

Trauma Informed Care for Behavior Analysts — Buzzword or Just Good Practice?

by Courtney Vaughan, MS, BCBA, LBA



What Defines a Trauma Informed Organization or System?

"A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed:

- Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
- Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;
- Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
- Seeks to actively resist re-traumatization."

Researchers have found that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can affect an individual's health and wellbeing across the lifespan. ACEs include child abuse and neglect, household challenges, and other socio-behavioral factors experienced before the age of 18. A survey was created to determine the number of ACEs an individual has endured. A growing body of research recognizes that as an individual's number of adverse childhood experiences goes up, so does the likelihood of many negative health and wellbeing outcomes such as alcoholism, cancer, depression, heart disease, STDs, financial stress, etc.

Quick Tips for Behavior Analysts to Implement Trauma Informed Care

1

Look beyond the immediate function of the behavior!

Do your best to do a thorough review of your client's history. Can you determine whether your client has had any adverse childhood experiences?

2

Determine how your client's ACE score may impact his or her behavior and the success of your intervention.

Tailor your intervention accordingly. With an understanding of trauma history, create an environment that encourages the behaviors that you want to see. If you are not sure how, learn more!

3

Continue to educate yourself!

Seek out additional training and knowledge when necessary. Learn how trauma history may impact behavior and success of treatment. Join the conversation!

4

As always, know your limit!

If you find that trauma has played a big part in your client's life and you are unsure how the trauma may impact the treatment that you provide, don't hesitate to refer your client elsewhere or collaborate with a more experienced clinician.

Here are some other good resources to learn more!

- Center For Disease Control: Adverse Childhood Experiences
- National Center for Trauma Informed Care
- Trauma Informed Network Community

For more resources, check out our Best Practice Blog at
www.cahumanservices.org/bestpractice