

Trauma-Informed Care Introduction

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SHAWN SMITH: People aren't their trauma. And the true story of trauma is a story of resilience. And that's the ability to bounce back from something. These are folks that had experienced incredible wounding experiences, and have been set off of their trajectory of who they were. The choices that they've made in their lives are not who they are. They can start to make different choices. And they can make a choice to heal. That gives me hope that it's possible for anybody.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

How does trauma show up in people? How can we effectively respond to it? How can we help people go through their own process of healing, to be in service to these other humans in a way that allow that healing to start?

The word trauma means wound. There's an invisible wound. And that's really what creates this dynamic where people are confused by how people behave. They don't understand that this invisible wound has got a hold on them. Basically, we've been wandering around traumatizing each other since we walked off the savanna. And that it would be a really good idea if we stopped doing that.

The big switch with trauma-informed care is changing this question in my head from "what's wrong with you" to "what happened to you". We can all help each other understand that trauma has an effect on us. And it's getting in the way of us connecting with each other.

One of the things that anybody can do is just listen, listen without judgment, listen from a place of a deep understanding which we frame as empathy, listen from a place of compassion, and really kind of tune into what is this person's world like. Most of the people that are serving folks who've experienced trauma are non-clinical providers. So it's really

important, when we're helping each other learn about how trauma has an effect on each other, is that we have a way that connects with the person we're talking to.

Experiencing trauma, the impact of it can be subtle. It can be dramatic. When a person experiences powerlessness over their body, their mind, their psyche, or any part of themselves, that can be a moment of this deep wounding.

There's this line of homeostasis. And this is when we're in balance. There are things that pull us out of balance. When you look at a surfer riding a wave, they're making all these kind of little micro-adjustments as the wave is riding in. And then oof, the wave comes and knocks them under. They're trying to fight their way back up to the surface. And that's our bodies trying to find our way back to this line of homeostasis.

Trauma pulls us out. And because we can't escape it, then what happens is the body's like whoa, you are way above homeostasis. And then it overshoots.

And then we end up in a place where it's kind of like, unreal. Often in a trauma, you end up in a place of automatic obedience. And then we get into a place of self-repair, which for some could be connecting with a loved one or someone that's going to help us through it.

It doesn't matter if you live in a small town of 3,000 or New York City. It's going to show up. And that's why we really need everyone to be mindful and aware and attentive to folks, so that we can support them to heal through that, because if we don't start the cycle now, it's going to continue. It's going to continue. It's going to continue. It takes a lot to get over experiences, no matter how small it may seem to us. Anybody who has gone through a moment of powerlessness and are able to move forward is, in my opinion, one of the most courageous people on the planet.

[MUSIC PLAYING]