How Having Kids from Hard Places Helped Me Serve Open Source Communities

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How I'm an SME on this…

Trauma and PTSD

Psychological **trauma** is the unique individual experience of an event or enduring conditions, in which:

- The individual's ability to integrate his/her emotional experience is overwhelmed, or
- The individual experiences (subjectively) a threat to life, bodily integrity, or sanity.
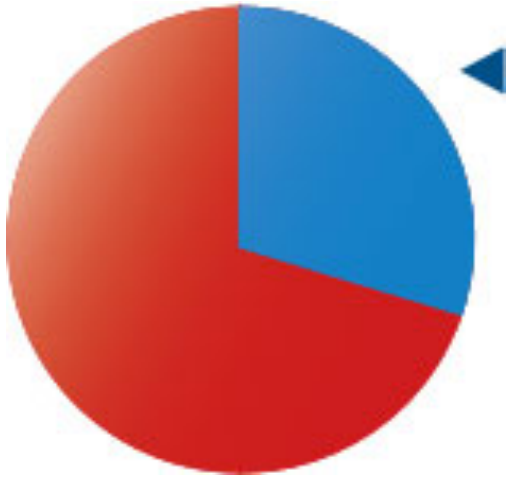
(source
https://www.sidran.org/resources/for-survivors-and-loved-ones/what-is-psychological-trauma/)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a type of anxiety disorder which you may develop after being involved in, or witnessing, traumatic events.

(source
https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/#.W9BDsBNKh_Q)

Some facts about trauma and PTSD

70% of adults in the U.S. have experienced some type of traumatic event at least once in their lives. This equates to approximately 223.4 million people

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Some facts about trauma and PTSD

Up to **20%** of these people go on to develop PTSD. As of today, that equates to approximately 44.7 million people who were or are struggling with PTSD.
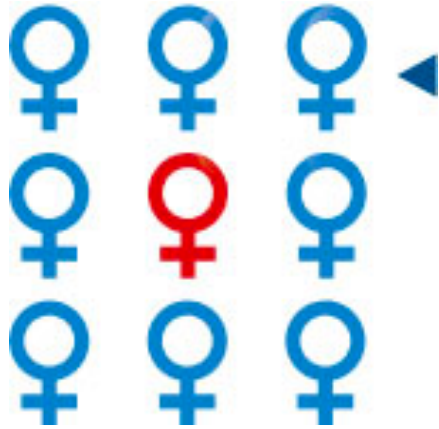
Source: http://www.ptsdunited.org/ptsd-statistics-2/

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Some facts about trauma and PTSD

An estimated **8%** of Americans − **24.4 million people** − have PTSD at any given time. That is equal to the total population of Texas.

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Some facts about trauma and PTSD

An estimated **one out of every nine women** develops PTSD, making them about twice as likely as men.

Chances are pretty good those in your community are suffering from the effects of trauma ☹

Signs and Symptoms

- Physical Signs of Trauma:
  - Unexplained sensations including pain
  - Sleep and eating disturbances
  - Low energy
  - Increased arousal
- Emotional Symptoms:
  - Depression and fear
  - Anxiety and panic
  - Numbness, irritability, anger
  - Feeling out of control
  - Avoidance
- Cognitive:
  - Distraction
  - Decrease in concentration
  - Memory lapse
  - Difficulty with decisions
- Behavioral Signs & Effects:

  - Compulsion
  - Substance abuse
  - Eating disorders
  - Impulsive, self-destructive behavior
  - Dissociation Changes in interpersonal relationships:
  - Isolation, avoidance, social withdrawal
  - Sexual disruption
  - Feeling threatened, hostile, argumentative
- Re-experiencing the trauma:
  - Flashbacks
  - Nightmares
  - Intrusive thoughts
  - Sudden emotional and or physical flooding Co-occurring Disorders

Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

- TBRI® was created by child psychologists Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross, who also co-wrote the popular book "The Connected Child."
- TBRI is a research and evidence-based model of intervention for "children who come from hard places," - referring to children who have experienced early risk factors such as prenatal stressors, a traumatic birth experience, early hospitalization, abuse, neglect or other trauma — many of them common among children adopted from institutions or foster care. These risk factors alter a child's brain development and can negatively affect their overall development.
- TBRI is built on three founding principles: connecting, empowering and correcting.
- Learn more about TBRI and Dr. Purvis's work at https://child.tcu.edu/about-us/tbri/

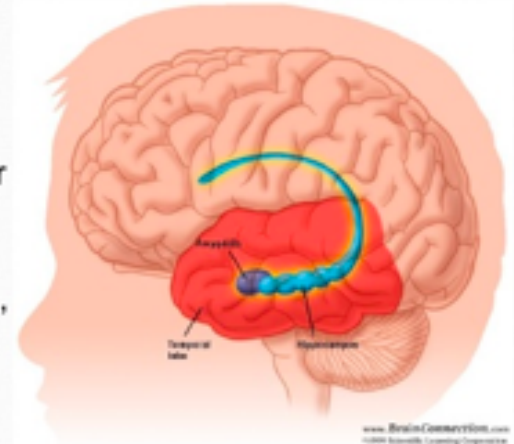THE LINUX FOUNDATION
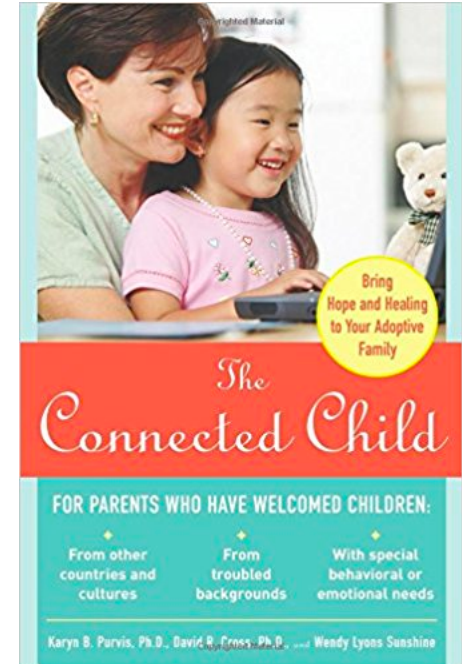
The symptoms aren't really a choice

When one is impacted by trauma, key areas of the brain such as the Hippocampus and Amygdala are effectively "re-wired" to cause a **fight or flight response** to an external stresses on the body.

Amygdala - The brains emotional computer and alarm system

Hippocampus - Brains storage for our most recent conscious memories

**Thalamus** - Translates sights, sounds, smells into the language of the brain

Prefrontal cortex- Where information is used to make decisions about cognitive and emotional responses
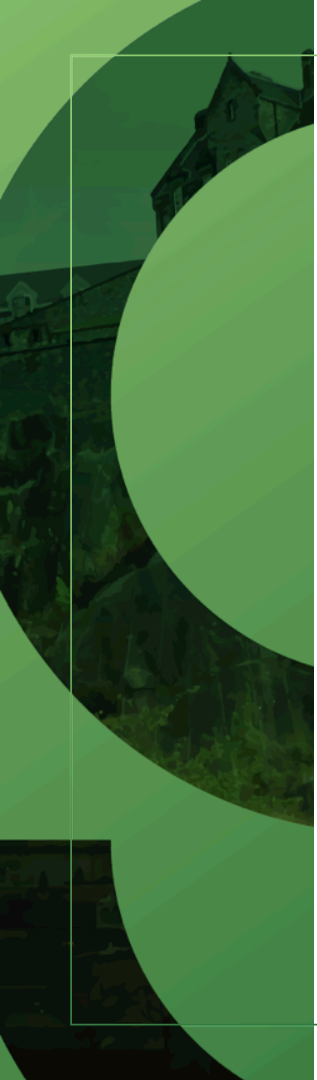
Source: https://pivotaleducation.com/hidden-trainer-area/training-online-resources/trauma-brain-limbic-system/

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What does this mean for the trauma effected person?

