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Agenda

- Opening Circle

- Topic: Tune In & Watch Out: Recognizing and Reshaping Trauma in Media
  - Presenter: Marcella Maggio

- Q&A

- Discussion: Shared expertise, emerging issues, challenges, triumphs
Opening Circle

- Please type in your name, agency and location
Recognizing & Reshaping Trauma in Media
In 2010, Marcella Maggio started researching the CDC's ACE study and discovered the link between childhood trauma and adulthood drama (physical, social, emotional problems).

Driven to help people heal from hurt, she shares how to mentor youth and model resilience by being a Trusted Adult.

WHO AM I?

*Survivor*
Adverse Childhood Experiences, Sexual Assault, Teen Dating & Domestic Violence

*Preventionist*
Mentoring Sessions, Interactive-Workshops & Keynote Speeches

*Speaker*
ABCs in Relationships, Bystander Intervention, Mentorship, Resilience & Social Justice
What a weirdo... what’s her issue with media?
Objectives:

Discuss
Short-term & long-term effects of Adverse Childhood Effects (ACEs).

Review & Critique
Media clips & soundbites as traumatic vs. not traumatic

Identify
Strategies on how to respond to trauma in media
What are ACEs?

When youth are traumatized, their brains develop differently to survive. Which means they process reaction times faster or slower or not at all.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) labeled this type of trauma as **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)** & measured it into categories:

- **Childhood abuse**: emotional, physical & sexual;
- **Neglect**: both physical & emotional; and
- **Family dysfunction**: growing up in a household where there was substance abuse, mental illness, violent treatment of a mother/stepmother, a parental separation/divorce, or a member of the household went to prison.
Effects of ACEs

Short-term

• School performance: Suspensions & expulsions
• Impaired learning: Jumpiness, intrusive thoughts, moodiness; reduces ability to focus, organize & process information; interferes with effective problem solving and/or planning; results in overwhelming feelings of frustration and anxiety
• Physical & emotional distress: Headaches and stomachaches; unpredictable and/or impulsive behavior; over or under-reacting to bells, physical contact, doors slamming, sirens, lighting, etc.
• Intense reactions: Thinking others are violating their personal space, “What are you looking at?”; blowing up when being corrected or told what to do by an authority figure; fighting when criticized or teased by others
Effects of ACEs

Long-term

- Alcoholism
- Cancer
- Drug addiction
- Heart disease
- Incarceration
- Liver disease
- Poor work performance
- Intimate partner violence
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Sexual violence
- Suicidal thoughts/attempts
- Generational trauma

“If I ignore my past, I affect my future, and risk recycling ACEs.”
From 2016 – 2019, It’s My Life led 13 focus groups which examined the consequences of exposure to trauma in media, viewing habits, parental monitoring, and self-reported symptoms of psychological trauma, from youth in grades 7–12 in 8 public & court-appointed schools throughout San Diego who completed an anonymous questionnaire during usual school hours.

- The final sample was comprised of 163 youth, ranging in age from 11 to 18 years; 57% female, 34% male, and 9% undisclosed.

- The findings revealed that only 1 in 4 adults know how to identify vulnerable youth and/or normalize conversations about trauma in media, in effort to provide services & support.

**WHAT IS MEDIA?**
“That’s not part of my job.”
What Does Trauma in Media…

…look like?

• Appearance of characters
• Behaviors between characters
• Comfort level of characters in different environments/situations

…sound like?

• Accusations without facts
• Bullying; of any kind
• Carrying on (and on) about the past, or worrying about the future

But MOST importantly…
WHAT DOES TRAUMA FEEL LIKE?

IMPACT OF TOXIC STRESS:

• **Fight, Flight, or Freeze Reaction**
• **Short Attention Span**
• **Difficulty Learning; Struggles in School**
• **Talks about being “bad; good for nothing”**
• **Distrustful of Adults**
• **Unable to Develop Healthy Friendships**

**Triggered**
In times of stress, our heart beats faster, our blood pressure increases, and adrenaline and cortisol (the stress hormone) surge through our system to make us stronger, faster, and more alert. This is our body’s way of reacting to a trigger.

**Supported**
Youth can’t always avoid stress – the loss of a parent, conflict at home, overstimulation – but with the support of a Trusted Adult, the physiological effects of toxic stress can minimize the risk of long-term damage.
24/7 accessibility tempts brains to explore & learn until addicted;

Excessive exploring leads to competition, resentment, anger, aggression & depression;

Pathological envy is quantified through likes & retweets;

Validation – Acceptance – Love; it’s all youth want.

But what happens when they only see what they don’t want?

