others who continue to inspire and share their stories with us

Consumer/Survivor Movement

- Opal Network, Safe, Inc., LILA, MindFreedom Funders
- Northwest Health Foundation
- Spirit Mountain Community Foundation
- Centers for Disease Control
- LaneCare of Lane County, Oregon

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This presentation can be downloaded in pdf:
www.healingattention.org/prestentations/ivat2010.pdf