How to be an
Interdisciplinary
Team Player

Agenda

- Introductions
- Social Work 101
- Models of Work
  - Multidisciplinary
  - Interdisciplinary
- Potential Considerations
- Q&A

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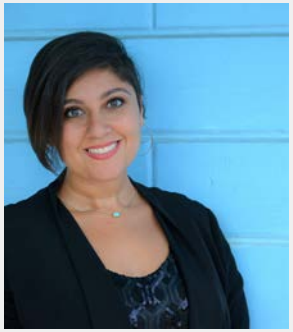

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Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative (HILSC)

HOUSTON IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES COLLABORATIVE

The **vision** of the Collaborative is that no Houston immigrant goes without legal assistance while seeking legal status and navigating the complexities of the U.S. immigration system.

The **mission** of the Collaborative is to create a coordinated network of effective and efficient services to assist low-income immigrants access the information and legal representation that allows them to make choices in their own best interest.

HOUSTON IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES COLLABORATIVE

- Legal Services
  - Increase quantity and quality of low cost, high quality legal services to serve Houston's low income community
    - i.e. Trainings, connection to experts, etc.
- Access to Services
  - Improving and streamlining immigrants access to legal and social services
    - i.e. A2S, trauma-informed intake, notario fraud

HOUSTON IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES COLLABORATIVE

- Communication
  - Being a source of reliable and timely information changing immigration policies and resources
    - i.e. Collaborative PSA, press statements, and conferences
- Funder
  - Providing funding for non-profit immigration service providers
    - i.e. Host funder briefings, engage local funders

Social Work
101

What is social work?

- Social work profession:
  - Seeks to help people overcome life's most difficult challenges using a person-in-environment model through a social justice lens
    - Examine relationships, family structure, community, systems, policies, etc.
    - Strength based approach build upon skills and support systems

Social work is dedicated to the pursuit of social justice through direct service and through advocacy on the local, national, and global levels.

3 PRACTICE AREAS of Social Work

MICRO

Working directly with individuals or families on everything from access to housing, healthcare, and social services to treating mental, behavioral, and emotional disorders.

MEZZO

Working with groups and organizations such as schools, businesses, neighborhoods, hospitals, nonprofits, and other small-scale communities.

MACRO

Working towards large-scale systematic change by crafting laws, petitioning governments for community funds, organizing activist groups, and molding social policy.

BSW

- Bachelor Degree (4 years+400 practicum hours)
  - Can provide case management, non-clinical emotional support