“The short-term, dopamine-driven feedback loops that we have created are destroying how society works,” Chamath Palihapitiya, former Vice President of User Growth at Facebook

THE DOPAMINE REWARD SYSTEM

MESOCORTICAL
Cognition, Memory, Attention, Emotional Behavior, & Learning

NIGROSTRIATAL
Movement & Sensory Stimuli

MESOLIMBIC
Pleasure & Reward Seeking Behaviors; Addiction, Emotion, Perception
Has this ever happened to you?
“The general public doesn’t understand the appetite women in America have today for all things politics” ~ Samantha Barry, Glamour
Trauma vs. Drama?
Trauma vs. Drama?
Trauma vs. Drama?
Trauma vs. Drama?
“What It Feels Like For A Girl”

[Spoken]
Girls can wear jeans and cut their hair short,
Wear shirts and boots 'cause it's okay to be a boy.
But for a boy to look like a girl is degrading.
'Cause you think that being a girl is degrading.
But secretly you'd love to know what it's like,
wouldn't you?
What it feels like for a girl?

[Verse 1]
Silky smooth,
Lips as sweet as candy, baby.
Tight blue jeans,
Skin that shows in patches.
Strong inside but you don't know it.
Good little girls, they never show it.
When you open up your mouth to speak,
Could you be a little weak?

[Chorus]
Do you know... what it feels like for a girl?
Do you know... what it feels like in this world, for a girl?

[Verse 2]
Hair that twirls on fingertips so gently, baby.
Hands that rest on jutting hips, repenting.
Hurt that's not supposed to show,
And tears that fall when no one knows.
When you're trying hard to be your best,
Could you be a little less?

[Chorus]
Do you know... what it feels like for a girl?
Do you know... what it feels like in this world, for a girl?
The DOPE of ME
Rewarding System?
Stop being weird.
Get REAL & TALK about it... whatever it is.

Listen to Learn by being:

- Respectful
- Empathic
- Aware
- Logical

Speak to Share by bringing the:

- Truth
- Accountability
- Leadership
- Kindness
THE CONSEQUENCES OF LOW LEVELS OF DOPAMINE?

- ADHD
- Addiction
- Alzheimer’s Disease
- Apathy
- Brain Fog
- Bulimia
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- Cognitive Aging & Poor Memory
- Cognitive Decline
- Depression & Hopelessness
- Moodiness & Irritability
- Parkinson’s Disease
- Restless Leg Syndrome
- Social Anxiety
- Toxic Mold Illness
- Traumatic Brain Injury
What are youth asking?
How are you answering?

Do you see me?
LOOK –
• See the person, not “the problem”
• Pay attention to their non-verbal behaviors: eye contact, crossed arms, deep sighs, or complete silence?

Do you hear me?
LISTEN –
• Ask open-ended questions to allow conversation
• Repeat responses back as questions to ensure clarification; motivational interviewing

Do I matter?
LEARN –
• Take notes about comments/behaviors that strike a chord
• Review notes to create follow-up questions
• Check in with them
The importance of talking about ABCs in relationships?

“Did you see/hear what I saw/heard?”

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<th>Awareness</th>
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<td>• The ability to perceive, to feel, to be conscious of events</td>
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<td>• No assumptions, it is known</td>
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<th>Boundaries</th>
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<td>• Guidelines, rules or limits that identify reasonable, safe &amp; permissible ways for others to behave toward a person</td>
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<th>Consent</th>
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<td>• Giving approval to another or agreeing to participate in an act or event</td>
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<td>• Not just “a look”, or expected</td>
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Face-to-Face Time
Sit with youth, without any distractions. No screens, no speakers, no noise but your own voices.

Reality vs. Fantasy
Ask about real-life interests vs. what they’re playing in Fantasyland.

Feeling vs. Reeling
Ground them by modeling mindfulness exercises to support overall wellness.

Rights & Resources
Do they know what to do if something is wrong? Would they know where to go? Mentor them.

Be the Trusted Adult
YOU needed & youth need!
10 Ways to Naturally Increase Dopamine Levels

**Practices:**
1. Exercise regularly
2. Eat foods with tyrosine; protein, bananas & avocados
3. Get enough sleep
4. Meditate
5. Have a massage
6. Pet your pets
7. Music therapy
8. Sun yourself with Vitamin D
9. Stand up
10. Cold showers

**Benefits:**
- Increased enthusiasm & drive to accomplish tasks
- Reduced drug addiction & dependence
- Improved long-term & working memory
- Increased focus & concentration
- Increased creativity
- Improved mood
- Reduced fear
- Increased social bonding & stronger relationships
- Increased pain tolerance
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Shared expertise and discussion

- Current emerging issues?
- Challenges or triumphs in your prevention efforts?
Together we’re stronger

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