

# Addressing the Effects of Psychological Trauma in a Community Using a Social Determinants of Health Approach: A Case Study

## FACILITATOR GUIDE

This case study has four sections – introduction, case study, side bar, and vignettes. The facilitator may wish to note that learner motivation to work through the case, access appropriate resources; and work in a team will be essential to successful completion. The facilitator needs to recognize that use of this case study may take considerable time and preparation. The in-class time allotment will vary, but we suggest allowing approximately two hours for the introduction and case study pieces. For the vignettes, we suggest discussion time of up to 45 minutes each with additional time for reporting back and debrief.

### Student Learner Outcomes

**Upon completion of the case study, the student will be able to:**

1. Recognize the symptoms of psychological trauma.
2. Assess for adverse experiences that may precede psychological trauma.
3. Analyze the relationship among psychological trauma, physical and mental health, and social determinants of health.
4. Examine the prevalence of psychological trauma in a community context.
  - a. Analyze the social and community context of adverse experiences and psychological trauma.
  - b. Analyze access to health and health care for those with adverse experiences and psychological trauma.
  - c. Analyze neighborhood conditions and the built environment in relationship to adverse experiences and psychological trauma.
5. Identify how adverse experiences may contribute to health issues over the life course and adversely impact multiple generations of a family and community.

6. Discuss the institutional relationships in a community that may impact mental health and well-being and points for improvement.
7. Discuss available federal, state, and local resources to improve the physical and mental health of community residents.
8. Develop a strategy to address social determinants of health to improve mental health and well-being in individuals residing in a community with wide-spread psychological trauma.

## Introduction

The purpose of this first section is to ensure that all learners have a basic understanding of SDOH. It introduces the learner to the SDOH concept and defines the term. Key SDOH as defined by HealthyPeople2020 are presented. **(Table: Social Determinants of Health)**

You may wish to offer specific examples of SDOH specific to your own locale. For example, is there a publicly available park or other recreation site that is widely utilized by residents? Is there a social issue in your community that impacts health, such as poor water quality or noise pollution? Has there been a recent violent event or natural disaster in your area that you may wish to frame within the SDOH lens?

## Discussion

1. What do you know about Social Determinants of Health?
2. Of the five key Social Determinants of Health which do you think has the biggest impact on health? Why? **(Table: Social Determinants of Health)**
3. What sort of social, economic, and environmental adjustments in your home neighborhood or work place would support better physical and mental health, greater self-care, and more effective wellness activities?

Discussion Question: Of the five key Social Determinants of Health which do you think has the biggest impact on health? Why?

Many experts would point to economic stability, socio-economic status, income as the most important social determinant of health. Poorer people tend to have poorer health. Education is

closely related to economic status and some experts consider education as the most impactful social determinant of health. **(Table: Social Determinants of Health)**

## Readings and Resources to Explore

Marmot, M. & Allen, J. (2014). Social determinants of health equities. American Journal of Public Health 104 No. S4 S517-S519.

The Poverty Clinic <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/03/21/the-poverty-clinic> The Poverty Clinic <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/03/21/the-poverty-clinic>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Social Determinants of Health: Know What Affects Health <https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/>

Health Equity Institute <https://healthequity.sfsu.edu/content/defining-health-equity>

Healthy People 2020 Social Determinants <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/leading-health-indicators/2020-lhi-topics/Social-Determinants>

World Health Organization Social determinants of health [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/en/](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/)

## NEWARK Case Study

Part 2 introduces the learner to our Newark case study exemplar using the five key SDOH as an organizing format. The purpose of this section is to serve as a locale description from an SDOH point of view and to describe location specifics that may increase the prevalence of psychological trauma.

Faculty may wish to start connecting findings from the Newark example and resources to explore to their own practice locales using, for example, the Census, County Health Rankings and 500 Cities data. **(Table: Data sources to Learn More About a Community, its Population, and Its Health)**

**ASSIGNMENT IDEA:** Consider a front porch to exam room experience for students to shadow a patient from home to health care setting. The student could describe the transportation, environmental conditions, and potential barriers to health care access.

Faculty may encourage student visits to local food, diaper banks, or other community resources that ameliorate SDOH.

**ASSIGNMENT IDEA:** Complete a practice site assessment within and immediately outside of the health care setting. Which features are welcoming and support a positive health care experience for the patient? Which features do not? What does the waiting area look like? How are health literacy deficits addressed? How are transportation barriers overcome?

**ASSIGNMENT IDEA:** Faculty may wish to assign individual or group projects to develop location-appropriate interventions to address a minor SDOH.

