

# A FRAMEWORK FOR RESPONDING TO TRAUMA

## TYPE OF TRAUMATIC EVENTS

Single Traumatic Event

Multiple Traumatic Events

## SEVERITY OF TRAUMA

Acute or  
impersonal traumas

Interpersonal trauma

Chronic interpersonal  
trauma

Early prolonged, and  
repeated attachment  
trauma

## DEVELOPMENTAL CAPACITIES

Well-developed capacities: secure  
attachments, coping skills, cognitive,  
language and problem solving skills and  
resources. High resilience factors.

Disruption of later develop-  
mental tasks (adolescent/  
adult); moderate levels of  
resilience

Significant disruption  
of early developmental  
tasks

## POST-TRAUMA RESPONSES

Acute stress disorder,  
acute PTSD

Chronic PTSD

Chronic PTSD with co-morbid conditions  
(depression, substance abuse, dissociative  
disorders, personality disorders)

## THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

Easily established -  
basic trust exists

Helping client to **reconnect** with  
previously known resources that  
have been lost through the process  
of overwhelming trauma

Building basic relationship resources  
and capacities not previously existing;  
trust and ego-supportive work and  
relationship repair skills essential;  
transference, boundary and traumatic re-  
enactment issues will be highly potent

## FOCUS ON TRAUMA

Trauma focussed  
interventions: after initial  
engagement and  
development of safety clients  
will usually move to **directly**  
address and uncover  
traumatic events (exposure  
based interventions and  
reintegration of traumatic  
material)

Stage oriented model: longer  
period of establishing safety;  
developing affect regulation  
and distress tolerance skills;  
address here-and-now problems;  
stabilization of symptoms **prior**  
to addressing traumatic material

Rehabilitation model: psycho-  
educational approach for  
managing PTSD as a chronic  
condition; life-time self care and  
self-management strategies;  
compensation strategies;  
developmental repair; relatively  
structured, directed, reality  
oriented focus on coping with  
current life stressors; address  
traumatic material largely  
**indirectly - little or no  
uncovering of trauma**