

Historical Trauma, Addiction, and Student Success

Presented by Juan Blea, MA, LADAC

4/05/16

SFCC Mental Health Symposium

Introduction & Gameplan:

- Why am I talking about this?
- Why on Earth would there be a connection between Addiction and Student Success?
 - “Old” Stuff:
 - Locus of control
- What can we do about it?

Main Learning Objectives:

- Time is multi-dimensional and must be recognized as such in both education and treatment practices
- Many people afflicted with various obstacles do not recognize their own strength or capability to overcome those obstacles
- **It's not about fighting Addiction**; rather, it's about rediscovering who we are and how we can participate fully in the greater world and being instruments to help others do the same

3

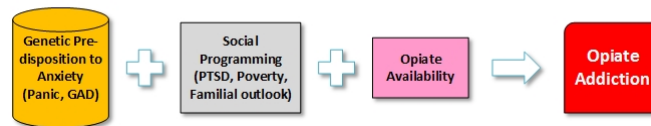
I believe that if we, as treatment providers, educators, and parents learn the context in which we develop our youth, we may find relevant and culturally appropriate ways to both heal and prevent the suffering that we face.

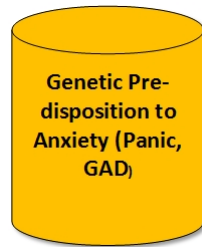
4

I also believe that social and genetic programming in this region has created a community containing “embedded” traumas. This community seeks relief from this embedded trauma through an unconscious drive towards unhealthy behaviors, including opiate abuse. Also, this social and genetic programming has led to generational poverty, which contributes to the region’s struggle with opiate addiction

The Perfect Storm:

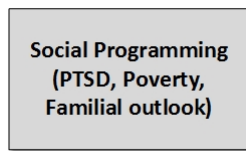
If unrecognized and/or untreated:





There is a growing body of evidence¹ that shows that anxiety disorders are both familial and heritable. That is, a person's tendency towards anxiety disorders such as panic disorder and generalized anxiety is coded into his or her DNA

¹See Kulikova, et al (2008) & Merikangas, et al (2002) for starters



Espanola, Santa Fe, and surrounding areas (excepting Los Alamos) are among the poorest regions in the state. Further, with a high dropout rate and high alcohol and other substance use rate, when coupled with the underlying trauma of the region, the programming is in place to extend the tendency towards opiate use.

**Opiate
Availability**



Rio Arriba County has led the nation in opiate-related death rates for several years. There is plenty of black tar and other heroin types available. In here book, *Chiva: A Village Takes on the Global Heroin Epidemic*, Chellis Glendinning describes the path heroin took to get to Espanola. What's more, Rx Opioids are now the nation's leading substance of abuse and is only adding to the mess Northern New Mexico faces.

**Opiate
Addiction**



Opiate Addiction is a self-sustaining cycle. That is, a person becomes physically addicted, fearful of withdrawal, and then shameful of use. The fear and shame feeds the underlying trauma and maintains itself until death, prison, or both.

“The problem was...a conflict between divergent legal and social values of the two cultures. The Anglo common law at this time emphasized individualism displayed in an adversarial struggle between the opposing parties leading to a decisive outcome, with clear winners and losers. In contrast, the Spanish and Mexican system of justice relied on compromise and conciliation as a means of reaching an outcome where each side got something they wanted.”

--Malcolm Ebright

11

“Times of widespread social change have seemingly always led to some individuals to seek ways of coping that have included ingestion of mood-altering substances when such substances were available”

-- Tracy & Acker

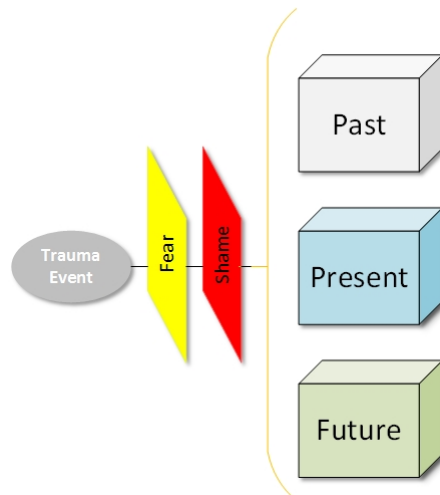
12

“Anthropology has shown how following the life history of a single person can illuminate the complex intimate and structural relations that constitute a life, a community, and a social world”

--Andrea Garcia

13

Time is multidimensional – especially where trauma is concerned



14

“In oppressed cultures, the weight of apparently limitless time hindered people from reaching that consciousness of temporality, and thereby achieving a sense of their historical nature. A cat has no historicity his inability to emerge from time submerges him in a totally one dimensional today of which he has no consciousness. As people emerge from time, discover temporality, and free themselves from today, their relations with the world become impregnated with consequence”

-- Paulo Freire

15

“May we keep telling these true stories for generations to come so that our grandchildren can remember them as they strive to keep their culture alive and maintain for the land the love, respect, and spiritual power their ancestors felt in their bones”

-- Malcolm Ebright

16

References

- Ebright, M. (2008). *Land Grants & Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico*. Santa Fe, NM: Center for Land Grant Studies.
- Freire, P. (1974). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York, NY: Sheed & Ward.
- Garcia, A. (2010). *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Glendinning, C. (2005). *Chiva: A Village Takes on the Global Heroin Trade*. British Columbia. New Society Publishers.
- Kulikova, MA., Trushkin, EV., Timofeeva, MA., Shlepzova, VA., Schegolkova, JV., Maluchenko, NV., Tonevitsky, AG. (2008). Genetic markers of predisposition to increased anxiety. *Bulletin of Experimental Biology and Medicine*, 146, 6, 774-778
- Merikangas, K. Pine, D. (2002). Genetic and other vulnerability factors for anxiety and stress disorders. *Neuropsychopharmacology: The Fifth Generation of Progress*. 1, 867-882.