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Welcome to

Mental Health Wellness
for Individuals with
Intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities

Click the "Start" button to begin the
Trauma Informed Care Module

Start



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Mental Health Wellness for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (MHW-IDD)

 Certificates of completion are available for each module. Please print or save your certificate immediately following completion of the course as they will NOT be available to you at a later time.

 It is estimated that it will take you 50 minutes to complete this module. It **does** need to be completed in one sitting as your work will be lost if you close out this program during the middle of the module.

 You can pause or back up at any time during the training but you cannot fast forward through slides. Slides will automatically advance once the voiceover is complete.

 Your computer should have audio to complete the training as the voiceover presents much more information than what is displayed on the slides. Do not attempt to complete this training without audio. For those who are deaf or hard of hearing, a narrative of each slide is available in the Resources section of this online training.

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Trauma Informed Care for Individuals with IDD

Objectives:

1. Introduce the concept of trauma informed care
2. Review the signs and symptoms of trauma often experienced in people with IDD
3. Identify strategies for working with individuals with trauma histories and IDD

Outline:

- I. Introduction to Trauma Informed Care
- II. What is Trauma?
- III. Trauma-Informed Care: Using A Trauma-Informed Care Approach
- IV. Trauma: The Effects on Our Brain and Behavior
- V. Signs and Symptoms of Trauma
- VI. The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness

Outcome:

By the end of the module, learners will be able to assist in using a trauma-informed care approach in supporting individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

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 What is Trauma?
Big "T" Traumas

Little "t" traumas Big "T" traumas

- Trauma comes in all sizes
- Trauma can be caused by a **single event** or through the impact of **ongoing abuse over time**
- Big "T" events are things such as a natural disaster, physical assault, sexual assault, death or a horrible accident

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 What is Trauma?
Little "t" Traumas

- There are smaller traumas that also effect people
- Little "t" events, such as being bullied or excluded, can be devastating to a person who is experiencing them
- Individuals with IDD are more prone to experience little "t" traumas, such as:
 - ✓ Repeated rejection and invalidation
 - ✓ Bullying, being teased, name calling
 - ✓ Being discredited or ignored
 - ✓ A lifetime of people trying to "fix" you
 - ✓ Living in situations where you lack control
 - ✓ Having extended hospitalizations
 - ✓ Abandonment by family, relatives, friends or even just expecting a phone call or visit from a relative but never received
- **Trauma is based on the individual's perception of the experience!**



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 What is Trauma?
Vulnerability in IDD

- People with IDD may be more vulnerable and easily hurt by these events because they may not be able to process their thoughts as easily as others, or may have less access to social supports
- Studies have shown that people with friends and social support are far more resilient (recover more quickly from difficult situations) when facing traumatic events than those without such support
- There are some people who experience traumatic events and do not develop ongoing symptoms of a traumatic disorder. More often than not, these people have strong social networks and support
- This is often not the case for individuals with IDD

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 What is Trauma?
Statistics

- **70%** reported experiencing physical, sexual or financial abuse
- **90%** of those said that it was ongoing
- only **37%** reported it to the authorities
- Research has shown us, experiences of trauma can have serious negative impacts on psychological, social, and medical outcomes throughout a person's life
- For more information on the impacts of early traumatic experiences and associated negative outcomes, you can access the following resource: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>

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 Trauma-Informed Care:
Using a Trauma-informed Care Approach (Slide 1 of 3)

- How to use a **trauma informed care approach**
- A trauma-informed care approach is one in which the service providers:
 - ✓ **Realize** the widespread impact of trauma and understand the path to recovery
 - ✓ **Recognize** the signs and symptoms of trauma
 - ✓ **Seek** to put knowledge about trauma into practice
- "A trauma-informed care approach can be implemented in any type of service setting or organization" (<http://www.samhsa.gov/trauma>)



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 Trauma-Informed Care:
Using a Trauma-informed Care Approach (Slide 2 of 3)

- **The trauma-informed care approach looks at challenging behavior in a new way**
- Do not assume that behaviors are due to a person's disability!
- Behavior can be a learned way of keeping them physically and mentally safe
- Behavior also lets us know what is going on with an individual and it is often up to the DSW or caregiver to figure out what the individual is unable to tell us
- If you focus solely on the behavior instead of mental wellness, this can greatly reduce the chances for helping the person achieve a better quality of life
- This factor is important to remember because you may not always be aware of the history of trauma in the people you support

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Trauma-Informed Care: Using a Trauma-informed Care Approach (Slide 3 of 3)

- In a trauma informed care approach, we show each person **respect** and **dignity**
- We help people to feel safe and accepted in a way that helps them to **move forward** in their lives and have a new level of **hope** each day
- It is good for everyone to interact in this way, even with those who have not experienced a trauma
- **All of us need to be treated with dignity and respect!**
- For individuals who have been traumatized, it is especially important that we are thoughtful in our approach

