Toxic Stress, Trauma, and Resilience

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Everyone Has Stress and Hard Times

Toxic Stress and trauma are different
## Tipping Point Between Stress and Toxic Stress

- Intensity
- Frequency
- Duration
- Timing
- Degree of Violence
- Pre-natal Experiences
- Capacity for stress-recovery and regulation/co-regulation
- Genetic Loading
- Environment
- Temperament
- Quality of Attachment
Toxic Stress

- Toxic stress is the extreme, frequent, or extended activation of the stress response, without the buffering presence of a supportive adult. (Johnson, Riley, Granger Riis Pediatrics 2013)
Toxic Stress

- Inability to recover from stress and functioning in an ongoing state of
  - Hyper-vigilance
  - Rage
  - Depression

(Lillas 2015)
Toxic Stress

- If experienced during the early years and left untreated it may negatively impact brain development on multiple levels:
  - Executive
  - Regulation
  - Sensory
  - Mental Health

(Lillas 2015)
Toxic Stress Response

- Strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity
- Examples- physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship—without adequate adult support
- Prolonged activation of the stress response systems can disrupt the development of brain architecture and other organ systems
- Can increase the risk for stress-related disease and cognitive impairment, well into the adult years.

(Harvard Center on the Developing Child)
ACES

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Adverse Community Experiences
- Adverse Climate Experiences

The Pair of ACEs

Ellis and Dietz (2017)
Illness and disease are not and accident. They are a predictable result of toxic stress and trauma.
Poorer Health Outcomes are Linked to Traumatic and Toxic Stress

When someone has 4 or more ACEs they are:
- Twice as likely to smoke
- Twice as likely to have heart disease
- Twice as likely to be diagnosed with cancer
- Four times as likely to have emphysema or chronic bronchitis
- Six times as likely to have sex before age 15
- Seven times as likely to be alcoholics
- Twelve times as likely to have attempted suicide
- 46 times as likely to have injected drugs

(Lillas 2015)
Resilience

- Health Promotion and Prevention Work
- If There is Risk or Harm Intervene Early
- Support Two Generation Models
- Strengthen the Context of Health - Family Community and Culture
  - Concrete Supports - Basic Needs
  - Increase Understanding of Child Development
  - Reduce Social Isolation
  - Focus on Social and Emotional Development
- Focus on Assets not Just Risks
- Remember – we’re in this together!