TRAUMA INFORMED CARE AND THE LIBRARY

Elissa Hardy, LCSW

Ann Schwab, MLIS

PLA 2016 Conference
WHAT IS TRAUMA?

- Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence.
- Experienced a real or perceived threat
WHAT IS TRAUMA?

- Oppression
- Sexism
- Racism
- Ableism
- Discrimination related to sexual orientation and gender identity
TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

- “… approach to engaging people with histories of trauma that recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives.”

- Shift from "What's wrong with you?" to "What has happened to you?“

- www.samhsa.gov/nctic
BUT I WORK IN A LIBRARY!

Why do we need to know this?
BU T I W O R K I N A L I B R A R Y!

Many people who are seeking support and services have experienced trauma in their lives.

You are exposed to people who have experienced trauma.
NEUROBIOLOGY OF TRAUMA
VICARIOUS TRAUMA & BURNOUT

When our own experiences overlap or are affected by the people we encounter, we are even more vulnerable to vicarious trauma and burnout.
WHY TRAUMA INFORMED SERVICES?

- Serve people better and from a place of compassion and empathy
- Understand why people get frustrated easily or it’s hard for them to access services
- Recognize we’re affected by this work
WHY TRAUMA INFORMED SERVICES?
VICARIOUS RESILIENCY

A unique and positive effect that transforms service workers in response to trauma survivors’ own resiliency.
WHY ARE WE HERE?

What do you need to feel safe in doing this work?
WHAT DO YOU NEED TO FEEL SAFE IN DOING THIS WORK?

• A Clean and Safe Environment
• Supportive Co-Workers and Supervisor
• A Place to “Vent”
• Respect
• Empathy
• Non-Judgment
WHAT DO OTHERS NEED TO FEEL SAFE COMING TO THE LIBRARY?

• A Clean and Safe Environment
• Supportive Supervisor
• A Place to “Vent”
• Respect
• Empathy
• Non-Judgment

• A Clean and Safe Environment
• Supportive People
• A Place to “Vent”
• Respect
• Empathy
• Non-Judgment
Trauma Informed Services

- Administrative Commitment
- Training and Education
- Hiring Practices
- Policies and Procedures

- Circulation Staff
- Security
- Custodial Services
- Librarian
- Shelver
- All Staff
CREATE A TRAUMA INFORMED ENVIRONMENT

* Discuss the physical environment.
* How can you approach people from a trauma informed perspective?
* What are ways your library is already doing this?
* What are things that can change?
* Are there any policies or procedures that can be addressed?
* How can you support each other?
TRAUMA INFORMED SERVICES @ DPL

- Homeless Services Action Committee (HSAC)
- Monday Morning Meditation
- Hard Times Writing Workshops
- Community Resource Specialists
- Security
- Community Technology Center
TRAINING @ DPL

- Trauma Informed Systems of Care
- Finding Resiliency: An Approach to Self Care
- Mental Health First Aid
QUESTIONS?

Elissa Hardy, LCSW
Community Resource Specialist
ehardy@denverlibrary.org

Ann Schwab, MLIS
Senior Librarian, Central Children’s Library
aschwab@denverlibrary.org