



Trauma-Informed Facilitation

Sky Gray

Dr. Kynetta Sugar McFarlane

Dr. Christine Norton

Webinar Objectives

- + Review the importance of psychological safety when facilitating groups
- + How to create space for authentic engagement
- + Define trauma from the perspective of race/equity
- + Understand the lasting impacts of trauma and the individual and community risk factors related to trauma
- + Review trauma-informed care principles
- + Define trauma-informed facilitation and identify its key components

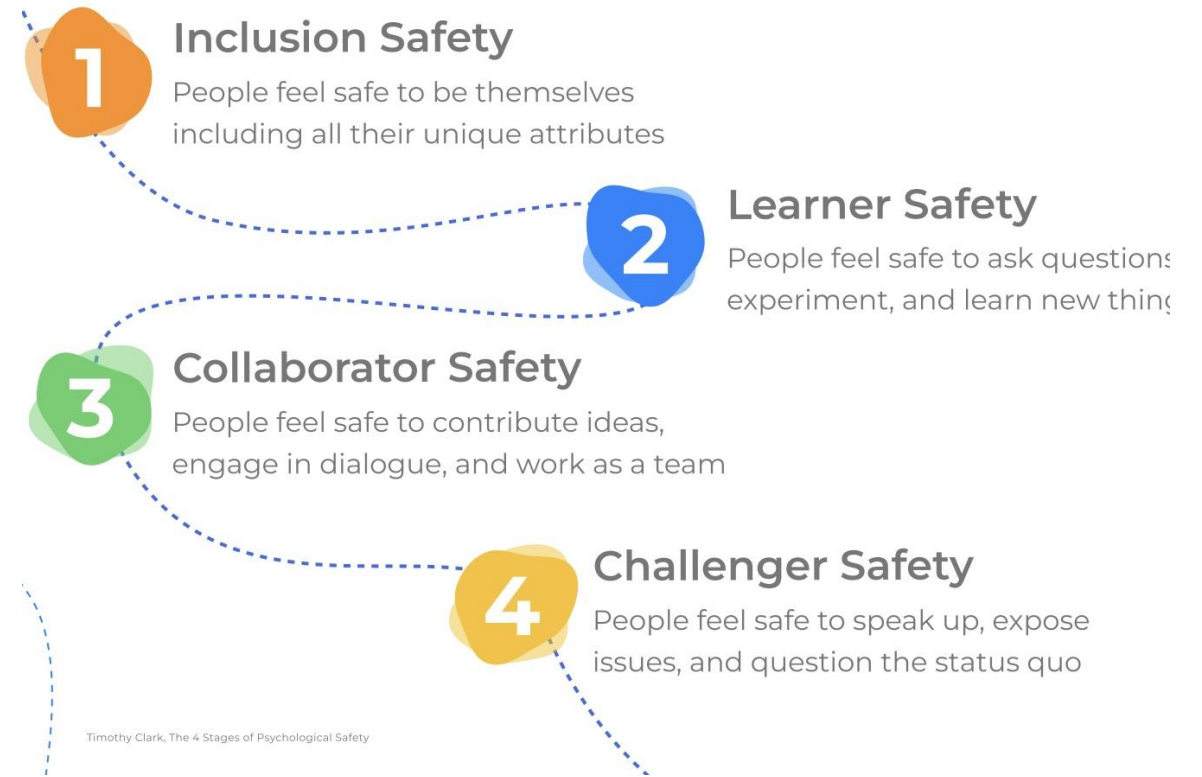
SPACE GUIDELINES: A COMPARISON

Creating a Space for Transformation and Growth

Safe Space Guidelines ❌	Brave Space Guidelines ❌	Accountable Space Guidelines ✅
Impossible for organizations to anticipate participants' evolving triggers.	An unbalanced onus of bravery of marginalized communities to maintain bravery while sharing lived experiences to ensure allies can grow and learn from it.	Places an equal amount of onus for all to behave equitably and inclusively to foster a deeper understanding of diverse lived experiences in REAL-TIME.
Impossible to guarantee complete safety since we cannot control people's behaviours or actions to embed DE&I principles in their actions during and after the conversation.	Negates the daily bravery marginalized communities need to display to navigate workplaces and society. Also, it does not lighten marginalized communities' "burden of bravery."	Creates a REAL-TIME opportunity for EVERYONE in the discussion to challenge the conditions that are oppressing marginalized communities by demonstrating accountable and equitable behaviours and actions.
It does not allow allies and non-marginalized people to show allyship in action by following a set of guidelines to support accountable conversations that foster inclusion and equity.	It does not allow allies and non-marginalized people to show allyship in action by following a set of guidelines to support accountable conversations that foster inclusion and equity.	Intent and impact are rooted within accountability to promote actions, thoughts, and behaviours that are equitable and inclusive of marginalized communities.

