# Individual and Collective Trauma

*Elizabeth Waetzig*

Change Matrix

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE: RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

2020 VIRTUAL REGIONAL TRAINING

This training is offered through
the Community Prevention Initiative
(CPI), which is funded by the California
Department of Health Care Services
and administered by the Center
for Applied Research Solutions.

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Increase their familiarity with different types of trauma.

- Learn more about the impact of trauma on individuals and groups.

- Recognize the connection between trauma and culture.

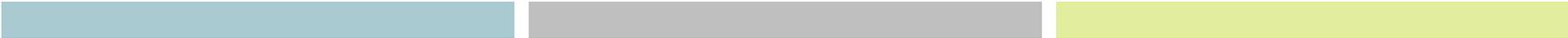- Understand the implications of trauma informed care.
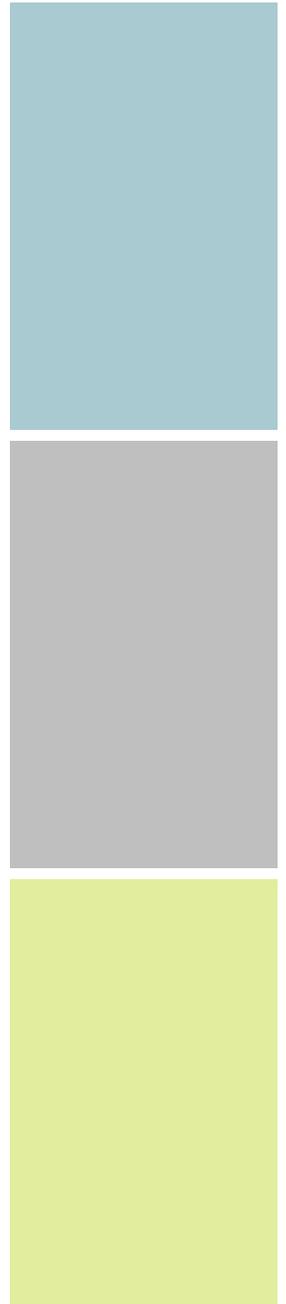
# AGENDA

- Define Trauma Types

- Discuss Individual and Collective Trauma

- Present Trauma Through a Cultural Lens

- Introduce Trauma Informed Care
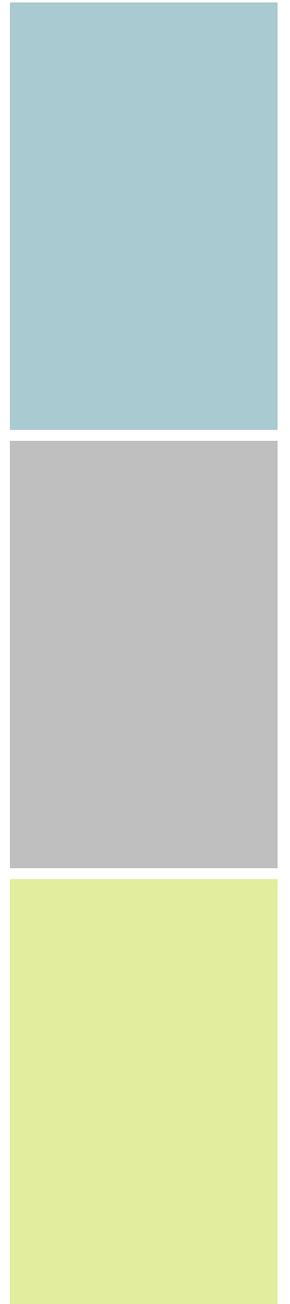
# UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

# TRAUMA DEFINITION

Trauma results from an *event*, series of *events*, or set of circumstances that is

- *experienced* by an individual or group as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and

- has lasting adverse *effects* on the individual's/group's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

# TYPES OF TRAUMA
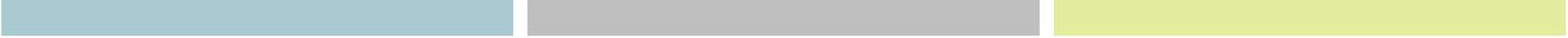
- Individual trauma

- Collective trauma

- Racial or race-based trauma

- Historical trauma

- Generational trauma

# Individual Trauma
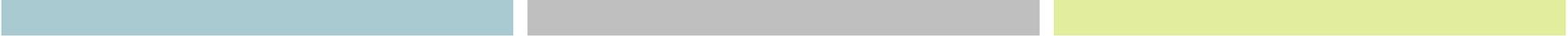
■ Can occur throughout a person's lifespan resulting from adverse experiences.