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Application Exercise

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Trauma: The Effects on Our Brain and Behavior (Slide 1 of 3)

- There is a part of our brain that stores all of our emotional memories called our amygdala (a-mig'-da-la)
- It flashes **DANGER** whenever it sees something that looks like it will bring harm
- A trigger is something that occurs that sets off a certain reaction or behavior. When something reminds an individual of a traumatic experience, it can trigger them to **re-experience**, or **re-live** the trauma all over again
- Triggers are sights, sounds, smells or touches that remind a person of trauma
- The DSW who is aware of someone's trauma history is alert to triggers in the environment which will help them to be responsive

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Trauma: The Effects on Our Brain and Behavior (Slide 2 of 3)

- Keep in mind, when the trauma that someone has experienced is excessive, that person may begin to think they are always in **danger** and can behave in a way that may seem strange to us, as though being threatened, when they are in fact safe
- They may fight a lot, run away or become upset about everything
- They may need constant attention in order to feel safe

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Trauma: The Effects on Our Brain and Behavior (Slide 3 of 3)

- For example, if the individual's trigger is being in the woods, because that is where their abuse happened, if while watching a movie, there is a scene where the characters are in the woods, the DSW or caregiver will acknowledge it and may:
 - ✓ **Acknowledge** the fear and empathize
 - ✓ **Respect** the individual's feelings and try to offer choices to the individual, such as offering a break or a different movie option
 - ✓ **Be patient**. If the individual has become upset due to the trigger it may require the DSW to put in some time to help support the individual

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How to help Using a Trauma-Informed Care Approach: Introduction

- When an individual is feeling unsafe and is responding to a trigger that is causing them to re-experience the trauma, this can be a crisis for the person
- It can also result in distressing a DSW or caregiver who wants to help calm the individual down
- Remember that this person is re-living the trauma and it is **not the time to attempt to negotiate** with them (e.g., saying things like “you need to calm down or you won’t be allowed to go on the outing”)
- Interventions such as restraint do the opposite of making someone feel safe, by making the person feel fearful, overpowered and totally out of control
- If we catch the person when they are showing signs of being triggered or unsafe, we can help reassure and comfort them and hopefully avoid the use of restraints

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Application Exercise

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How to help Using a Trauma-Informed Care Approach: Examples

- If we are able to see that the person is beginning to see himself as being in danger (we may see their behavior escalate), we want to help that person to feel safe, comforted and grounded **before they become dangerous to themselves or others**
- You can assist them in calming down by:
 - ✓ Listening to the person’s feelings
 - ✓ Being present and unafraid of them
 - ✓ Being patient and undemanding
 - ✓ Not engaging in power struggles
 - ✓ Offering an alternative situation or stimulation that is calming such as deep breathing, music or going to a sensory room



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Signs and Symptoms of Trauma (Slide 1 of 4)

- Some people have **intrusive thoughts or memories**, meaning traumatic memories from the person’s past may frequently upset them and interfere with his or her ability to live in the present moment
- They may **re-experience the trauma** over and over
- The person may experience **flashbacks** - when someone believes the traumatic event that happened in the past is actually happening to them at the present moment
- This can even be mistaken for mental illness, because it looks like the person may look as though they are hearing or seeing things that are not there; they may get a **“glassy-eyed look”** and won’t respond to attempts to bring them out of it

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Signs and Symptoms of Trauma (Slide 2 of 4)

- Sometimes people who’ve experienced trauma will **avoid people, places or things** that remind them of the trauma
- People can develop **obsessions** with a thought or activity and people perform **rituals** or odd routines and exhibit self-injurious behavior in order to avoid feeling unsafe
- These can take the form of rocking, head banging, skin-picking and hand biting that relieve stress
- Knowing these symptoms helps us in developing a trauma-informed approach and to support the individuals who’ve experienced trauma in **achieving wellness**

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Signs and Symptoms of Trauma (Slide 3 of 4)

- Some people might be **fearful** of things that seem enjoyable to others
- Some DSWs may know an individual that they support who has experienced trauma that has **physical complaints** or seems to be sick all the time, but has no obvious physical problems
- People responding to trauma are often **misunderstood**. Sometimes we might think that an individual is being deliberately aggressive or manipulative, when in reality they are merely trying to protect themselves from some perceived danger
- These symptoms may appear to be solely behavioral problems but the individuals experiencing them often do not respond to medication or traditional behavioral interventions

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Signs and Symptoms of Trauma (Slide 4 of 4)

