

Taking Back Our Wings: An insight on trauma and healing

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Overview

- Defining Trauma – Mental, Emotional, Physical, Spiritual
- ACTIVITY: Why does it matter?
- Types of Trauma (Categories)
- The Big 3 RAP Re-experiencing, Avoiding, Physiological
- The Five F's
- Healthy Coping Skills
- Nature, Journaling, Art, Music
- Little Simz- Wings
- Olivia – Easy

Defining Trauma – Why does it matter?

- Many students I work with have experienced trauma
- I myself (others in this room) have experienced trauma
- Related to surfing – Olivia's "real" first time "You don't belong here"
- **ACTIVITY: On a post it note please write your ideas on the question: "Why does trauma matter in what we do as an institute and in relation to access?"**

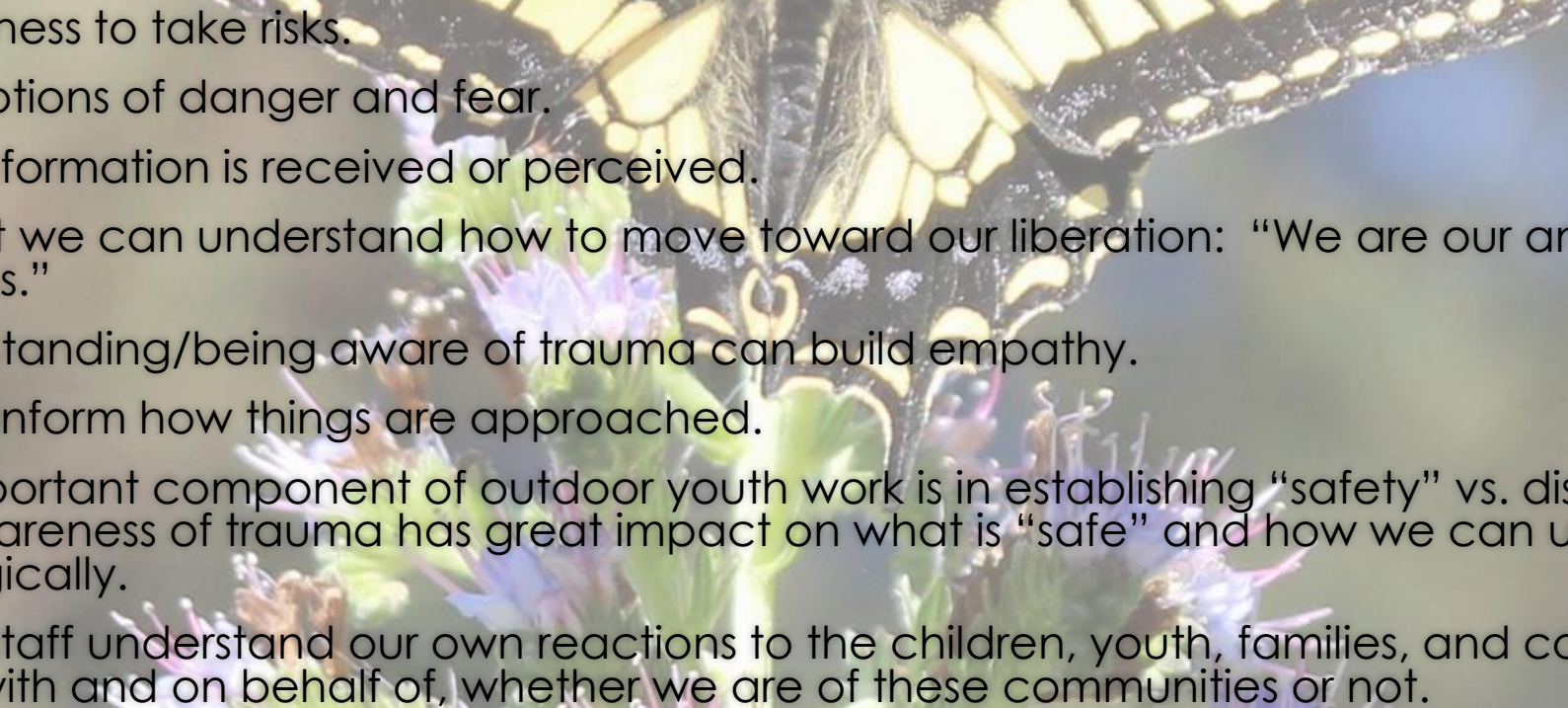
Please turn into Olivia and she will read out loud

Additional thoughts on why it matters?