- Military trauma
- Traumatic grief or separation
- Physical pain or injury

■ 70% of adults (223.4 million people) in the U.S. have experienced some type of traumatic event at least once in their lives. (National Council for Behavioral Health. www.TheNationalCouncil.org)

# ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity.

# Someone with 4 or more ACES

- 2.2 times as likely to have ischemic heart disease

- 2.4 times as likely to have a stroke

- 1.9 times as likely to have cancer

- 1.6 times as likely to have diabetes

- 12.2 times as likely to attempt suicide

- 10.3 times as likely to use injection drugs

- 7.4 times as likely to be an alcoholic
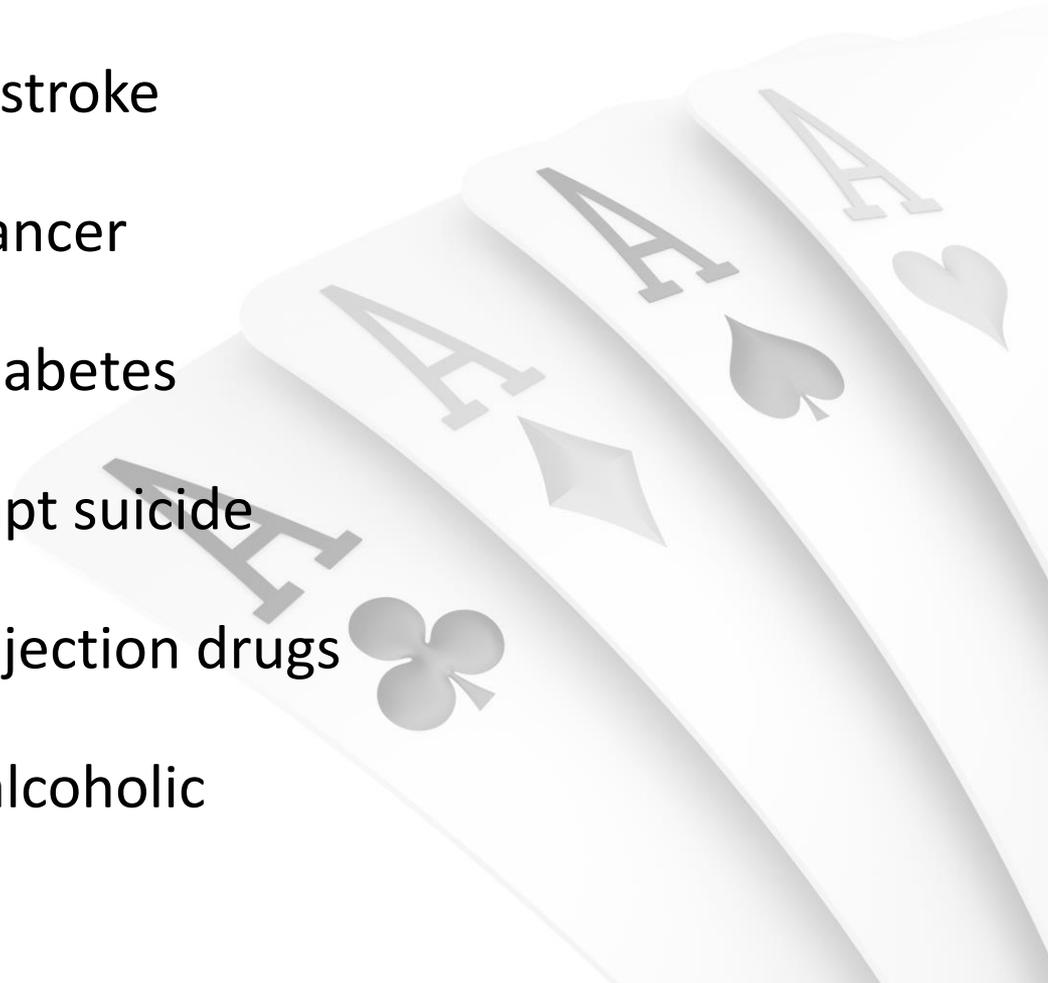
# Collective Trauma

# COLLECTIVE TRAUMA OR COMMUNITY TRAUMA

A group of people collectively experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event or conflict.

