

# TRAUMA-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS

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here is a growing awareness of the significant role that trauma can play in criminal justice involvement. Traumatic experiences have consequences on individuals' mental and physical health and can increase the risk of substance abuse and involvement in the criminal justice system. Trauma impacts an individual's sense of identity, perception of the world, and social relationships (Harris, M. & Falot, R.D., 2001). With an increased recognition of the prevalence of trauma and its impact on an individual, the principles of trauma-informed care and trauma-specific treatment interventions have been incorporated into an array of services.

Creating trauma-informed care requires the integration of trauma awareness into service delivery across all levels of treatment and support. Trauma-informed care involves the provision of both trauma-informed and trauma-specific services. Services that are trauma-informed acknowledge the needs that people with trauma histories may have in a particular treatment setting or service by promoting empowerment and acknowledgement of the impact of trauma on peoples' lives. Trauma-specific treatment services are "interventions designed to address the specific behavioral, intrapsychic, and interpersonal consequences of exposure to sexual, physical, and prolonged emotional abuse (SAMHSA, 2000)."

While there are many research reports about the effectiveness of trauma-specific interventions, relatively few have been peer reviewed. Nonetheless, the trauma-specific interventions listed below provide some empirical evidence on their effectiveness.

Seeking Safety is a present-focused intervention to aid in the recovery of people with histories of trauma, primary post-traumatic stress disorder and

substance abuse. There are five key principles of Seeking Safety: (1) safety; (2) integrated treatment; (3) a focus of ideals; (4) four content areas: cognitive, behavioral, interpersonal, and case management; and (5) attention to clinician processes. Seeking Safety consists of 25 modules with no set order. The topics range from learning grounding techniques to self-care and from recovery thinking to coping with triggers. Seeking Safety has been adapted for use in a variety of settings, including corrections (Najavits, L.M, 2002).

Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET) is a trauma-specific intervention that uses a seven-step psychoeducational skills approach emphasizing FREEDOM: focus, recognize triggers, emotion self-check, evaluate thoughts, define goals, options, and make a contribution. TARGET has been adapted for use with justice-involved people (University of Connecticut Health Center, 2011).

The Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM) is a gender-specific group intervention designed to address the impact of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. The model employs cognitive restructuring, psychoeducational, and skills-training techniques. Individuals take part in up to 29 group sessions. The model addresses coping skills, social support, mental health, and substance abuse (Harris & Community Connections Trauma Workgroup, 1998). A 24-session adaptation of the model for men, M-TREM, has been developed. Additional modifications have been made to M-TREM for use with veterans, V-TREM. TREM and its adaptations have been implemented in a variety of settings, including corrections and jail diversion settings.

Prolonged Exposure Therapy for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a cognitive behavioral treatment program that focuses on thoughts, feelings, and situations related to the traumatic event. Prolonged Exposure has four components: (a) education about the nature of trauma and trauma reactions; (b) training in controlled breathing; (c) repeated discussion and talking over of the traumatic event; and (d) exposure practice in situations that are safe but the individual has been avoiding as a result of the traumatic event.

Trauma-specific interventions have been shown to

Several other promising models of trauma-specific interventions exist, for example, Trauma, Addictions, Mental Health Recovery (TAMAR). TAMAR is a manualized intervention that combines psychoeducational approaches and expressive therapies, designed for individuals with histories of trauma in the justice system. TAMAR was developed as part of the SAMHSA Women, Co-Occurring Disorders, and Violence Study and has been implemented and adapted for use with justice-involved individuals throughout the state of Maryland; Fulton State Hospital, Missouri; the Correctional Center of Northwest Ohio; and Rhode Island's Jail Diversion and Trauma Recovery-

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