- Hurt people, hurt people. Let's understand the hurt so that we can heal.
- Mental health is interconnected to physical health.
- Because our sense of purpose and belonging matters to our well-being.
- If it is not confronted in a healthy way and people don't know there is a way to heal, it can lead to suicide.
- Because we can re-traumatize youth if we are not aware of it.
- Because trauma can distort reality.
- To educate for the future we must care/be aware of our pasts.
- Cultural relevancy includes the pain of history and **how that pain changes/creates culture.**
- Responsible youth development includes modeling how we can live with/survive/heal.

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Continued..

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- A butterfly with yellow and black wings is perched on a purple flower. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and blue.
- Willingness to take risks.
 - Perceptions of danger and fear.
 - How information is received or perceived.
 - So that we can understand how to move toward our liberation: “We are our ancestors wildest dreams.”
 - Understanding/being aware of trauma can build empathy.
 - It can inform how things are approached.
 - An important component of outdoor youth work is in establishing “safety” vs. discomfort, and an awareness of trauma has great impact on what is “safe” and how we can use discomfort strategically.
 - Helps staff understand our own reactions to the children, youth, families, and community we work with and on behalf of, whether we are of these communities or not.

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Types of Trauma

○ PTSD

- traditional PTSD: personal extreme trauma we have experienced or witnessed when thought self or someone close to us was going to die or be seriously injured
- traditional PTSD: based on combat war veterans
- is only form of trauma that is officially recognized by licensed mental health professionals

○ Complex trauma

- an answer to viewing trauma ONLY as an extreme or one-time trauma experience
- context to look at continued abuse as traumatic: neglect, verbal and emotional, physical, and sexual abuse
- abuse as children
- abuse as adult

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Types of Trauma

- **Multiple losses**

- trauma experience of losing people repeatedly due to death
- for example: AIDS epidemic in the late 80s/early 90s impact
- for example: community violence impact

- **Intergenerational/historical trauma**

- trauma and its ensuing coping skills that are developed as a result of trauma that is passed down the generations
- first applied to communities that have been historically, systematically prosecuted, colonized, and oppressed, such as Jews, Native Americans in U.S., African Americans in U.S., Japanese Americans in U.S.

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Types of Trauma

○ Sociocultural trauma

- trauma related to the continued experience of and living with oppression as part of an historically disenfranchised community, group, or identity that is given less privilege than others in this society
- for example: living with racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ageism, able-bodism, religious persecution/discrimination on a daily basis, whether conscious of or not
- oppression happens on 4 levels: personal, interpersonal, institutional, and structural/systemic (reminder: people make the laws, regulations, policies, rules, procedures that govern and become implicit in institutional or structural oppression, so it always goes back to the first two levels: personal and interpersonal)

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Types of Trauma

- **Secondary trauma/vicarious trauma**
- trauma that is experience “2nd” hand or indirectly from other sources
 - experiences with others (e.g., children/youth in after-school programs, co-workers, family, friends, strangers on a bus)
 - experiences with the media (e.g., print or online news, movies, tv shows)
- secondary trauma’s “double whammy”
 - cause its own trauma response
 - stir up previous personal traumatic experiences

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The Big 3 Experiences RAP

○ THE BIG “3” EXPERIENCES

- re-experiencing: **intrusive, unwanted** feelings, thoughts, memories, dreams/nightmares, behaviors, people, places/events/experiences/situations that remind us of the trauma that get replayed over and over again in our minds and make us hurt (mental experiences/symptoms)
- avoiding: remove ourselves from the feelings thoughts, behaviors, memories, people, places/events/experiences/situations, dreams/nightmares, behaviors that remind us of the trauma in order to make ourselves feel better; nihilism, apathy, and emotional numbness are examples of avoiding as they to cut off feelings (mental experiences/symptoms)
- physiological responses: body's response to anxiety – muscle tension, heart pounding/increased heart rate, difficulty breathing, head feels hot, headaches, sweaty, stomach aching up (nausea), guts acting up (diarrhea), increased startle response/more jumpy, hypervigilant (very watchful of self in surroundings) (physical symptoms)

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The Five F's

- **5 F's: FLIGHT, FIGHT, FREEZE** in response to **FEAR** can lead to **FUZZY** brain: impairments/difficulty in functions such as focus, attention, concentration, memory, abstract thinking, reasoning, logical thinking, insight, judgment, planning, organizing, following steps in a task, impulse control, emotional regulation, sense of self/identity.

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Healthy Coping Skills in Response

- Creating safety
- Spending time in nature
- Journaling
- Creating art
- Music
- And so many more!
- **Please pair share with a partner some of your tools for healthy coping! 1 minute**



Little Simz – Wings



Olivia – Easy