- Natural disasters
- War
- Displacement/Homelessness
- Poverty/Unemployment/Food Insecurity
- Historic Trauma - Genocide
- Racism/Discrimination
- Community/State violence - School shooting

**Are there traumatic experiences that are common among the population you serve?**

# COLLECTIVE TRAUMA AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

## COVID-19 Pandemic

- Though many may not realize it, emotional turmoil can, and is, causing symptoms of trauma to manifest in both children and adults.

- Trauma can carry long-term effects if left untreated, meaning the impact of COVID-19 could remain long after the pandemic is under control.

Campbell, Leah, "The World Is Experiencing Mass Trauma from COVID-19: What You Can Do," Healthline, September, 2020.

# Racial Trauma or race-based traumatic stress (RBTS)

Racial trauma refers to the mental and emotional injury caused by encounters with racial bias and ethnic discrimination, racism, and hate crimes.

■ Individual Racism: physical/verbal attacks based on race, unfair treatment

- Following the COVID-19 outbreak, there were nearly 1,500 reported incidents of anti-Asian racism in one month.

■ Systemic Racism: Previous and current policies of racial displacement, exclusion, and segregation

- Blacks make up 12% of the population, but 33% of prison population.

https://mhanational.org/racial-trauma

# Intergenerational Trauma
# (historical or transgenerational trauma)

**Intergenerational trauma (also known as transgenerational trauma or historical trauma) is trauma passed down through generations.**

What human beings cannot contain of their experience – what has been traumatically overwhelming, unbearable, unthinkable – falls out of social discourse, but very often onto and into the next generation as an affective sensitivity or a chaotic urgency.

From M.G. ed. (2012) Lost in Transmission: Studies of Trauma across Generations

# Intergenerational Trauma (historical or transgenerational trauma)
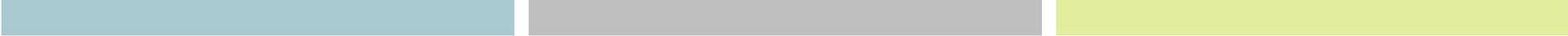
**Consists of three elements:**

1. A traumatic event

2. The shared experience of the trauma by a group of people

3. The multigenerational impact of such trauma

Mohatt et al., 2014

# Symptoms of Collective Trauma

- **People:** in the social-cultural environment, decrease in social relationships, norm, and efficacy.

- **Place:** in the the physical/ built environment, unhealthy and crumbling infrastructure.

- **Equitable Opportunity:** in the economic environment, poverty, unemployment, and disinvestment.
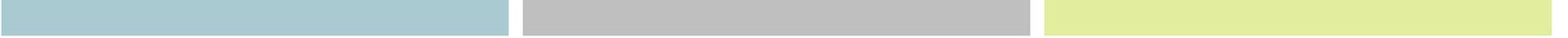
# OUTCOMES OF COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

- Community violence
- Concentrated poverty that damages social networks and trust
- Crumbling infrastructure
- Displacement

# Trauma Through a Cultural Lens

# A Cultural Lens

- Culture can profoundly affect the meaning that a child or family attributes to specific types of traumatic events such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, and suicide.

- Culture may also powerfully influence the ways in which children and their families respond to traumatic events including the ways in which they experience and express distress, disclose personal information to others, exchange support, and seek help.

# Culture and the Impact on Trauma

The current problems facing the _Native American_ people may be the result of "a legacy of chronic trauma and unresolved grief across generations" enacted on them by the European dominant culture.

- Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998, p. 60

_Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ)_ youth experience trauma at higher rates than their straight peers. Common traumas experienced by these youth include bullying, harassment, traumatic loss, intimate partner violence, physical and sexual abuse, and traumatic forms of societal stigma, bias, and rejection.

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network

# CULTURE AND THE IMPACT ON TRAUMA

*Black children* living in racially and economically segregated communities are more likely than children in other communities to live in poverty, to be placed in foster or substitute care, to be exposed to both familial and community violence, to lose a loved one to violent death, to have a family member incarcerated, to experience contacts with police and the justice system, or to become homeless.

