

Trauma-Informed Speech Therapy

Yvana Uranga-Hernandez, Ph.D, CCC-SLP
Alicia McCormick, M.A.

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Presenters

Yvana Uranga-Hernandez, Ph.D. CCC-SLP Yvana Uranga-Hernandez teaches both in the undergraduate and graduate programs on multicultural issues, language disorders, autism, and theology of disability. She strives to have her students see children with disabilities as people first, understanding that we are all made in the image of God and thereby deserve the same respect and love. Uranga-Hernandez’s teaching approach includes both theoretical education as well as a practical hands on approach in order to assist students in making connections between the two, and she strives to teach and love her students well so that they leave Biola and do the same. Her interest in trauma-informed practices stems from both personal and professional experiences.

Alicia McCormick, M.A. Alicia McCormick’s areas of interest include trauma-informed practices and education, inclusive education and ministry, and disability theology. She is currently working on a Ph.D. in Educational Studies through Talbot School of Theology at Biola University, and spends her time practicing what she teaches as an emergency foster mom in Orange County.




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Financial Disclosures

Yvana Uranga-Hernandez, Ph.D. CCC-SLP is a paid employee of Biola University. She has no other relevant financial disclosures. She has no relevant non-financial disclosures.

Alicia McCormick, M.A. is a paid employee of Biola University. She has no other relevant financial disclosures. She has no relevant non-financial disclosures.



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Learning Outcomes

- Participants will...
 - Understand how trauma affects children and adults
 - Gain theories and skills for trauma-informed speech therapy
 - Learn professional language options for writing a trauma-informed Speech-Pathology report



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In 2016 the U.S. Dept. of Ed. reported that 270,000 children in foster care are school-aged.

Individuals with disabilities are 30% more likely to be victims of violence or abuse

(Terban, Priuit & Maassen, 2018)



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In a current survey, approximately 80% of SLPs reported needing more training in trauma informed care.

(Capecci, Czaplá, Davis, McCurry and Siffa-Salas, 2021)



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Trauma & Its Effects

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What Is Trauma

A traumatic event is an “event, or series of events, [that] causes a lot of stress.... Traumatic events are marked by a sense of horror, helplessness, serious injury, or the threat of serious injury or death” (CDC, n.d.)

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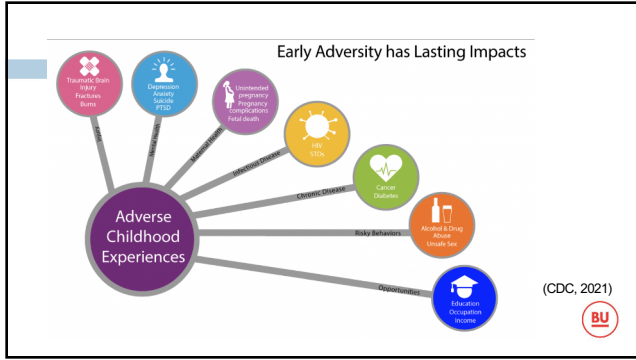
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- Abuse
 - Emotional
 - Physical
 - Sexual
- Household Challenges
 - Domestic Violence
 - Substance Abuse
 - Mental Illness
 - Divorce
 - Incarceration
- Neglect
 - Emotional
 - Physical

(CDC, 2021)

ACE Score Prevalence for CDC-Kaiser ACE Study Participants by Sex, Waves 1 and 2.			
Number of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE Score)	Women Percent(N = 9,367)	Men Percent (N = 7,970)	Total Percent (N = 17,337)
0	34.5%	38.0%	36.1%
1	24.5%	27.9%	26.0%
2	15.5%	16.4%	15.9%
3	10.3%	8.5%	9.5%
4 or more	15.2%	9.2%	12.5%

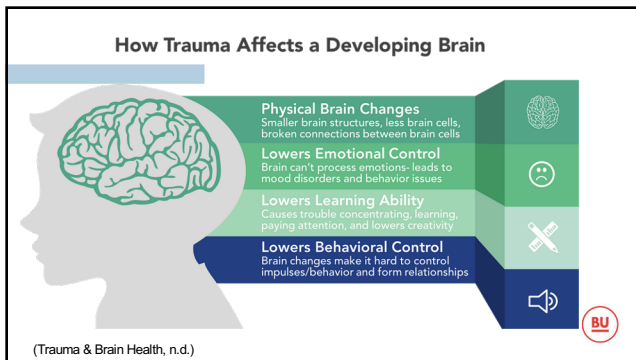
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- ### Chronic/Toxic Stress and the Brain
- Chronic stress
 - Cortisol
 - Dendrites and myelin sheath
 - Predisposed to fear response
 - Fight
 - Flight
 - Freeze
 - Felt safety
 - Threat is just as impactful as the actual harm
 - Each trauma is seen as equal trauma

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Trauma and Behavior

- All behavior is communication
 - Challenging behavior says, "Something is not okay"
- View behavior as a fear response
 - Fight
 - Flight
 - Freeze

(Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, 2019)




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The Limbic Brain and Its Role in Trauma

(Harris, 2018)



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Trauma-Informed Speech Pathology



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Trauma-Informed Practice

Four components identified by the SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

- Realize how trauma affects people and people groups
- Recognize the signs of trauma
- Respond with a trauma informed approach
- Resists re-traumatizing people



SAMHSA. (2014). p.9

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Trauma-Informed Practices

Inform identification, assessment, intervention, and management of communication disorders



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Social Pragmatics and Trauma

Children with trauma histories exhibit difficulty in the following areas:

- Social Cognition
- Executive functioning
- Regulation
- Communication Functions
- Discourse
- Working memory



Hyter, Y.D. (2021)

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Language, Trauma and Standardized Tests

Children with trauma histories have lower language scores

- PLS-3 (significantly lower)
- PPVT-3 (within 1 SD below mean)
- CELF-4 (delayed skills)
- Social Skills Improvement System (delayed skills)



Hytler, Y.D. (2021)

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Client History

Does your intake process involve...

