

How Being  
**Trauma Informed**  
Improves  
**Judicial Decision Making**



# **Why Learn About Trauma?**



**Trauma**



**Mental  
Health**

**Substance  
Abuse**

# VIDEO

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Why Learn About Trauma?





# VIDEO

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Why Learn About Trauma?



What's past is prologue





Trauma rates are very high

# National Child Traumatic Stress Network Study

## Justice Involved Youth Age 13-18

- Average number of trauma types—5
- PTSD—24% clinical range
- Academic Problems— 72%
- Substance use— 44%
- Child welfare involvement— 42%
- Age of onset— 1 year of life 34%  
ages 1-5 28%



## National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence

### Youth Age 0-18

- 37% experienced a physical assault in past year, peaks 6-9 (51% over lifetime) B>G
- 5% experienced sexual assault in past year, peaks 14-17 (8.4% over lifetime) G>B
- 15% experienced any maltreatment in the last year, peaks 14-17 (25% over lifetime) B>G
- 25% witnessed violence in past year, peaks 14-17 (38% over lifetime) B=G: boys more likely to witness community violence and girls family violence



## Why We Learn About Trauma

- Develop understanding
- Increase awareness
- Recognize signs
- Learn how to respond

GOAL: Trauma-Informed Responses

- Increase safety
- Reduce recidivism
- Promote recovery

# **What Is Trauma?**





**Event**

**Experience**

**Effect**

# VIDEO

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What Does  
Trauma Look Like?





# VIDEO

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What Does  
Trauma Look Like?



# Traumatic Events





A close-up portrait of a woman with dark hair, looking down with a sad and weary expression. She is wearing a brown cardigan over a red and white checkered scarf. The background is dark and out of focus.

**Experienced as:**

**Threatening**

**Terrifying**

**Overwhelming**

# Pervasive Effects





# Shapes World View:



**Self  
Beliefs  
Relationships**

## What Is Trauma?

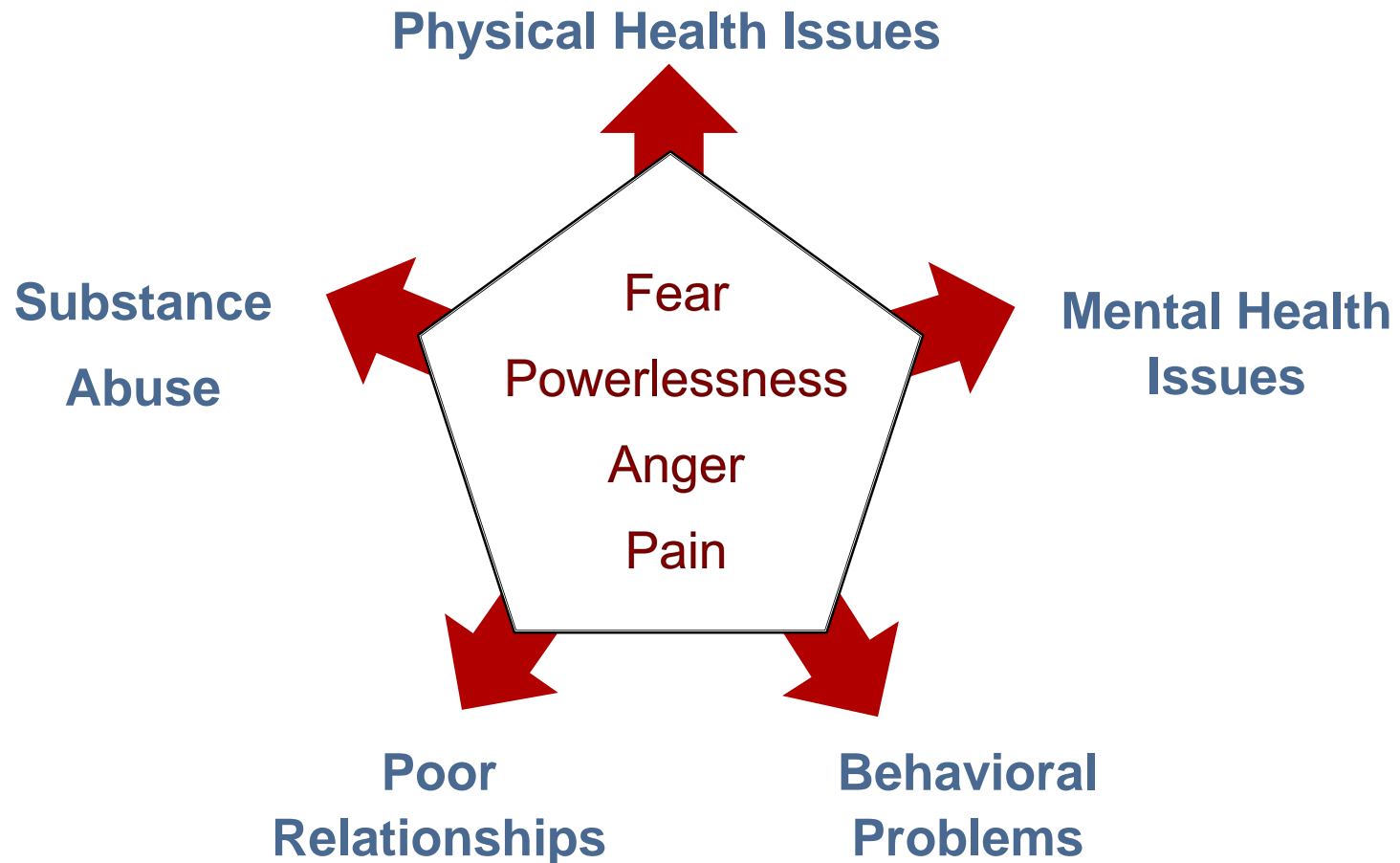
- Event, experience, effect
- Sudden event/ongoing abuse, past/present
- Experienced as terrifying, threatening, overwhelming
- Impact is pervasive and experienced throughout life
- Individualized experiences