The Importance of Psychological Safety

4 stages of psychological safety



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

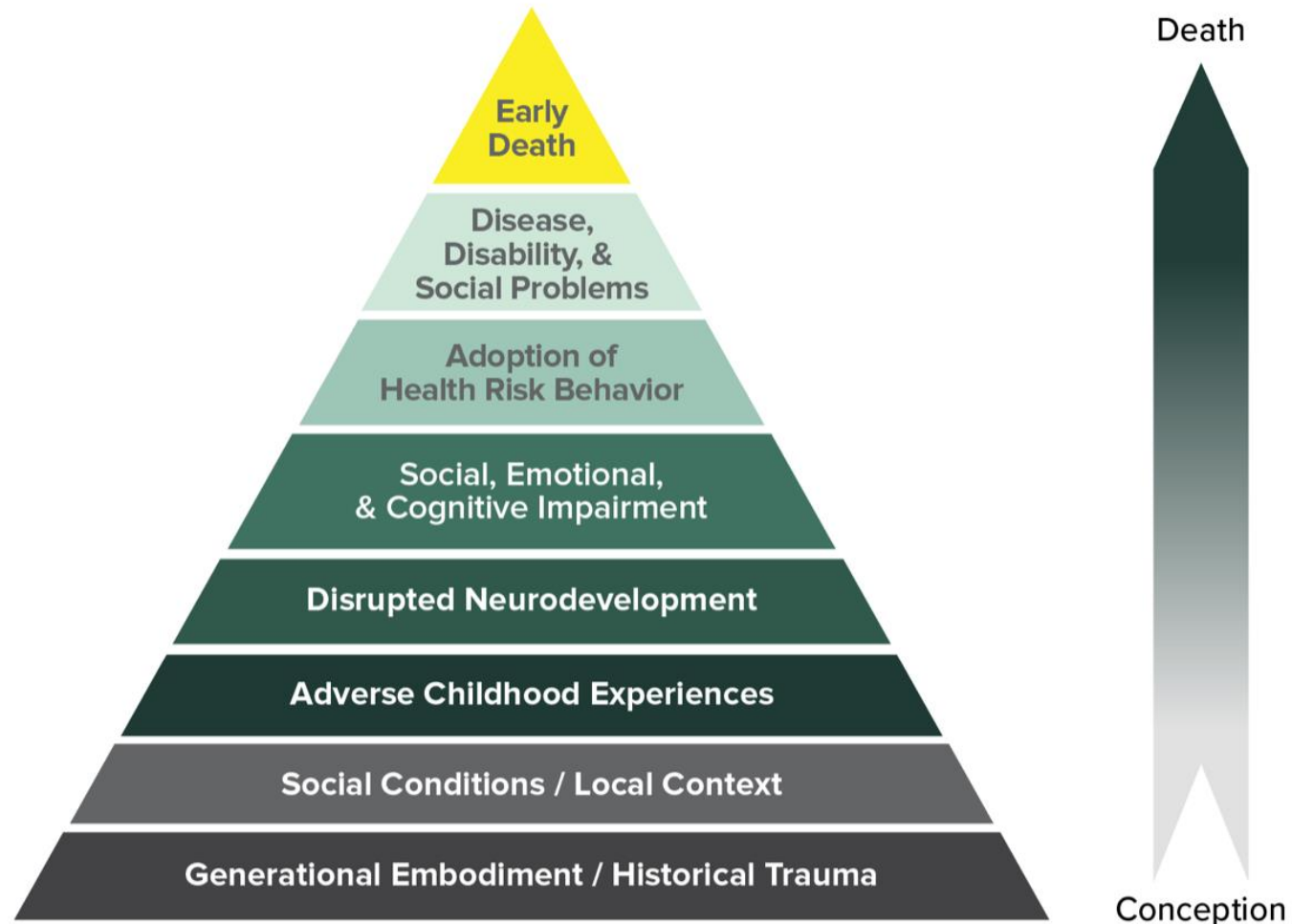
Abuse

Household
Difficulties

Neglect

What is a trauma?

- + A trauma is a scary, dangerous, violent event, or loss that can happen to anyone. Not all dangerous or scary events are traumatic events.
- + Traumatic stress occurs when a person is exposed to traumatic events or traumatic situations that overwhelm their ability to cope.