### **Discussion**

1. What characteristics of Newark may potentially increase the prevalence of psychological trauma in its citizens? **TABLE Social Determinants of Health in Newark**
2. After exploring the resources, describe your practice locale using the five key SDOH. **TABLE Social Determinants of Health.**
3. Assess your locale for indicators of high community-level trauma. **TABLE Data Sources to Learn More About a Community, Its Population and Its Health**
4. What community-wide ‘interventions’ are there available in your locale that may support mental health and well-being? **TABLE. Population based interventions to improve mental health and well-being and reduce psychological trauma** (For more interventions information <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources>)

**ASSIGNMENT IDEA:**

**1. Social Determinants of Health in the Community**

The purpose of this assignment is to identify, document with photographs, and explain SDOHs found in your home or work community as well as developing a short three-point action plan to address one of the SDOHs identified.

Document multiple SDOHs (both positive and negative) in your community (home or work) with photographs. Use photos you have taken yourself. Approximately 10 photo slides plus additional explanation slides required. Be creative! You will post (as an attachment) your PowerPoint for your classmates to learn from in the designated discussion board. The PowerPoint should explain and discuss what you found.

<b>Grading Rubric</b>		
<b>Criterion (Points Possible)</b>	<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Actual Points/Comments</b>
Introduction (5)	Introduction slide. Complete/focused purpose statement of main topic	
Organization (5)	Evidence of structure and organization	
Power Point Content (60) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify specific locale and describe (location, population size, demographics)</li><li>• Clearly identify and describe each SDOH documented by photograph.</li></ul>	Locale demographics slide. Incorporate census.gov content when describing your locale. Be specific.  10 individual photographs taken by you that visually document specific SDOH in your chosen locale.	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss impact of specific SDOH with supporting evidence.</li> <li>• Three-point action plan to address one of the SDOH you identified. Upstream interventions are preferred.</li> </ul>	<p>Clearly identify which SDOH picture represents.</p> <p>Succinct explanations of what each photo demonstrates.</p> <p>Impact on key populations, disparities, and health supported by scholarly sources/references.</p> <p>Action Plan slide.</p>	
<p>Conclusion (5)</p>	<p>Conclusion slide.</p> <p>Clear and effective summary statement.</p>	
<p>APA for citations and reference (10)</p>	<p>Adequately cited and referenced through-out.</p> <p>Reference page(s).</p>	
<p>Mechanical/usage (10)</p>	<p>Punctuation</p> <p>Capitalization</p> <p>Spelling</p> <p>Grammar</p> <p>Sentence Structure</p> <p>Word Use</p> <p>No more than one or two short direct quotes</p>	
<p>Discussion (5)</p>	<p>Via discussion: review and comment upon your classmate’s SDOH in the community PPT. Your comments on each should be well thought-out and go</p>	

	beyond 'good job', 'nice photos' and 'I like your town.' What did you learn and how might you apply it to your practice and future learning?	
<b>Total 100%</b>	<b>XXXXX</b>	

**ASSIGNMENT IDEA: Minor Social Determinant of Health Project/Service Learning Project**

As individuals or even as a small group, we may be unable to make significant changes to decrease poverty. However, we may be able singly or in groups, to impact smaller social determinants of health like diaper need. Read the article “Diaper Need: A Change for Better Health” then develop your own practice-based intervention (e.g., mini diaper bank) to address a minor social determinant of health. You may also consider developing this into a group service learning project.

**Readings and Resources to Explore**

Horowitz, McKay, & Marshall. (2005). Community violence and urban families: Experiences, effects, and directions for interventions. *Am J Orthopsychiatry* Jul; 75(3): 356-68.

Porter, S. & Steefel, L. (2015). Diaper Need: A Change for Better Health,” *Pediatric Nursing*, 3 (May/June), pp 141-144.

Post, Hanten, Li, et al. (2014). Dimensions of trauma and specific symptoms of complex posttraumatic stress disorder in inner-city youth: a preliminary study. *Violence and Victims*. 29, 262-279.

Anna Maria Santiago & George C. Galster (2014) The Effects of Childhood Exposure to Neighborhood and Community Violence: Impacts on the Safety and Wellbeing of Low-Income, Minority Children, *Journal of Community Practice*, 22:1-2, 29-46, DOI:

10.1080/10705422.2014.901271 To link to this article:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2014.901271>

500 Cities project <https://chronicdata.cdc.gov/health-area/500-cities>

Census.gov <http://www.census.gov/>

County Health Rankings <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

Kids Count Data <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/updates/show/127-death-rates-on-the-decline-2016?gclid=CP6Fg4nX9NECFRWBswodHHwKTg>

National Center for PTSD Community Violence

<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/trauma/other/community-violence.asp>

New Jersey State Health Assessment Data <https://www26.state.nj.us/doh-shad/community/>

## **SIDE BAR**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What are some of the symptoms of psychological trauma?
2. How might adverse childhood experiences contribute to adult psychological trauma?
3. How do the psychological trauma-related behaviors affect the individual's physical and mental health?
4. What role does Newark's social and community context described in the case study have in the prevalence of community-level psychological trauma?
5. What role has access to health and health care as described in the case study in community-level psychological trauma?
6. What role have neighborhood conditions and the built environment described in the Newark case study contributed to community-level trauma?
7. How does an individual's psychological trauma create a challenging situation for the family and community?
8. What institutional relationships in a community may impact mental health and well-being? What are strategies to improve these institutional relationships?
9. What federal, state, and local resources are available to improve the physical and mental health of community residents?

