

# TRAUMA AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

DONNICE E. BROWN  
Out of School Youth Administrator  
Mayor's Office of Employment Development  
City of Baltimore  
Thursday, October 25, 2018



# BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

- ▶ Trauma-informed care involves training first responders and other service providers in behavioral health agencies; the criminal justice system; local, state, and federal agencies; and other institutions in methods that reduce the use of seclusion, restraints, and coercive practices (see [National Center for Trauma-Informed Care](#)). These principles facilitate healing after trauma for a broad array of individuals, including people living with HIV, victims of domestic violence, and youth within the juvenile justice system.
- ▶ Trauma affects the mind and body and requires a multitude of approaches to healing. Through trauma-informed care's emphasis on survivor stories and case studies, neurobiological models of stress, and practical implementation strategies, the Baltimore City Health Department is working with other city agencies to prevent and ameliorate the impact of trauma in our city. This is a critical step in ensuring that our residents are treated with dignity and in lessening the impact of trauma across the lifetime and between generations.
- ▶ In 2015, the City was facing a surge of violent crime. Then Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake & Baltimore City Health Department Commissioner Dr. Leana Wen decided to provide FREE Trauma Training to City Employees.

# BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

- ▶ The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) lead the trainings with support from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) on trauma-informed care, starting with educating dozens of BCHD's own employees who work at STD clinics, on the Needle Exchange Program vans, at senior centers, and in-home visiting programs for pregnant women and children. The trainings were a part of Dr. Wen's public health recovery efforts after the City's unrest after Freddie Gray.
- ▶ Once the program expanded over 1,000 City employees learned how to **RECOGNIZE, UNDERSTAND & RESPOND** to people have experienced some form of trauma
- ▶ Mayor Rawlings-Blake made it a priority to get City workers at **ALL** levels to better understand the residents they serve and why they may be behaving the way they are.
- ▶ 10 sessions were held to train City employees, community church members and non-profits.

# BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

- ▶ The current Mayor Catherine E. Pugh and the City Health Department Commissioner continue to make Trauma Informed Care a priority.
- ▶ Healthy Baltimore 2020 is a strategic plan aimed to improve health disparities and cut by half in 10 years.
- ▶ BCHD identified the following **organizational values** that will drive this strategy:
  - • ***Race, Equity and Inclusion***: It is impossible to talk about health in Baltimore without addressing the significant disparities that exist as a result of structural discrimination, racism, poverty, and historical practices of exclusion.
  - • ***Focus on Well-Being***: As a local health department, they do not merely treat the symptoms of poor health – they will also address the barriers to overall well-being. In Baltimore, this specifically means applying a trauma-informed approach to all that we do, recognizing the cyclical, generational nature of trauma and its impact on both physical and mental health. They cannot provide effective services without acknowledging the role that trauma plays across the life course, and look forward to working with community partners to promote healing and awareness.

# BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

- *Health-in-All-Policies*: They view health as foundational to every issue – unhealthy children cannot learn in school, and unhealthy adults cannot be a productive part of the workforce. As they examine critical issues across the City – the economy, public safety, education – they believe that health should be addressed as a critical driver of each and therefore a key voice at the decision-making table. As a result, the work does not stop at the health department – and they look forward to working together with partners from multiple sectors to realize their vision.
- ▶ Mayor’s Office of Employment Development (MOED) Youth Services division provide trauma informed care training to all staff who interact with youth/young adults (WIOA providers & Youth Opportunity Centers).
  - Hearts & Homes for Youth ([www.heartsandhomes.org](http://www.heartsandhomes.org)) provided the training
- ▶ The Youth Mental Health First Aid training (*coordinated through the National Council for Behavioral Health*) was an 8 hour course that will allow staff to provide initial help to young people experiences mental health problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis, and substance use disorders.