- Their trauma disables them from feeling in control of themselves.
- That lack of control exhibits itself in behavior that can be destructive and chaotic
- The result of that behavior is increased self-shaming or denials which feeds into the negative emotional responses
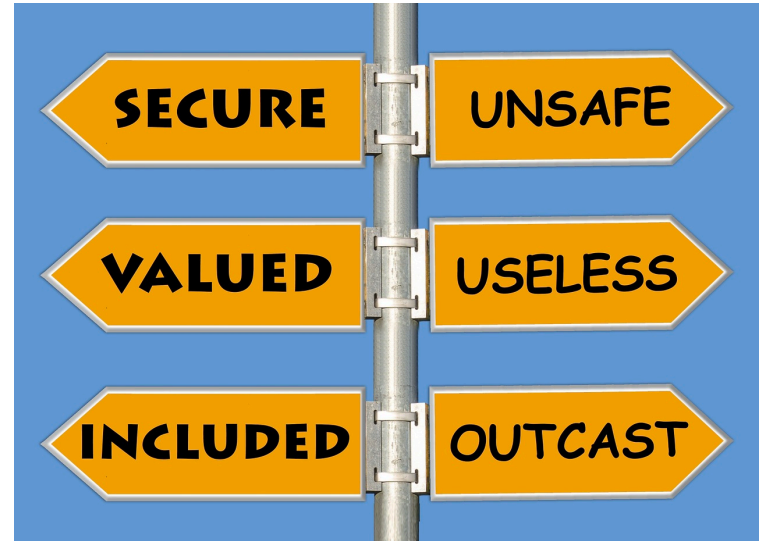
How can an open source community become better with those suffering with trauma?

Becoming Trauma-Informed

According to US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

"A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed:

- *Realizes* the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
- *Recognizes* the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;
- *Responds* by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
- Seeks to actively resist *re-traumatization*."
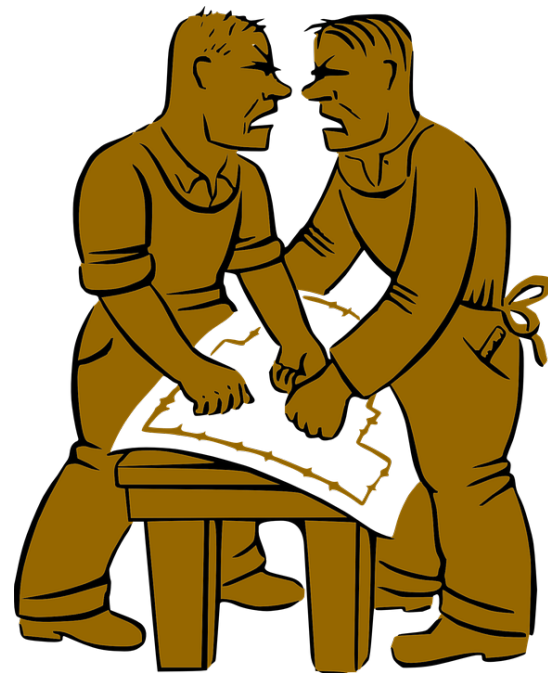
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The project community a safe place

- Establish and enforce a code of conduct
- Have leaders in the community showcase model behaviors
- Handle sensitive/ confrontational issues privately

Safe place

Improving how you engage with people

- Listen more – show empathy

- Shift to using "I statements" versus "you statements"

- Use good compromising skills

Resources

- PTSD United - http://www.ptsdunited.org/
- Trauma-informed approach - https://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/trauma-interventions
- Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development - https://child.tcu.edu/#sthash.eYy0ofU3.dpbs
- Traumatic stress: effects on the brain - https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3181836/

Parting thought

For years mental health professionals taught people that they could be psychologically healthy without social support, that "unless you love yourself, no one else will love you."...The truth is, you cannot love yourself unless you have been loved and are loved. The capacity to love cannot be built in isolation

— *Bruce D. Perry* —

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