Discussion Question 1. What are some of the symptoms of psychological trauma?

Advise students to review the “National Center for PTSD” web site to learn more about symptoms of psychological trauma. Symptoms of emotional trauma may include intrusion, avoidance, negative alterations in cognition and mood, and hypervigilance/hyperarousal.

**(TABLE: Emotional/Psychological Trauma Symptoms; TABLE: Trauma Assessment Tools)**

Discussion Question 2. How might adverse childhood experiences contribute to psychological trauma? What is the role of neurophysiologic changes in behavior after trauma?

Advise students to review the ‘ACES Too High’ web site to learn more about adverse childhood experiences and the impact on adult health and well-being. Poverty is linked with negative child mental health outcomes often depression, oppositional behavior, aggressive behavior, angry/hostile behavior, and impulsive behavior. Exposure to community violence is faced by many urban children. Witnessing violence especially to a family member or experiencing violence themselves deeply affects children. Children who witness violence may exhibit distress symptoms such as depression, anxiety, sleep problems, and impulsivity. Just being asked to retell traumatizing experiences may be retraumatizing to children.

Discussion Question 3. How do the psychological trauma-related symptoms affect the individual’s physical and mental health?

Psychological or emotional trauma may have a profound impact on overall health and well-being. Depression, substance abuse, and psychiatric hospital admissions are linked with poor neighborhood and community environment. Lifetime PTSD prevalence is higher for Blacks with symptom criteria (i.e., hypervigilance, cognition and mood alterations, avoidance, intrusion symptoms) prevalence often exceeding 50%. Exposure to trauma experiences at even at a higher rate for this group. There is no opportunity for ‘post’ trauma as the social and environmental conditions usually persist after treatment is initiated. Consider that psychological trauma, despite an increased prevalence, is not always as well-recognized and

treated in the low-income civilian population. PTSD diagnostic criteria and assessment may not completely elucidate the impact of recurring chronic trauma.

Discussion Question 4. What role has Newark’s social and community context described in the case study affected the adverse experiences, psychological trauma, and behavior noted?

The social and community context includes underlying factors such as social cohesion, civic participation, discrimination, and incarceration. As members of minority populations, Newark residents may have experienced discrimination. As members of the Newark community each has likely had exposure to community violence. Community violence impacts mental health. Inner city youth report high rates of trauma and PTSD symptoms especially intrusion and hypervigilance. If your locale is more suburban or rural than Newark, you may wish to discuss how this impacts your population of interest.

Discussion Question 5. What role has access to health and health care as described in the case study affected the adverse experiences, psychological trauma, and behaviors?

There may be challenges to accessing mental health care especially in communities of color with high rates of poverty. Psychological trauma may align with a lack of trust and exacerbate distrust in institutions like hospitals, mental health facilities, and substance abuse treatment centers. Some therapists may be reluctant to treat patients with more complex mental health disorders.

Discussion Question 6. What role have neighborhood conditions and the built environment described in the Newark case study contributed to the adverse experiences, psychological trauma, and behaviors?

Newark’s neighborhood and built environment are ripe for violence with residential segregation, racism/discrimination, education disparities, high unemployment, poverty, and overcrowding. Inadequate housing, poor infrastructure, and lack of green space impact well-being. Newark is an area of concentrated disadvantage. There is no opportunity for ‘post’ trauma as the social and environmental conditions usually persist after treatment is initiated.

Discussion Question 7. How does an individual's psychological trauma create a challenging situation for the family and community? An individual's psychological trauma may have a negative impact on the physical and mental health, this in turn may affect their ability to parent, work, and neighbor. If a mass of community members is thusly affected, this may change the entire dynamic of an area. Think about the impact one child with learning problems, irritability may have on an entire classroom of students.

Discussion Question 8. What institutional relationships in a community may impact mental health and well-being? What are strategies to improve these institutional relationships? Relationships between public safety departments and hospitals may impact mental health and well-being as there may be a lack of knowledge of resources locally available. Prevention tactics including those that target social determinants of health can produce larger reductions in the overall burden of violence-related psychological trauma. However, limited health resources tend to be invested on the acute treatment side.