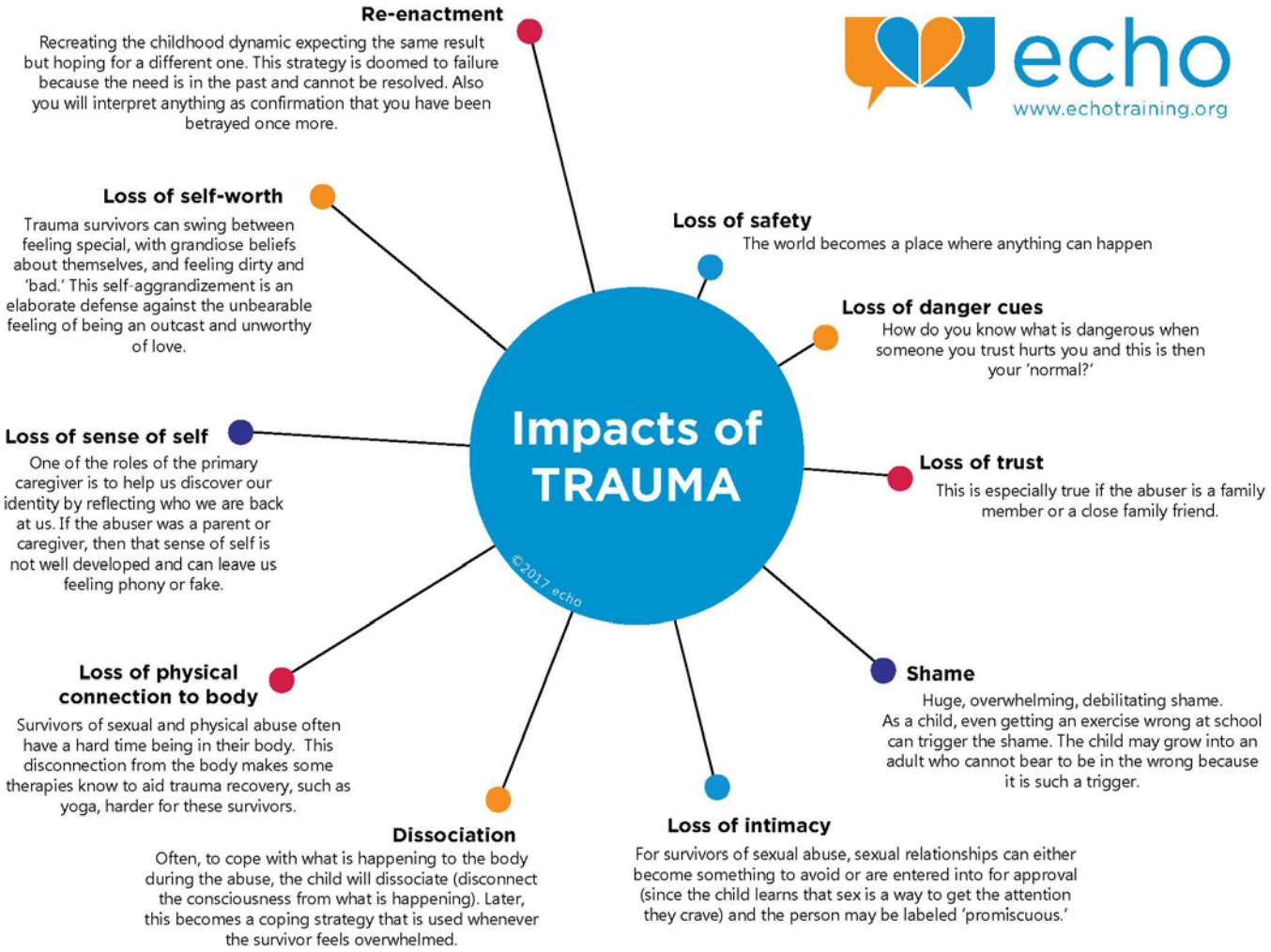
MSW/LMSW

- Master of Social Work Degree (2-4 years graduate school+900 practicum hours)
  - Can provide interventions under supervision of LCSW
    - Can supervise interns (MSW students) after 2 years

LCSW

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (3000 hrs+law/ethics exam)
  - Can provide clinical interventions/therapy

“
If we share our story with someone who responds with empathy and understanding, shame cannot survive.
-Brene Brown


Re-enactment
Recreating the childhood dynamic expecting the same result but hoping for a different one. This strategy is doomed to failure because the need is in the past and cannot be resolved. Also you will interpret anything as confirmation that you have been betrayed once more.
echo
www.echotraining.org
Loss of self-worth
Trauma survivors can swing between feeling special, with grandiose beliefs about themselves, and feeling dirty and 'bad.' This self-aggrandizement is an elaborate defense against the unbearable feeling of being an outcast and unworthy of love.
Loss of safety
The world becomes a place where anything can happen
Loss of danger cues
How do you know what is dangerous when someone you trust hurts you and this is then your 'normal?'
Impacts of TRAUMA
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Loss of sense of self
One of the roles of the primary caregiver is to help us discover our identity by reflecting who we are back at us. If the abuser was a parent or caregiver, then that sense of self is not well developed and can leave us feeling phony or fake.
Loss of trust
This is especially true if the abuser is a family member or a close family friend.
Loss of physical connection to body
Survivors of sexual and physical abuse often have a hard time being in their body. This disconnection from the body makes some therapies know to aid trauma recovery, such as yoga, harder for these survivors.
Shame
Huge, overwhelming, debilitating shame. As a child, even getting an exercise wrong at school can trigger the shame. The child may grow into an adult who cannot bear to be in the wrong because it is such a trigger.
Dissociation
Often, to cope with what is happening to the body during the abuse, the child will dissociate (disconnect the consciousness from what is happening). Later, this becomes a coping strategy that is used whenever the survivor feels overwhelmed.
Loss of intimacy
For survivors of sexual abuse, sexual relationships can either become something to avoid or are entered into for approval (since the child learns that sex is a way to get the attention they crave) and the person may be labeled 'promiscuous.'