- These symptoms described in these last few slides are all very serious
- A person dealing with symptoms of trauma is in pain and what they need most is support
- To learn more about the signs and symptoms of trauma, including information on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, please refer to the **Resources** section of this course
- A list of more specific examples is available for you. Additionally, the first module of this online training includes specific symptoms on PTSD



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The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Introduction

- How to move beyond trauma to achieve wellness
- Three important ingredients for healing:

- 1) Safety
- 2) Connection
- 3) Empowerment

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The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Safety (Slide 1 of 5)

1) Safety:

- Safety becomes a big priority
- Safety is an emotional issue for people, especially for those who've endured trauma
- The individuals we support have to know that the people they are depending on truly have their best interests at heart and have no intention to hurt them
- Need to communicate that we are safe people and that we care about them. This may seem obvious, but it has to be made clear over and over to the person with a history of trauma

Am I safe from further trauma?

What is the next bad thing?

Has my situation changed?

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The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Safety (Slide 2 of 5)

1) Safety:

- Give a lot of reassurance
- Establish safety by controlling factors in the environment so that the person does not become triggered or upset
- We can prepare the person we are supporting by:
 - ✓ Practice calming techniques
 - ✓ Make sure that there are extra supports in place when possible
 - ✓ Let them know what to expect to minimize their stress and reduce the chance of a crisis

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The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Safety (Slide 3 of 5)

1) Safety:

- "Walk with me, talk with me"
- We communicate through body language and tone of voice (i.e. gestures, facial expressions, voice tone, posture and behavior)
- Understanding what someone is "telling" you or "listening" to them doesn't always mean that they are verbally communicating
- Listening, being present, and guiding the person in a warm manner helps an individual escape from the thing that that is causing the response
- Assisting that person in calming down by providing emotional support at that crucial moment

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The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Safety (Slide 4 of 5)

1) Safety

- Ask a person "What happened to you?" or "How are you feeling?" rather than "What's wrong with you?"
- Need to understand what the individual may have been through
- It is important for people with IDD, some of whom have never had someone who cared enough to listen to them, to be validated
- It may take extra time and effort to discover what they are communicating, but the time and effort will pay off if it results in the individual feeling **safe and valued**

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 The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Safety (Slide 5 of 5)

1) Safety:

- Establish rapport with the person
- Listen to the person!
- Respect their personal space and property
- Make yourself available
- If you are assisting the person with a personal task (i.e. bathing), let the person know what you are doing
- Learn the person's triggers. Help them to avoid triggering situations
- Identify the person's strengths and learn what helps them to calm down
- Be honest with the person
- "Walk with me, talk with me"

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 The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Connection (Slide 1 of 3)

2) Connection

- The more friends and support systems people have the more resistant they are to the negative effects of traumatic events
- Our friends and support networks help us move beyond our past traumas and can also help us to be stronger in the present
- Individuals with IDD need strong support networks and this starts with having people in their lives who genuinely care for them and enjoy being with them



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 The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Connection (Slide 2 of 3)

2) Connection

- DSWs can wear many hats - a supporter, an encourager, a friend, a teacher
- **You are essential in helping an individual see his or her potential**
- The nature of the relationship with the DSW is important!
- When we are consistent with the people we work with and communicate genuine concern for their well-being, we can eventually form a strong and positive connection with them
- This connection actually helps people get over the bad things that happened in the past and enjoy the present

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 The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Connection (Slide 3 of 3)

2) Connection

- Be respectful; use person centered language
- Be conscious of your tone of voice and even how fast you talk
- Be patient and give the person the time needed
- Be aware of your body language
- Find the person's strengths and celebrate them
- Help the person build upon already established connections, such as friends, family, church groups, community groups, sports teams, etc ...
- Help the person get involved in things they like to do



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 The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Empowerment (Slide 1 of 2)

3) Empowerment

- Nobody wants to be without power and control over his or her life
- Feeling powerless can be even more challenging for someone with IDD
- It is important not to mislead individuals about the amount of control they have; offer choices when possible
- A sense of control is critical in moving past trauma and **achieving mental wellness**
- Some individuals who feel powerless will engage in dangerous behavior. For people who have more severe disabilities or fewer verbal skills, this is often a primary means of expressing their control

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 The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Empowerment (Slide 2 of 2)

3) Empowerment

- Support the person in making decisions for themselves; give real options when you can
- Be collaborative
- Provide the person with opportunities to learn new skills, based on their strengths and interests
- Assume that the person is able to participate in their care and wellness
- Appreciate where the person is coming from and do not be scared of them or the trauma they've faced
- Give the person honest and frequent praise for their successes

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The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Summary

- **People with IDD are people first!**
- We all need safety, connection and empowerment in order to achieve mental wellness
- You are some of the most important people in the lives of those who have those who have IDD and have experienced trauma
- What that DSWs do every day provides a foundation for the individual's ongoing recovery
- When trauma symptoms are affecting an individual, often, therapy and trauma treatment are valuable in the process of recovery, but the role of the DSW is foundational
- The entire team works together!