- Questions about potential past/current trauma
- Inquiries about possible triggers and/or positive solutions that already work for your client
- Time for parents/caregivers to ask or answer questions
- Giving the impression you see the client as a whole person



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Practical Application

Think about the case history form you currently use in your practice.

1. Are there any questions that will help you understand if a client has a trauma history?
2. If not, what are some questions to add to the case history form that would give you the information you need.
3. What interview questions would give additional information you might not receive from a form?



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Group Share

Time to Share!





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Trauma-Informed Practice: Building Relationships




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Relationship & Behavior




- Therapy must start with relationship
- Build your relationship to build your effectiveness in therapy (Klenk & Gordon-Pershey, 2021)
- Relationship more important than tasks
- Bad behavior = something is not working
- Connect first and foremost, then we can correct
- Need felt safety

(Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, 2019)




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Redo




- Gives client the chance to do it right
- Opportunity for praise and encouragement
- Positive body memory
- Applies to the client and to yourself

(Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, 2019) 

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Give Choices


- Shares a little power
- Reduces fear
- Avoids power struggles
- Choices...
 - “Do you want to do X or Y?” (not “can”)
 - Not be used as a threat or punishment
- Compromise for older kids and adults
- Choices can be given after a refusal

(Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, 2019) 

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Expectations and Scripts

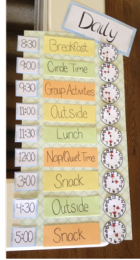
- Set your expectations from the beginning
- Use positive language to avoid negative connotations
- Scripts
 - Children: Gentle and kind, show respect, have fun, stick together, no hurts
 - Teens and adults: Show respect, work together, take a breath

(Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, 2019) 

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Transitions

- Usually the hardest time of the day
- Give a warning (5 min, 2 min, 1 min)
 - Client should acknowledge the heads up
- Schedules



(Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, 2019)



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Self Care



SELF-CARE IS NOT LAZY OR SELFISH. SELF-CARE IS HEALTHY. SELF-CARE IS IMPORTANT. SELF-CARE IS NECESSARY.

Take care of yourself so you can take care of others

- Nutrition
- Hydration
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Spend time with your people
- Creative outlets

(Boynton, 2021)



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Report Writing



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Trauma-Informed Report Writing

The words we use to explain a client's behavior will affect how other people see them, and may impact whether or not people will step in to help our client.



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Families may have difficulty understanding reports due to:

- Use of Jargon
- Readability level
- Lack of clear descriptions of child's needs
- List of recommendations that often provide little help



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According to Hite (2017), reports with lower readability levels, focus on the child (not the test), and empower families and are significantly more useful.



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Deficit-Based vs. Strength-Based Descriptions

Deficit-Based

- Non-English Speaking
- English as a Second language (ESL) student
- English Learner (EL)
- Limited English Proficient (LEP)

Strength-Based

- Bilingual
- Bilingual Spanish-English
- Dual Language Learner
- Native Spanish Speaker



Soto-Boykin, 2021

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Deficit-Based vs. Strength-Based Writing

Deficit-Based

- He was very impulsive
- Billy had a very difficult time during the evaluation
- Social Interactions were very difficult for Tommy

Strength-Based

- He hit his sister twice and threw one book.
- During the evaluation Billy stood up from his seat 3 different times.
- Tommy responded to questions, however he did not make comments or ask questions of the examiner



Braun, Dunn, & Tomchek, 2017

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Goals

Are goals highlighting only an observable behavior?


By September 2022, Billy will learn to wait his turn and not interrupt the teacher in 1/5 opportunities.

If so, will meeting the goal actually teach the child a new goal?



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“Rather than simply reducing a behavior, a trauma-informed IEP focuses on skill-building; and in this case, such an IEP could focus on building self-regulatory skills and identifying alternative behaviors to interrupting.”
 (Rossen, 2019)



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Case Study


Read through the report excerpt provided and identify language that is not best practice for trauma-informed report writing. How would you re-write the report?



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Case Study

Sam is in the first grade. He is a monolingual Spanish speaker. He is currently living with a foster family. He had difficulty in kindergarten and now in first grade. He was given time to “adjust” and therefore no intervention was provided. The team conducts an assessment and finds him eligible under the SLI criteria.



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Group Share

Time to Share!

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Outcomes of strength based practices...

- Improvements in provider-family relationships.
- Improvements of family perceptions of the child with special needs
- Improvements in parent-child relationships
- Increasing positive effects on challenging behavior, academics, and family functioning
- Improving self-esteem and positive affect
- Increasing patient empowerment and self-management
- Facilitating patient well-being

Braun, Dunn, & Tomchek, 2017

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"In its simplest form, trauma-informed approaches represent a shift in an individual's mindset when working with students, acknowledging the broad and significant impact of trauma on behavior, learning and social-emotional functioning. The IEP process provides a unique opportunity to apply a trauma-informed lens to support all students with disabilities" (Rosson, 2019)

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Next Steps

- Continue to learn about trauma and its effects
- Commit to making one change starting now to make your practice trauma-informed
- Help colleagues change their mindset and behavior towards clients affected by trauma

(Hyter, 2021) 

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Questions?




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Thank You!

Yvana Uranga-Hernandez, PhD. CCC-SLP
yvana.hernandez@biola.edu

Alicia McCormick, M.A.
alicia.m.mccormick@biola.edu



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