ATTORNEYS VS SOCIAL WORKERS

THE ULTIMATE SHOWDOWN

KEEP
CALM
AND
We are
all heroes

Differences between Attorneys and Social Workers

Attorneys

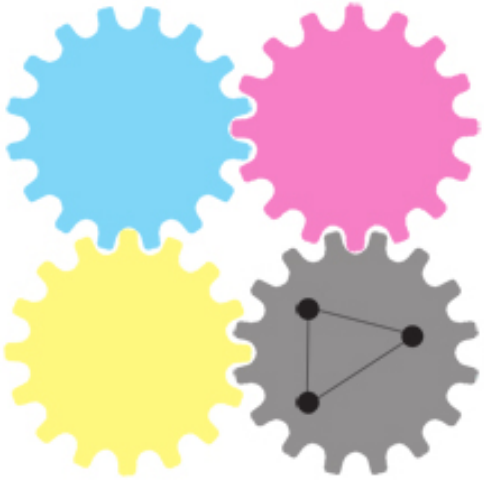
- Trained in problem solving/problem prevention
- Individual clients
- Advocate for express wishes of client
  - Even if they do not agree with them

Social Workers

- Trained to fully understand the context of problems
  - Strength based/holistic approach
- Client can be broader than just the person referred
- Solve problems based on total circumstances and empowerment

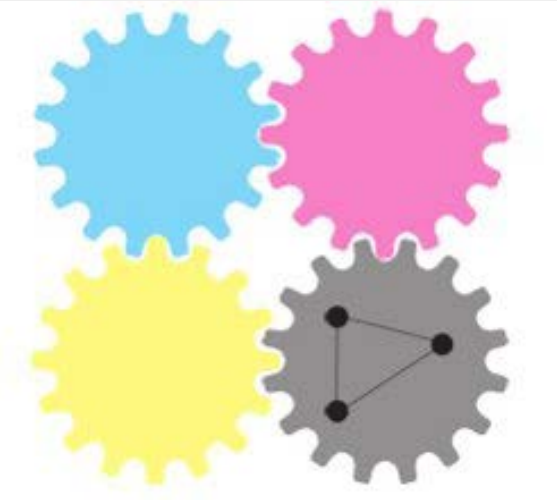
Models of work in legal services

MULTIdisciplinary



INTERdisciplinary

The Multidisciplinary Model



- Draws on knowledge from different disciplines but stays within their boundaries
  - treat patients/clients independently
  - share information with each other
  - patient/client may recipient of care

The Interdisciplinary Model

- Analyzes, synthesizes and harmonizes links between disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole
  - Merging of different professions into one umbrella

Interdisciplinary in Practice …

- Capacity for cases (one SW)
- Providing emotional support to clients (non-clinical)
- Articles on trauma (can be used as exhibits)
- Connecting to community partners and growing support for clients
- Assessing for client needs (linking to resources)
- Holistic care (treating client as a whole)
- Helping to stabilize clients throughout legal cases (even after)
- Defining mental health documentation/diagnosis for attorneys

Ways to integrate…

- Legal and social services coordination
- Intake forms that consider client's potential non-legal needs
- Trauma informed training for all staff within legal services
  - Incorporating ways to practice this approach
- Policies and procedures that are inclusive of legal and social services
- Clear understanding of roles across programs

Potential Considerations

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Attorneys may not use or disclose confidential client information, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 1.05
- Confidential information = privileged + unprivileged client information
- All nonlawyers working as agents of the attorney are bound by the attorney's rules of confidentiality, including social workers, counselors, paralegals and interpreters
  - This includes work-product privilege

ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE

- If the social worker is not an agent of the attorney, presence may destroy the protections of attorney-client privilege
  - communication no longer “in confidence” and no longer privileged
    - Interdisciplinary model of work becomes the best model of practice

MANDATORY REPORTING

Texas Family Code Sec. 261.101(a) "A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report..."

- Report to state/local law enforcement agency or Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).
- Attorney-client privilege superseded except to prevent an attorney from *testifying against* their client.

ETHICAL DUTIES/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Ethical duties of attorneys v. Ethical responsibilities of social workers
  - Can get confusing
    - i.e. client for social workers can include the direct client, family, community, agency, etc., while the client for attorneys is only the child—other related individuals could provide a conflict of interest

When working with children…

- Children have agency/autonomy
- Using developmentally appropriate language
  - Clearly defining works like consent, truth, immigration court (age appropriate)
  - Not using jargon, acronyms, etc.
- Being transparent (your word is your bond)
- Don’t be afraid of getting to a child’s level (if they are on the floor, join them)

Q&A

Thank You!

Resources:

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