Building capacity to address trauma among women living with HIV in Ryan White Part A mental health programs: The role of evidence-based interventions and clinical supervision

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Background

• People living with HIV (PLWH) are more likely to have experienced childhood sexual and physical abuse, other traumatic events, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). 1

• Trauma has been linked to low antiretroviral adherence, increased viral load, virologic failure, and faster disease progression. 2

• In a national sample of women, HIV+ women were over five times more likely to have PTSD. 3 A NYC study found that 37% of HIV+ women reported childhood sexual or physical abuse; as adults, 30% reported sexual abuse and 48% reported physical abuse. 4

• One study found that HIV+ black women who reported victimization were diagnosed with higher rates of AIDS-defining conditions than HIV+ black women who did not. 5

• To address trauma among PLWH, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH) drew from guidelines for trauma informed care (TIC) by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to build the capacity of services to PLWH through the implementation of Seeking Safety and clinical supervision.

Objectives

• Define trauma and understand the principles of Trauma Informed Care
• Discuss the relationship between trauma and poor HIV-related health outcomes

Discussion

Definition of trauma

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically and emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being (SAMHSA, 2014).

Principles of Trauma Informed Care

• Safety
• Trustworthiness
• Peer Support
• Collaboration
• Empowerment and Choice
• Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues (SAMHSA, 2014)

Examples of TIC Approaches

• Asking permission from the individual
• "Is it okay if I give you a hug?"
• Demonstrating empathy and compassion
• "Would you like to share what happened?"

Implementation of Seeking Safety and clinical supervision.

• Develops staff capacity to model the principles of TIC
• Focuses on supporting staff in their personal and professional development
• Creates an opportunity for the prevention of and/or resolution of trauma

Conclusion

• Adopting a TIC framework is essential to the delivery of mental health services for Black women living with HIV.

• A universal TIC approach ensures that staff at all levels have the capacity and support to effectively address trauma experiences among their clients.

References


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