



Working with Survivors of Abuse

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ERIE COUNTY WORKFORCE COLLABORATIVE TRAINING SERIES

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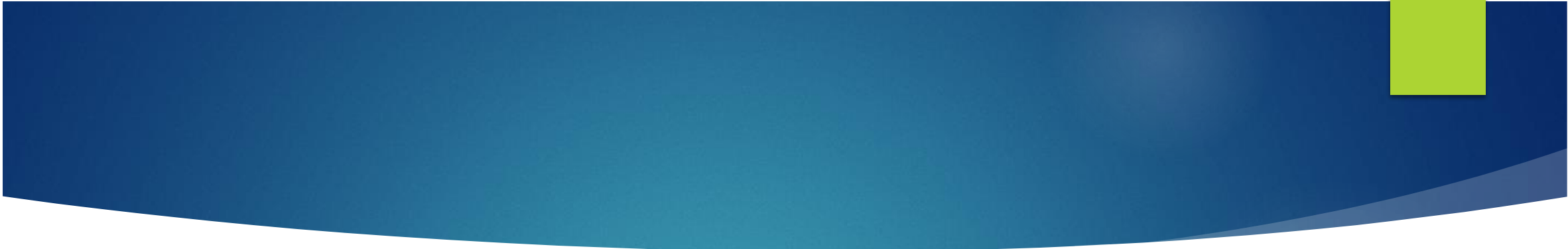
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Working with Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Outline:

1. Message to survivors
2. Perspectives necessary for this task
3. Review of Erickson's Developmental Stages
4. Traits & characteristics of families
 - a. The family process
 - b. Family messages to survivors of abuse
5. Aftereffects of abuse
 - a. Severity of aftereffects by type of abuse
 - b. Symptom constellation
 - c. The Incest survivors' aftereffects checklist
6. Physical and emotional abuse: 4 roles
 - a. Caretaker
 - b. Perfectionist
 - c. Rebel
 - d. Invisible one
7. Goals of treatment
8. Adult survivors – Stages of Recovery
9. Forgiveness? Stages of Forgiveness – role of anger
10. Flashbacks
11. Transference Issues
12. Countertransference Issues

They are survivors. If you don't have respect for their strength you can't be of any help. It's a privilege that they let you in - there's no reason they should trust you - none. You can't know their terror - it's your worst nightmare come true - a nightmare from which you never awaken. It's unrelenting. There has been no safety: no one, no time, no place, no thing - all was tainted. Hope was obliterated - time and time again. That they are in your office is in itself a supreme act of valor.



*HEALING DOESN'T MEAN THE
DAMAGE NEVER EXISTED.
IT MEANS IT NO LONGER
CONTROLS YOUR LIFE.*

Uncovering the Abuse

- ▶ Important therapist perspectives/qualities
- ▶ Important issues
- ▶ Things to avoid
- ▶ Uncovering the abuse

Erickson's Developmental Tasks

- ▶ **Trust vs. Mistrust – Hope** (infants, 0-1 yrs)
- ▶ **Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt – Will** (toddlers, 2-3 yrs)
- ▶ **Initiative vs. Guilt – Purpose** (preschool, 3-5 yrs)
- ▶ **Industry vs. Inferiority – Competence** (childhood 6-11 yrs)
- ▶ **Identity vs. Role Confusion – Fidelity** (adolescents, 12-19 yrs)
- ▶ **Intimacy vs. Isolation – Love** (young adults, 20-40 yrs)
- ▶ **Generativity vs. Stagnation – Care** (middle adulthood, 45-65 yrs)
- ▶ **Integrity vs. Despair – Wisdom** (seniors, 65 yrs +)

The Family Process

- ▶ Two broad family types:
 - ▶ Normal appearing
 - ▶ Chaotic
- ▶ Characteristics of each
- ▶ Patterns of intergenerational transmission
- ▶ Family rules and injunctions



Family Messages to Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Common Aftereffects of Incest