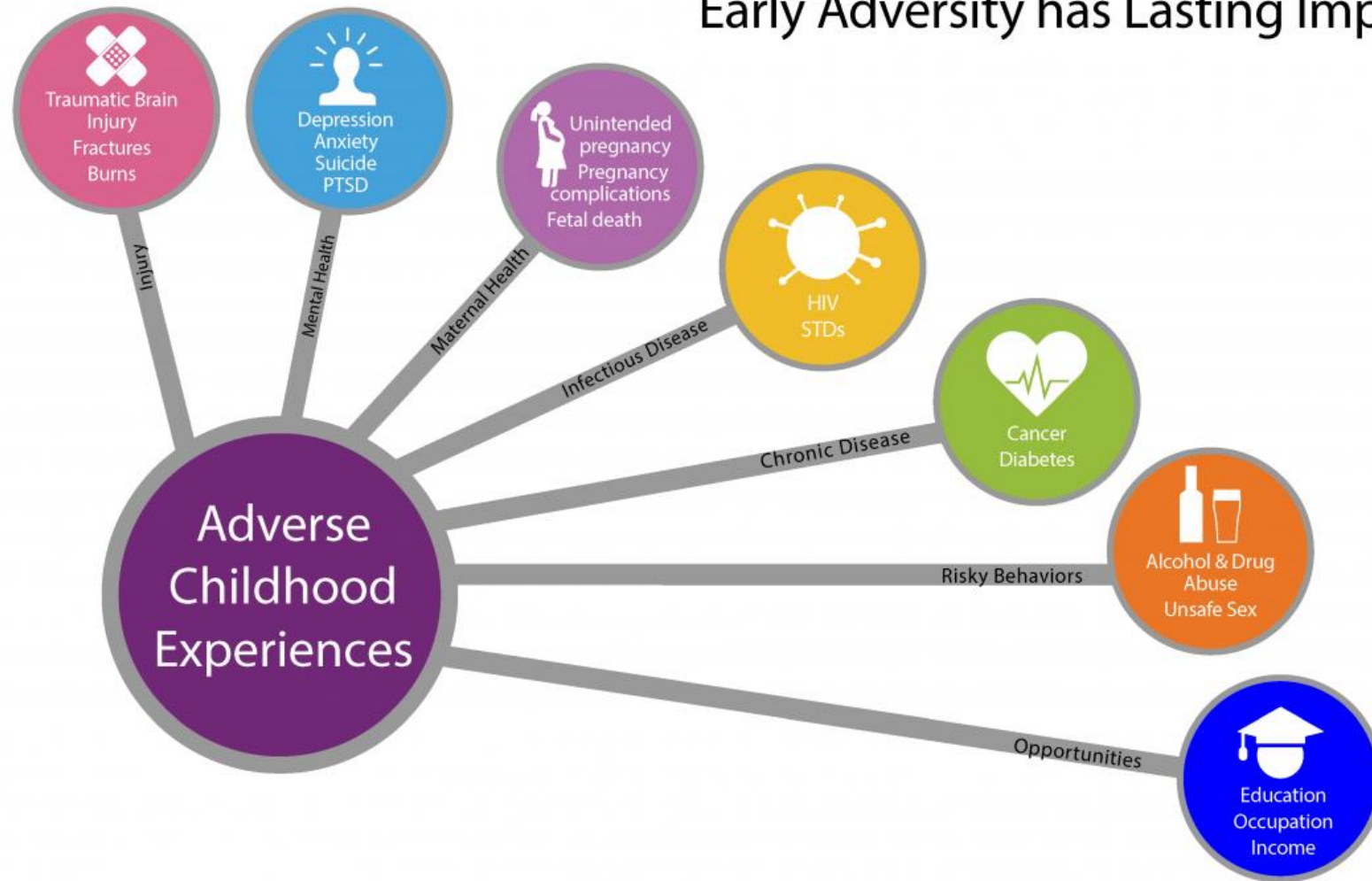
Mechanism by which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

Center for Disease Control, 2021

What about racism/discrimination

- + *To the best of your knowledge, has your child ever been treated or judged unfairly because of his or her race or ethnic group?*
- + Interpersonal racism
- + Institutional/Systemic Racism

Early Adversity has Lasting Impacts



Center for Disease Control, 2021

Community Risk Factors

- Violence and crime
- Poverty, lower educational and economic opportunities
- High unemployment
- Access to drugs and alcohol
- Low community involvement
- Little community activities for youth
- Unstable housing, residents move frequently
- Food insecurity
- Social and environmental distress