*Many people cope or heal –  
others get stuck*

# **Trauma's Effects**



# Long-term Effect



# VIDEO

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The Effects of Trauma



# VIDEO

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The Effects of Trauma





**BEHAVIOR**

**=**

**SURVIVAL**

# **L**earning check

## **Trauma's Effects**

- Trauma can result in adverse health effects
- Symptoms of trauma & mental illness overlap
- Reactions to perceived threats may result in high-risk behavior
- Substance use can be coping behavior

# Individualized Experiences

## RESILIENCE

**Family ties**

**Strong primary relationship**

**Connection to community**

**Employment**

**Biology**

**Meaningful activity**

**Strong cultural or religious beliefs**



## RISK

**Health issues**

**Pre-existing mental health problems**

**Severity of trauma**

**Proximity to trauma**

**Biology**

**Numerous traumas**

**Experiences that diminish coping capacity**



# People *think* differently about trauma

Self-blame & shame

Always present

Push people away & on guard

Fear

Awareness of space

Flashbacks

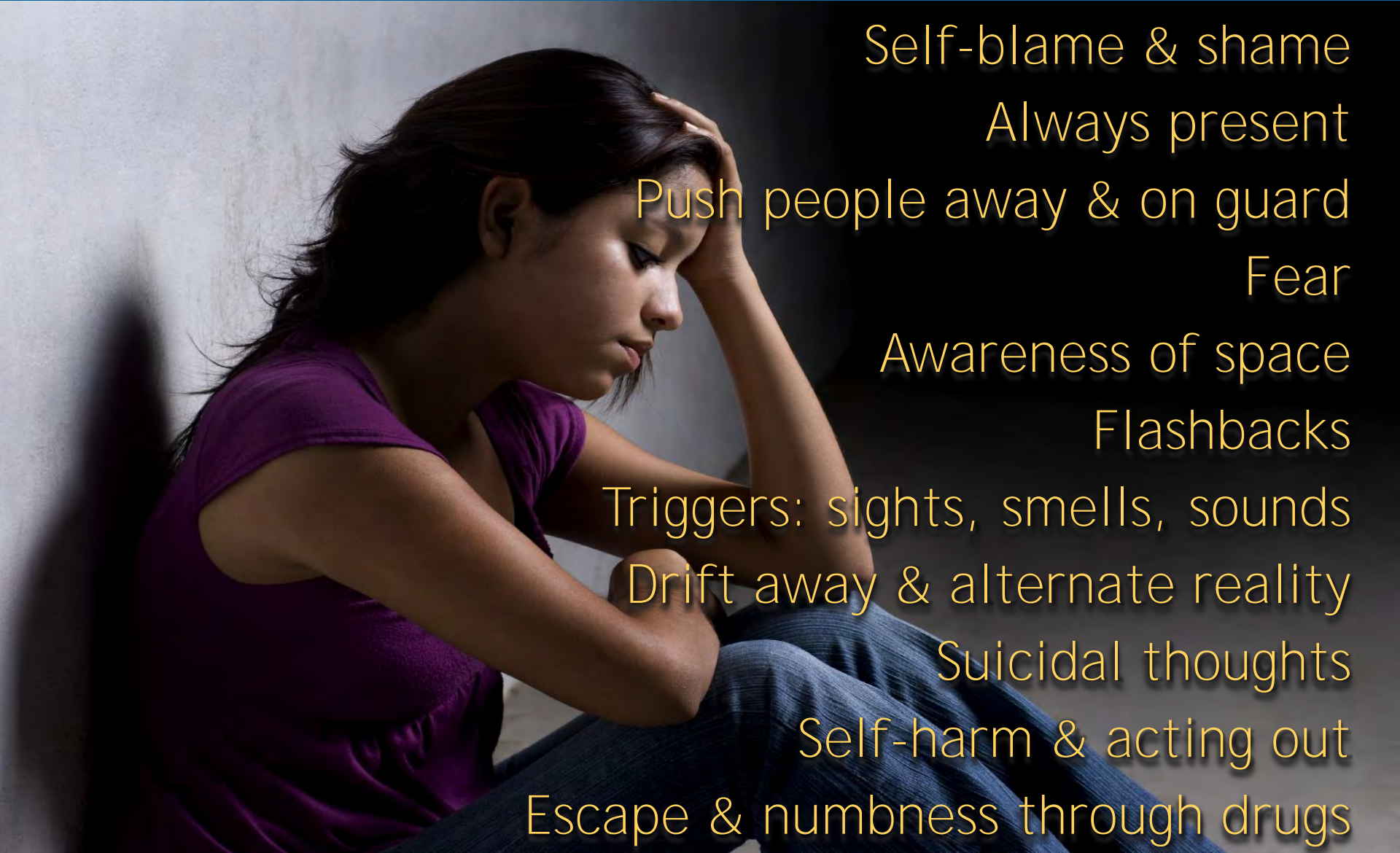
Triggers: sights, smells, sounds

Drift away & alternate reality

Suicidal thoughts

Self-harm & acting out

Escape & numbness through drugs

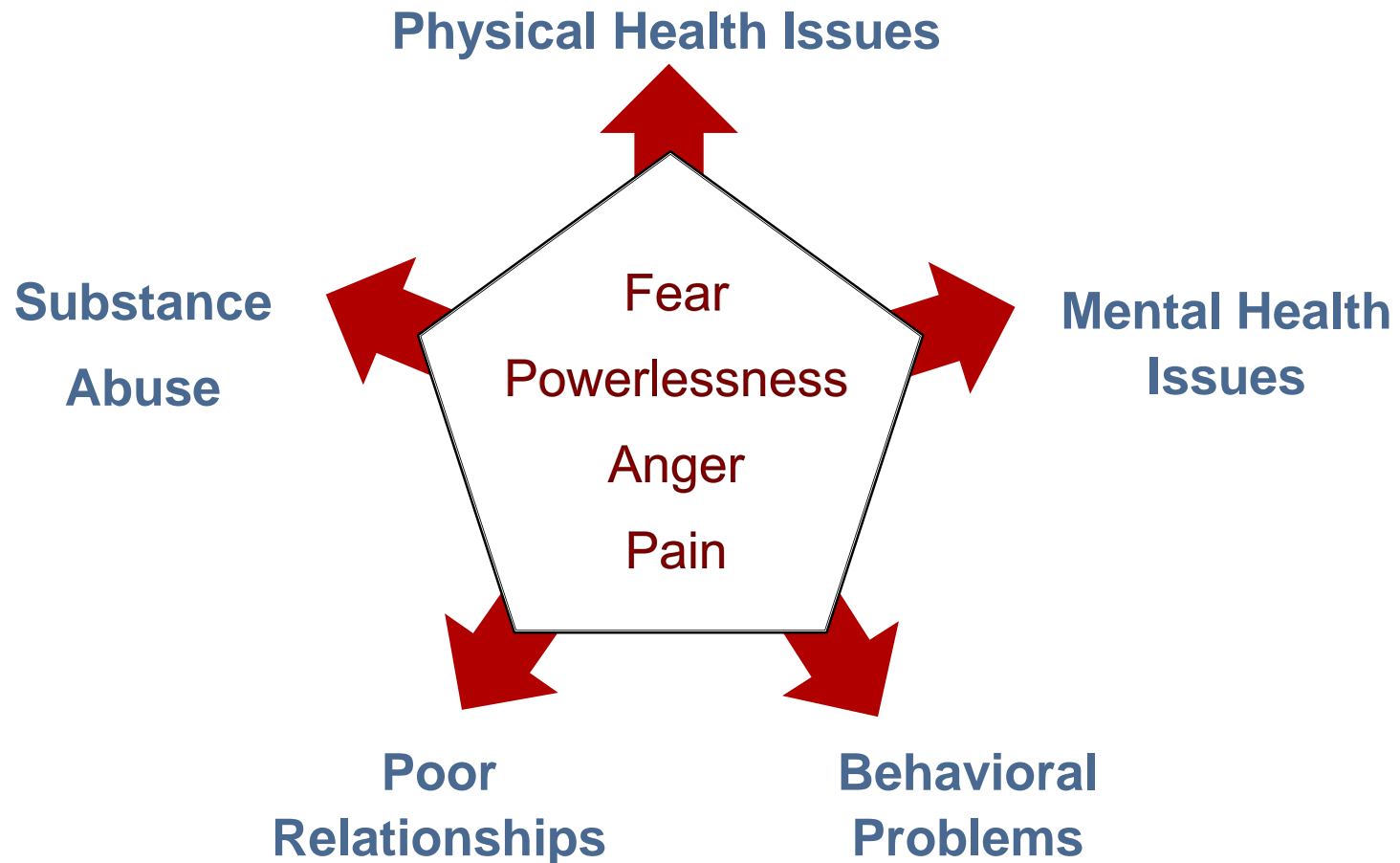




**Circumstances can affect risk**



# Long-term Effect: Summary





# SUMMARY

- Individual differences can affect resilience and risk