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Application Exercise

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The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: The Toll Taken

The Toll Taken

- This difficult work can take its toll
 1. You may find yourself somewhat traumatized after a difficult behavioral event
 2. You may also feel a sense of horror at the events individuals share with you that occurred in their lives
 3. You might have endured difficult circumstances yourself and have your own trauma
- It takes dedication and commitment to be a DSW and it's not always easy!
- It is important to practice self-care and find ways to release stress in the healthiest manner possible that fits your personality and life style

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The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Self-Care

Self-Care

- We all need to take care of ourselves if we are going to be able to do this important and life-changing work
- You are a part of a team and not working in isolation; your team can be a source of self-care
- Many employer's offer mental health assistance that is confidential through programs called Employment Assistance Programs (EAPs)
 - ✓ Texas Health and Human Services System Employee Assistance Program <http://www.txhhsseap.com/>
 - ✓ The Deer Oaks EAP assists with the issues of depression or anxiety stemming from work, family, legal, financial, or health related problems <http://legacy.deeroaks.com/pages.asp?id=4>
- Other employers promote physical health through incentivized health care

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Application Exercise

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The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Self-Care Examples

Go to a quiet place, close your eyes and breathe deeply	Relax your muscles	Take time to get up and stretch for 5 minutes 5 times each day	
Take a walk every day for at least 10-15 minutes	Exercise	Listen to some music that you like	Practice art, or just doodle
Write in a journal	Meditate	Keep a clean workspace	Read a non-work related book that you like

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 **The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: Resources**

These can all be found in the Resources section of this online training

- PTSD hotlines: <http://ptsdusa.org/get-help/hotline-crisis-numbers/>
- SAMHSA Trauma Informed Care and Alternatives to Seclusion and Restraint: <http://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/trauma-interventions>
 - SAMHSA Suicide Prevention 24/7 hotline: **1-800-273-TALK** (8255)
 - SAMHSA National Helpline for MH/SA treatment referral: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
 - SAMSHA Disaster Distress Hotline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 (provides crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters)
- If you are faced with a **medical emergency**, please dial 9-1-1.
- If you are **contemplating suicide**, please call
 - 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or TTY 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)
 - Red Nacional de Prevencion del Suicidio 1-888-628-9454



 **The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: The Story of John (Slide 1 of 3)**

The Story of John

- 34 years old and had Down Syndrome
- He was raised in a loving and caring family his entire life until his father had a heart attack and died in front of him in their home
- His mother was placed in a nursing facility several weeks after his father's passing
- He was continually talking about seeing his father die in front of him
- Would become aggressive at home and at work
- Sometimes, when he saw someone asleep he would start screaming that the person might be dead
- John would state that during those times he saw his father's body





 **The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference: The Story of John (Slide 2 of 3)**

The Story of John

- John got a new DSW, named Ed
- Ed did not tease John and spent a lot of time getting to know him
- He saw John on a daily basis and learned about John's interests and strengths
- Ed listened to John, and even though John's verbal communication was limited and at times difficult to understand, Ed took the time to really hear him
- Ed used this information to help develop a plan for when John was triggered
- He now had tools he could use to help John calm down if he was in crisis
- He acknowledged that John seemed upset; and let him know he was safe
- Ed asked John he would like to listen to listen to his music, as they had practiced



 **The Important Ingredients for Mental Wellness and How You Can Make A Difference The Story of John (Slide 3 of 3)**

The Story of John

- Ed took John to different places in the community
- Ed made a point of helping John visit his mother, brother and nephews
- Through Ed's listening to John and assisting him in making more choices about his daily life, John's quality of life improved
- After roughly 6 months of Ed helping John create interpersonal connections, assess situational choices and making his home environment enjoyable, John's behavior changed
- He was with someone who really understood him, communicated with him, and cared about him
- Ed made all the difference in John's world and as a result, John finally began achieving mental wellness






 **Trauma Informed Care: Summary** 

- Approach the individual by trying to determine **"What happened to him?"** instead of asking "what's wrong with him"
- Focus on building a trusting relationship by supporting the individual rather than making choices for him or her
- Remember that **behavior is a form of communication** and try to determine what the individual is trying to tell you through the behavior
- Instead of simply trying to change or manage an individual's behavior, consider seeking consultation by a mental health professional and getting a comprehensive mental health evaluation
- Be the friend you would want to have
- **Don't give up on the individual!**
- Recognize that people with IDD experience mental illness, including the impact of trauma, and they can recover
- Recognize when you need to step back and take care of yourself so that you will be able to have a positive impact on the person you are trying to support