Trauma-Informed Care

Traumas frequently occur



ACES affect a person's behavior and functioning



Traumas affect the person, staff, helpers, and systems

Principles of Trauma- Informed Care

Safety

Trust and transparency

Peer Support

Collaboration and mutuality

Empowerment, voice, and choice

Cultural, historical, and gender issues

Secondary Traumatic Stress

- + Emotional distress when you hear about the trauma experience of another
- + Mimics the symptoms of PTSD
- + Common in those who work with traumatized people
- + Risk greater
 - Empathetic
 - Unresolved trauma
 - High caseload of traumatized individuals
 - Isolation
 - Lack of training

Symptoms of PTSD

- + Worries
- + Sadness
- + Anger
- + Recurrent thoughts or images
- + Flashbacks
- + Repetitive Play
- + Physical reactions to reminders of the stress
- + Stress by reminders of the trauma
- + Hard to remember the trauma
- + Avoidance of reminders
- + Feel detached
- + Hard to identify their feelings
- + Reduced interest in activities
- + Feel like life will be shorter
- + Sleep problems/Dreams/Nightmares
- + Concentration difficulties
- + Hypervigilance
- + Easily startled
- + Zoning out/Dissociating
- + Difficulty trusting others

What does this have to do with facilitation and experiential education?

- + As experiential educators, we work to create engaging and transformational experiences for participants that encourage authentic engagement. However, trauma of all forms, can prevent authentic engagement if we don't work to create meaningful opportunities for voice and choice.

What is Trauma-Informed Facilitation

+

Trauma-informed facilitation is an approach to leading groups or workshops that acknowledges and integrates an understanding of trauma and its effects on individuals. This approach is especially relevant in settings where participants may have experienced trauma, such as in therapy groups, support groups, educational workshops, or community programs.

Key Aspects of Trauma-Informed Facilitation

- + **Safety:** Prioritize creating a physically and emotionally safe environment for participants. This includes ensuring that the space feels welcoming, non-threatening, and free from judgment. Establish clear guidelines for behavior and confidentiality to promote a sense of safety.
- + **Trustworthiness & Transparency:** Build trust with participants by being transparent about the goals, structure, and expectations of the group or workshop. Communicate openly and honestly, and maintain consistency in your approach.
- + **Empowerment and Choice:** Provide participants with choices and opportunities for autonomy whenever possible. Respect their decisions and preferences, and empower them to participate in the facilitation process in ways that feel comfortable and meaningful to them.
- + **Collaboration and Mutuality:** Create a collaborative atmosphere where participants feel valued and respected. Encourage mutual support and cooperation among participants, and model respectful communication and behavior.
- + **Respect for Diversity:** Recognize and honor the diversity of experiences, backgrounds, and identities among participants. Create an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and promotes cultural sensitivity.

Key Aspects of Trauma-Informed Facilitation (continued)

- + **Understanding Trauma Impact:** Learn about the impact of trauma and its potential effects on individuals' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Be aware of common trauma responses, such as hypervigilance, dissociation, and triggers, and respond with empathy and compassion.
- + **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Be flexible and adaptable in your facilitation approach to accommodate the needs and preferences of participants. Be willing to modify activities, agenda, and expectations as necessary to support their well-being.
- + **Self-Care and Boundaries:** Prioritize self-care and set appropriate boundaries to prevent burnout and vicarious trauma. Practice self-awareness and seek support when needed to maintain your own well-being.
- + **Feedback and Reflection:** Seek feedback from participants and colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of your facilitation approach. Reflect on your experiences, successes, and challenges, and use them as opportunities for growth and improvement.
- + **Continuous Learning and Improvement:** Commit to ongoing learning and professional development in trauma-informed practices. Stay informed about current research, best practices, and emerging trends in trauma-informed facilitation.

When facilitating a workshop, remember:



90% of our time is spent indoors.



How our environment affects our attitudes, mood and behavior.



Using regulation to cope with stress

In trauma-informed facilitation, if possible, we should also consider these elements of our environments:

- + Safety
- + Connection to Nature
- + Accessibility
- + Inclusion
- + Finding your way
- + Visibility
- + Comfort
- + Lighting
- + Sounds
- + Movement/Play
- + Choice/Flexibility
- + Community/Culture

Thank you!!!

Please direct questions or concerns to:

ssgray@schsd.org

cn19@txstate.edu

Kynetta@transformativehealth.net