- Individualized experiences and responses - each person is unique
- People think differently about trauma
- Circumstances can affect resilience and risk

# **Becoming a Trauma-Informed Court**

# VIDEO

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Implementation of Trauma-Informed Practices





A photograph of a person's hands covering their face, set against a background of a severely cracked and textured wall. The person is wearing a dark shirt and jeans. The overall tone is somber and evocative of trauma or distress.

# IMPLEMENTATION OF TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES

# VIDEO

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Implementation of Trauma-Informed Practices





# **VICARIOUS TRAUMA**





# WHO IS AFFECTED

- Judges
- Attorneys
- Court staff
- Jury members
- Court consultants



# IMPACT WORK PRODUCT

A man in a blue suit and yellow tie is shown in profile, looking towards the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a stone wall and a tree.

- Behaviors
- Interpersonal
- Job Performance
- Personal values/beliefs



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white lab coat, is shown from the chest up. She has her hands pressed against her temples and a pained or distressed expression on her face. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with some foliage.

# IMPACT PERSONAL

- Health problems
- Mental health
- Relationships
- Substance use
- Burnout



# SELF-HELP

# WORKPLACE HELP





# Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach

- Cultural, historical, and gender issues
- Empowerment, voice, and choice
- Safety
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Trustworthiness and transparency

# Guidelines for Implementing a Trauma-Informed Approach

**1**

**Governance & Leadership**

**2**

**Policy**

**3**

**Physical Environment**

**4**

**Engagement & Involvement**

**5**

**Cross-Sector Collaboration**



# Guidelines for Implementing a Trauma-Informed Approach

**6**

**Screening, Assessment, & Treatment Services**

**7**

**Training & Workforce Development**

**8**

**Progress Monitoring & Quality Assurance**

**9**

**Financing**

**10**

**Evaluation**

## Trauma-Informed Courts

1. Realize the prevalence of trauma & why a trauma-informed approach is important
2. Recognize how trauma affects all individuals in an organization, program, system, & workforce
3. Respond effectively & with compassion
4. Resist Re-traumatization

Universal Assumption of  
Trauma

The background features a solid blue field with two prominent orange L-shaped decorative elements. One is in the top-left corner, and the other is in the bottom-right corner. A large white rectangle is centered on the page, containing the word "Closing".

# Closing





**Please complete  
the evaluation form  
at the end of the program**

# For More Information



<http://www.samhsa.gov/gains-center>

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