Discussion Question 9. What federal, state, and local resources are available to improve the physical and mental health of community residents? Formal resources include: mental health program, inpatient hospital, emergency department, substance abuse treatment, intoxicated driver resource center, police department, outpatient medical care, SSI, case management, medical transportation, SNAP food stamps, and child welfare. **(TABLE: Concrete Resources for Individuals and Families)**

## Readings and Resources to Explore

ACES Too High <https://acestoohigh.com/>

Adverse Childhood Experiences <https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/practicing-effective-prevention/prevention-behavioral-health/adverse-childhood-experiences>

Brain change with trauma <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4o-EXLkA7Y>

Brain model of PTSD <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yb1yBva3Xas>

Center on the Developing Child <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/>

Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc. (2016). Strategies for encouraging staff wellness in trauma-informed organizations. www.chcs.org December 2016.

Honor, G. (2013). Childhood Trauma and Toxic Stress: What the PNP needs to know. Journal of Pediatric Health Care 29, 191-198.

(May 2016). Stress and Complex Trauma issue. Zero to Three.

Dulmus, C. & Wodarski, J. (2000). Trauma-related symptomatology among children of parents victimized by urban community violence. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 70, 272-277.

Gapen, M., Cross, D., Ortigo, K., et al. (2011). Perceived neighborhood disorder, community cohesion, and PTSD symptoms among low-income African-Americans in an urban health setting. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 81, 31-37.

McKay, M., Lynn, C, et al. (2005). Understanding inner city child mental health need and trauma exposure: Implications for preparing urban service providers. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 75 201-210.

National Center for PTSD [https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/PTSD-overview/dsm5\\_criteria\\_ptsd.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/PTSD-overview/dsm5_criteria_ptsd.asp)

Post, Hanten, Li, et al. (2014). Dimensions of trauma and specific symptoms of complex posttraumatic stress disorder in inner-city youth: a preliminary study. Violence and Victims. 29, 262-279.

Trauma Assessment for Adults – Self Report

<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/te-measures/taa.asp>

Traumatic Loss Coalitions for Youth <https://tlc4teens.org/>

Seeking Safety [https://seekings.ipower.com/7-11-03%20arts/2009%20implementation\\_guide\\_ss.pdf](https://seekings.ipower.com/7-11-03%20arts/2009%20implementation_guide_ss.pdf)

Smith, J. & Patton, D. (2016). Posttraumatic stress symptoms in context: Examining trauma responses to violent exposures and homicide death among Black males in urban neighborhoods. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 86, 212-223.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration-Health Resources and Services Administration Center for Integrated Health Solutions. "Trauma." Available at: <http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/trauma>.

## Summary

**ASSIGNMENT IDEA:** You may wish to assign the discussion as a group or individual project putting smaller groups together by locale. An interprofessional small group is encouraged to provide multiple points of view and expertise.

You could tell students "**Summary: Application to YOUR Practice**"

Thinking about what you learned over the course of this case study, develop a plan using a social determinants of health strategy to improve mental health and well-being and reduce psychological trauma in your work or home community. Develop tactics that address psychological trauma in the social and community context, health and health care, and the neighborhood and built environment. "

1. Here you might begin with the Friedan framework as a model for strategy development. Ask students to start from the bottom up when considering their strategy: focusing first on socioeconomic factors (e.g., minimum income), then considering changing the context to encourage default healthy decisions (e.g., nearby safe and inviting walkable green space), and lastly, long-lasting protective interventions (e.g., exclusive breastfeeding for six months).

**(TABLE. Population based interventions to improve mental health and well-being and reduce psychological trauma)** (For more interventions information

<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources>)

Encourage students to address each of the SDOH focused upon in this case study:

1. Social and community context - Consider how health concerns are experienced by people living within the context of high poverty and unemployment. Consider how social norms may impact the decision to engage in healthy behaviors like physical activity, immunizations, and breastfeeding.

2. Health and health care - Consider that consumers may face multiple barriers to accessing health care. Consider that using a trauma-informed approach to all institution-based services recognizes high community-level trauma.
3. Neighborhood and built environment - Consider that urban green space in the form of parks, trails, and nature elements has the potential to protect mental health as well as reduce symptom intensity for certain psychological disorders including PTSD. Contact with nature may reduce stress and anxiety.

If you have multiple groups working on their own strategy, ask them to evaluate another groups work. What are the strengths and challenges of the approaches used by each group?

## Readings and Resources to Explore

Frieden, T.R. (2010). A framework for public health action: The health impact pyramid.

American Journal of Public Health

<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2009.185652?journalCode=ajph>

Understanding Trauma Informed Care Fact Sheet

<https://www.chcs.org/resource/understanding-effects-trauma-health/>

Roe, Jenny. (2016). Cities, green space and mental well-being. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Environmental Science. USA: Oxford University Press.