Objectives

- Identify the ways organizations are traumatized and how trauma manifests itself.

- Describe strategies to ameliorate trauma and build resiliency.

- Create strategies to respond to trauma within their own agencies.
Organizational Perspective

- Organizational view complements individual focus
- Organizational self-care enhances individual self-care
- Organizational self-knowledge helps with survival in tough times

Pat Vivian and Shana Hormann
2014
Organizational Culture

✧ Core character and uniqueness
✧ Collective identity and home for members
✧ Shared knowledge and language
✧ Norms, values and standards
✧ Personality and spirit
Work Influences Culture

✧ Creation story and rationale for organization’s existence

✧ The struggle and formation of individual and collective identities

✧ Relationship of the organization to society

✧ The way the work is done
Individual-Work-Culture Connection

- Individuals Attracted to The Work
- The Work Itself
- Organizational Culture

Intensity
What do we know about how trauma (such as sexual violence) affects individuals?
Organizational Trauma

✧ Emotionally and cognitively overwhelming

✧ Self-protective structures penetrated

✧ Vulnerable and temporarily helpless

✧ Lasting psychic and cultural impact
Lifecycles, Crises, Trauma

✧ Lifecycles are normal developmental stages of organizational growth and change.

✧ Crises are disruptive occurrences that create anxiety, uncertainty, and opportunity.

✧ Traumas debilitate an organization, temporarily or long term.
Sources of Organizational Trauma

✧ Single catastrophic event

✧ Ongoing wounding

✧ Redemptive nature of the work

✧ Empathic nature of the work
Traumatized System

- Closed boundaries
- Centrality of insider relationships
- Stress and anxiety contagion
- Worldview and identity erosion
- Depression
- Despair and loss of hope

Pat Vivian and Shana Hormann 2014
Persistent Traumatization

- Regularity of re-traumatizing triggers
- Trauma-inured or accepting culture
- Ongoing instability
- Anxiety-based conversations and decisions
- Inadequate emotional containment
- Cumulative discouragement
- Cyclical burnout of staff and leaders
- Continuing lack of trust
Complexity of Traumatization

✧ Healed and unhealed traumas
✧ Historical and current dynamics
✧ Widespread and confined impact
✧ Deeply hidden and just below the surface
✧ Cumulative from long-standing patterns and the nature of the work
Mitigating Factors

- Strong core identity
- Organizational esteem
- Facilitating structures and processes
- Hopeful and energetic leadership
- Positive connection to peer agencies
Exacerbating Factors

- Limiting attitudes and worldview set at organization’s creation
- Organizational amnesia
- Unproductive relationships between organization and environment
- Unrecognized wounding from trauma
Responding to Organizational Trauma

- Recognize and acknowledge trauma
- Remember history and interrupt amnesia
- Strengthen organizational identity and esteem
- Institute facilitating structures and processes
- Open system to new energy and information

Pat Vivian and Shana Hormann 2014
Responding to Organizational Trauma

- Ensure safety, contain anxiety, and normalize experience
- Create process for organization-wide dialogue
- Integrate trauma in affirming and meaningful ways
- Set priorities to move forward
Building and Supporting Resilience

- Act as a role model
- Identify suffering and trauma
- Contain impacts of traumatization
- Offer optimism, confidence, and energy
- Provide frameworks for meaning making
- Champion organizational strengths
- Model kindness and compassion
- Ask for outside help when necessary

Pat Vivian and Shana Hormann 2014
Thank you!

- Cat Fribley, RSP Coordinator
  - rsp@iowacasa.org
- Kris Bein, RSP Asst. Coordinator
  - kris@iowacasa.org

- www.resourcesharingproject.org

- Organizational Trauma and Healing by Pat Vivian & Shana Hormann, 2013