- ▶ Symptoms of traumatic stress
- ▶ Emotional effects
- ▶ Self-perceptions and cognitive effects
- ▶ Somatic effects
- ▶ Sexual effects
- ▶ Interpersonal relating and functioning
- ▶ Social effects

Severity of Aftereffects by Type of Abuse

- ▶ The variables of incest most related to severity of aftereffects are:
 - ▶ Duration and frequency
 - ▶ Type of sexual activity
 - ▶ Use of force
 - ▶ Child's age at onset
 - ▶ Age, gender and relatedness of perpetrator
 - ▶ Child's submission or participation
 - ▶ Overt or disclosed incest with lack of assistance
 - ▶ Parental reaction
 - ▶ Institutional response

Many of these are interrelated. The child's personality and moderators can also effect response

Symptom Constellation of Adult Survivors

- ▶ History of revictimization
- ▶ History of self-injury
- ▶ History of suicidality, suicide attempts
- ▶ Polarities of behavior
- ▶ Difficulty establishing therapeutic alliance
- ▶ Amnesia
- ▶ Negative identity/shame; identity diffusion
- ▶ Anger
- ▶ Grief



The Incest Survivors' Aftereffects Checklist

4 Roles of Survivors Associated with Physical and Emotional Abuse

- ▶ Caretaker
- ▶ Perfectionist
- ▶ Rebel
- ▶ Invisible One

Goals of Treatment

- ▶ Development of commitment to treatment and establishment of a therapeutic alliance
- ▶ Acknowledgement and acceptance of the occurrence of the incest
- ▶ The breakdown of feelings of isolation and stigma
- ▶ The recognition, labeling and expression of feelings
- ▶ The resolution of responsibility and survival issues
- ▶ Grieving
- ▶ Cognitive restructuring of distorted beliefs and stress responses
- ▶ Self-determination and behavioral changes
- ▶ Education and skill-building

Adult Survivors – Stages of Recovery

- 1) The Decision to Heal
- 2) The Emergency Stage
- 3) Remembering
- 4) Believing it Happened
- 5) Breaking Silence
- 6) Understanding That it Wasn't Your Fault
- 7) Making Contact with the Child Within
- 8) Trusting Yourself
- 9) Grieving and Mourning
- 10) Anger – the Backbone of Healing
- 11) Disclosures and Confrontations
- 12) Forgiveness?
- 13) Spirituality
- 14) Resolution and Moving On

Stages of Forgiveness

- ▶ STAGE ONE: Identify Perpetrator and Transgression
- ▶ STAGE TWO: Identify, Experience, and Process the Emotions
- ▶ STAGE THREE: Understood the Need for Forgiveness
- ▶ STAGE FOUR: Set Clear Boundaries
- ▶ STAGE FIVE: Integrate the Past and Begin Recreating the Future

Flashbacks

Transference Issues in Treating Incest Trauma

- ▶ Betrayal, disillusionment, mistrust
- ▶ Traumatic transference
- ▶ Shame, self-hatred and low self-esteem
- ▶ Interpersonal/intimacy difficulties
- ▶ Guilt, complicity and responsibility
- ▶ Defenses, survivor skills and accommodation mechanisms
- ▶ Caretaking and learned responsibilities
- ▶ Loss and grief
- ▶ Rage and anger

Countertransference Issues in Treating Incest Trauma

- ▶ Denial, distancing, blame
- ▶ Guilt
- ▶ Rage
- ▶ Dread and horror
- ▶ Shame
- ▶ Grief and mourning
- ▶ Therapist as liberator
- ▶ Survivor as hero

Recommended Reading

- ▶ The Courage to Heal: by Ellen Bass & Laura Davis
- ▶ Secret Survivors: by E. Sue Blume
- ▶ Adult Children of Abusive Parents: by Steven Farmer
- ▶ Toxic Parents: by Susan Forward
- ▶ Quick Steps to Resolving Trauma: by Bill O'Hanlon