- National Traumatic Stress Network

Pre-*migration* poverty combined with clandestine entry into the US increased the risk of trauma and the subsequent development of PTSD symptoms. Post-migration experiences of discrimination and neighborhood disorder further exacerbated this risk, while social support
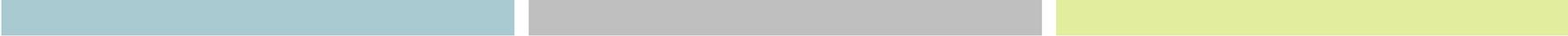
- National Center for Biotechnology Information

# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND TRAUMA
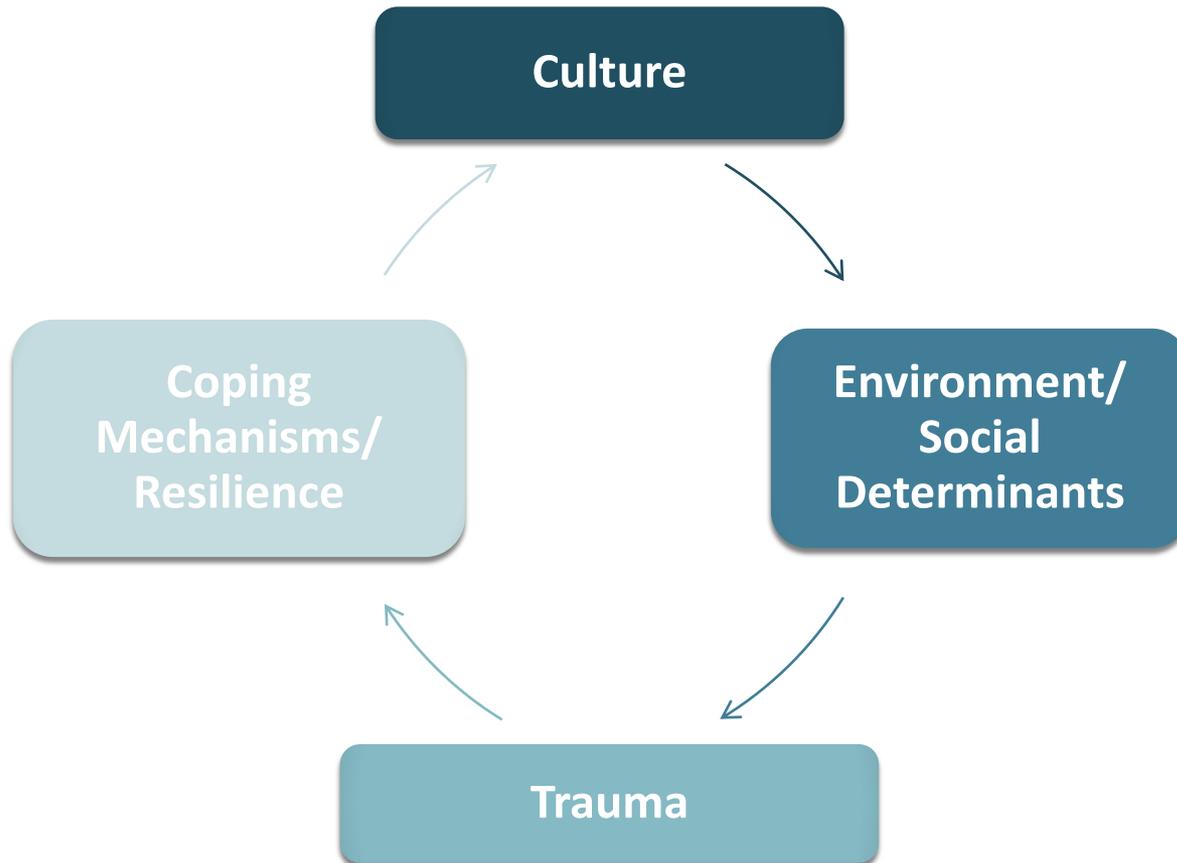
# Trauma Informed Care

# A Trauma-informed System

- A program, agency, or system that is trauma informed is *aware* of the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for healing.

- They *recognize the signs* of trauma in clients, staff, and others touched by the system, and *have responded* by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices.

- A trauma-informed approach reflects a *culture change*, reflected in the shift to asking, "What happened to you?" rather than "What's wrong with you?" In contrast, a trauma-specific *service* has a more focused primary task – to directly address trauma and its impact and to facilitate trauma healing.

# Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach
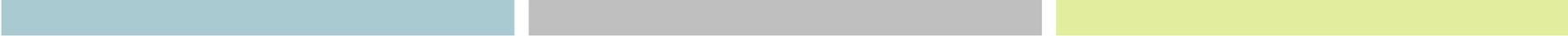
- Safety

- Trustworthiness

- Collaboration/Mutuality

- Empowerment, Voice, and Choice

- Resilience

- Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

# Principles of CLC and Trauma-informed Care

| Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC) | Trauma-informed Care |
|---|---|
| Acknowledgment of unique issues of cultural status | Safety |
| Concept of responsive services | Trustworthiness and transparency |
| Working with natural, informal support systems | Peer support and mutual self-help |
| Participation of diverse groups at all organizational levels | Collaboration and mutuality |
| Support of self-determination for the broader minority community | Empowerment, voice, and choice |
| Understanding the dynamics of difference | Cultural, historical, and gender issues |

# Share

**What is coming up for you right now?**

# Poll

**What do you do to fill yourself up when you feel your reserves are low?**

# In Summary

> **Trauma is the science that binds all our work together.**
>
> - Sandra Bloom

- Trauma occurs individually and collectively and can have a severe long-term impact.

- Trauma can be mitigated by trauma-informed principles:
  - A trauma informed system realizes the impact of trauma, recognizes signs and symptoms, responds through policy and practices, and resists re-traumatization.

- Trauma - its experience, response, and intervention - are culturally bound.
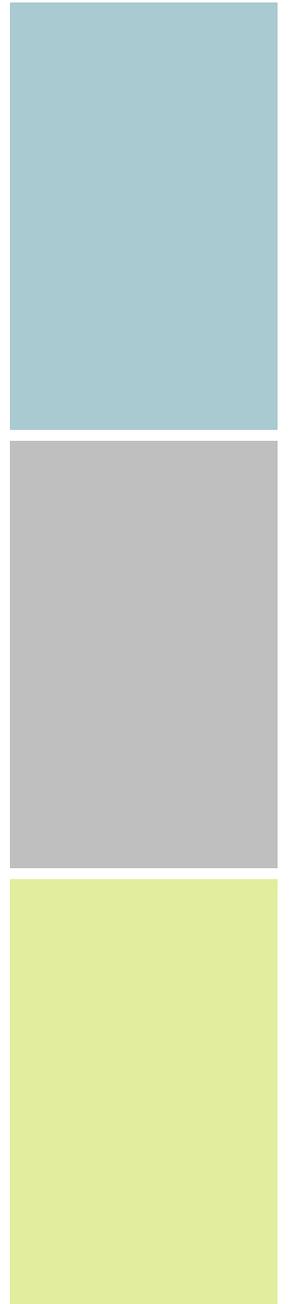
# QUESTIONS
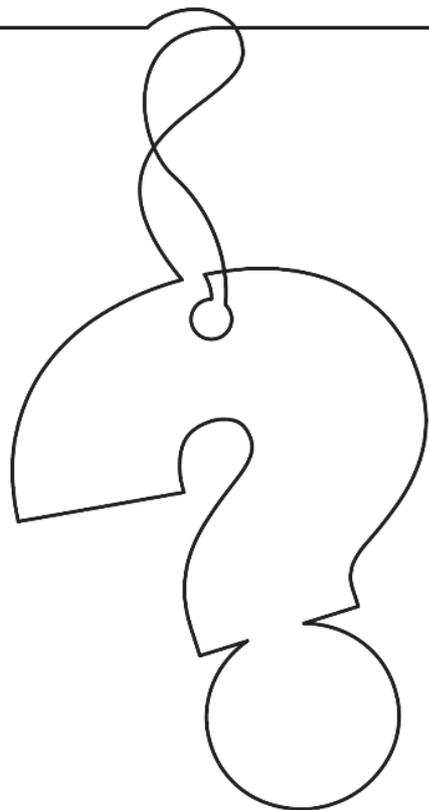
# PRESENTER INFORMATION

**Elizabeth Waetzig**
**ewaetzig@changematrix.org**

# MORE IS AVAILABLE FOR YOU!

[www.ca-cpi.org](www.ca-cpi.org)

# CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH SOLUTIONS (CARS)



**708 College Avenue**
**Santa Rosa, California  95404**
**707.568.3800 Phone**
**707.568.3810 Fax**
**www.cars-rp.org**