

- Relational or sexual abuse
- Surviving a natural disaster, war, or terrible accident
- Incarceration or incarceration of a family member
- Surviving gang violence
- Substance abuse or addiction
- Housing or financial insecurity
- Racism, classism, or xenophobia
- Homophobia or transphobia
- Recurring distressing events
- Loss of loved one
- Medical malpractice
- Physically or chronically painful experiences

Different types of trauma:

Trauma and the Brain

Trauma is a full-brain experience involving three components of the brain; reptilian brain, mammalian brain, and prefrontal cortex.

Reptilian brain: Manages bodily function & automatic nervous system (or our fight or flight response)

Mammalian brain: Manages emotions and memories

Prefrontal cortex: Manages mindfulness, cognition, and consciousness



Trauma Responses

Experiencing trauma can trigger the release a variety of different neurochemicals, such as adrenaline, natural opioids, and oxytocin. Each can have a different effect on a trauma-survivors behavior:

Adrenaline: Adrenaline can cause survivors to appear extremely energetic or anxious.

Natural opioids: Opioids can cause survivors to appear confused or dissociative.

Oxytocin: Opiates can cause survivors to appear amused or calm.

Trauma-responses can be complex and varied. However, very few certain trauma-responses are represented in our media and validated by our social systems.

What is trauma?

Like most terms, the meaning of **trauma** has changed throughout history.

- Originally, **trauma** only meant *physical injury*, like a broken bone or brain injury.
- When the field of psychology developed, **trauma** started to include *extreme disturbing psychological experiences*, like witnessing a horrible accident or experiencing a battlefield.
- Most recently, the definition of **trauma** has evolved to include *a multitude of experiences and emotional responses*.
- Today it is recognized that **trauma** is a common experience in our society and is connected to the intersectionality of people's identities.

What is trauma-informed care?

Trauma-informed care (TIC) does not have a single definition, but it is widely recognized as a cultural shift.

TIC is an awareness of the prevalence of trauma in our society, and an understanding that the current systems in place have a tendency to re-traumatize individuals.

TIC recognizes both the clinical symptoms of trauma, and the real-life signs

Some of these signs and symptoms of trauma can be: *anxiety, anger, distrust, hyper-defensiveness or vigilance, substance abuse, extreme shyness, isolation, projection, need for control, disorganization or hoarding, feelings of loneliness or depression, suicidality, perfectionism, aches and pains in the body (or somatization), paranoia, poor memory retention, and many more.*

a queer sex ed community curriculum zine

Trauma, trauma response, and trauma-informed care.

Based on the workshop "Exploring Trauma Reactions, Allyship & Anti-Oppression Principles" by **Ayana Wallace**

A zine exploring the evolving definition of **trauma**, **trauma-response**, and the framework of **trauma-informed care (TIC)**.

How to practice trauma-informed care:

Honor trauma reactions: Our understanding of trauma is far from complete. Whatever reaction or emotion a person is presenting in response to trauma is a **valid trauma-response**.

Advocacy, not rescue: Empowering trauma survivors is key to TIC. Most policies in place today tend to medicalize or criminalize survivors: recognizing these faults and centering survivor's agency and resilience is essential.

Change policy and structures: Re-traumatizing can happen in our current systems because survivors are asked to constantly retell their story, undergo invasive procedures, are institutionalized or reduced to a statistic, and rarely have any opportunity to give feedback or make choices about their treatment. TIC requires changes to these policies and structures.

Sources:

This zine is based off a workshop hosted by **Ayana Wallace**, facilitator and domestic-abuse survivor advocate. The workshop is titled, "Exploring Trauma Reactions, Allyship & Anti-Oppression Principles."

Additional sources include:

"What is Trauma-Informed Care?," by the **University of Buffalo School of Social Work**
<http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/social-research/institutes-centers/institute-on-trauma-and-trauma-informed-care/what-is-trauma-informed-care.html>

"What is Trauma-Informed Care?," by **Trauma Informed Oregon**
<https://traumainformedoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/What-is-Trauma-Informed-Care.pdf>