

# May Newsletter

## Your Brain on Trauma

### Special Dates

May 16 - TRIAD-  
Woodstock Moose

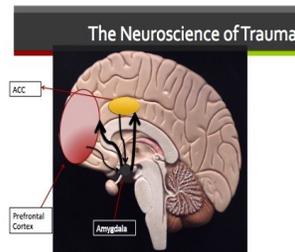
May 18 - Community  
Wellness & Safety Day  
- WWR - 10am-2pm

### Current Needs

- **Liquid hand soap—URGENT need!**
- **Pine-Sol type cleaner.**
- **New Women's underwear—all sizes**
- **Canned ravioli, SpaghettiOs, etc.**
- **Disinfectant wipes and spray**

In the field of domestic and sexual violence, as in an increasing number of other disciplines, trauma-informed care is becoming more widely recognized and put into practice. You might have heard a lot about trauma lately, and that's a good thing; often the clients that we serve have experienced significant trauma, either as adults or as children, so learning about trauma is an important part of our training.

To start, a quick overview of the areas of the brain that are most heavily involved when trauma is experienced:



- **Prefrontal cortex** -The “Thinking Center” - Plans and makes decisions about responses to situations; allows awareness of ourselves and others.
- **Anterior cingulate cortex (ACC)** - The “Emotion Regulation Center” - Handles difficult emotions without becoming overwhelmed by them.
- **Amygdala** -The “Fear Center” - detects danger and activates the nervous system to deal with the threat; stores new threat-related memories.

These three areas normally function well together and balance each other nicely. So what happens when there is a traumatic event? The brain becomes “bottom-heavy”, which means that the lower, more primitive sections become over-activated, while the higher areas are under-activated. Most people have heard of the “fight or flight” reaction; a third reaction, “freeze” is also a common response to perceived danger. When trauma occurs and the amygdala takes over, the prefrontal cortex shuts down, limiting decision-making and language abilities. This stress is then profoundly imprinted on the amygdala, where it may result in a number of different effects.

Folks with trauma often report difficulty with concentration, and attention, and may feel that they are in a “fog”. Survivors of trauma, such as sexual assault, often cannot relate the events in chronological order, and may focus on some specific details, while missing others entirely. Many trauma survivors find it difficult to regulate their emotions, finding themselves to be overly “jumpy”, suffering from panic attacks, and having difficulty letting go of minor annoyances. Sleep disorders are also common among survivors.

In general, traumatic experiences can produce profound and lasting changes in a survivor's emotions, thoughts, and body stress responses; this impact has many implications for a person's health, as well as their ability to follow through on tasks that may be necessary to get the assistance they need.

As advocates for survivors of trauma, it is important for us to recognize the effects of that trauma; we need to individualize the care of our clients in a way that allows them to move through their experience in the most effective way possible.

Trauma-informed care is what we are all about.

## Recap of Events

### Pinwheel Gardens



In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month our staff, board, and volunteers joined with local law enforcement agencies and preschools to “plant” several pinwheel gardens throughout the county. Thanks to all who helped us with this effort to remind our community about the need to ensure a safe environment for our children.



### “Matilda”

Who doesn't love a free movie, right? On April 14, Response, with sponsorship by Dellinger Funeral Homes, hosted the movie, *Matilda*, at the Community Theater for local families to enjoy. Over 80 folks came to the movie! Sabrina Shirkey spoke to the audience about our mission here at Response, as well as the importance of Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The guests were given a packet of information about our agency services, bullying, childhood sexual abuse, etc., and the children received a bottle of bubbles. We were pleased with this opportunity for outreach while providing an event to foster positive, healthy family interactions.

### SAAM



As you probably already know, April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month, a time when we take the opportunity to recognize the prevalence of sexual assault and the long-lasting impact on survivors. It is a time to educate the public and change harmful perceptions about sexual assault, with prevention as the ultimate goal.



If you had a chance to drive by the Chamber of Commerce office, you might have noticed our display for SAAM. The various outfits of clothing, with the words, “What were you wearing?”, aim to get the message to our community that sexual assault happens in all walks of life, in many different circumstances, and it doesn't matter what the victim was wearing. All too often the victim-blaming question, “But what was she wearing?”, is asked as a way to hold the survivor accountable for her assault. Our hope is to help eliminate this particular rape culture myth, as well as to point out that survivors of sexual violence can be any gender, age, or socio-economic status. Please speak up when you hear any of these myths that blame the victim rather than the perpetrator.

## Fashion Show

What a lovely afternoon the fashion show was! From the beautiful decorations, to the delicious food, to the fashionable models and clothing...such a fun event, as well as being a successful fundraiser. Thanks to all who helped or attended...it was definitely a wonderful thing to see everyone work together to help create such an outstanding event!



## Upcoming Events

### TRIAD and Community Wellness and Safety Day

Just an FYI for two upcoming events— TRIAD is hosting a conference on May 16th at Woodstock Moose. TRIAD is a partnership between the Office of the Attorney General, local law enforcement and SAA which hosts an annual conference for seniors 60 years and older. There will be vendors and topics to promote well-being and safety; Response will have a table with information and goodies for the senior folks.

Then, on May 18, we will have a table at WWR at the Community Wellness and Safety Day, sponsored by Woodstock PD and Valley Health. There will be an activity for the kids, as well as handouts about our services for the adults. I'll be asking for some helping hands for this day, so please consider joining us.

### Celebration of Hope

Now that the Fashion Show is over, it's time to focus on the 2nd annual "Celebration of Hope"! So mark your calendars for October 12, 2019 and plan to join us at Cave Ridge Winery as we rock to the sounds of The Foundry Street Project. Watch our Facebook page and website in the months ahead for more info!