

# Trauma Research

A brief genealogy of trauma research

# Beginnings

- 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Century Greek – hysteria
- Combat
- 19<sup>th</sup> century focus on hysteria
- 1980 American Psychological Association, Diagnostic & Statistical Manual-III (DSM) listed posttrauma stress disorder (PTSD)
  - Initial focus on survivors of traumatic & catastrophic stress (victims of crime, war veterans, natural disaster, and eventually specific trauma of women and children)
- DSM-IV-TR (2000)  
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/39470480/DSM-IV-TR>

# Recent Researchers

- Lifton, Robert J. 1950's – 1980's
  - Combat stress, Korean war prisoner trauma, Chinese penal system, survivors of disaster, Hiroshima and Holocaust survivors
- Van der Kolk, Bessel A. (1985). Adolescent vulnerability to posttraumatic stress disorder. *Journal for the study of interpersonal processes*. Vietnam combat veterans 18-20 yrs.
  - 1991 – research on impact of PTSD on central nervous system & lasting effects; 1999- “persistent, profound alterations in stress hormone secretion & memory processing in SS w/PTSD

# Judith Lewis Herman, M.D.

- Psychiatrist, researcher, teacher, professor of clinical psychiatry at Harvard University Medical School
- After 20 years of research & clinical work groundbreaking work: Herman, J.L. (1992). Trauma & Recovery. U.S.A: Basic Books.
- Trauma & Recovery: Restoring connections: Public & private worlds, individual & community, men & women.
- Focus on the hidden trauma of women, tendency to blame the victim & prolonged, repeated trauma

# Complex Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

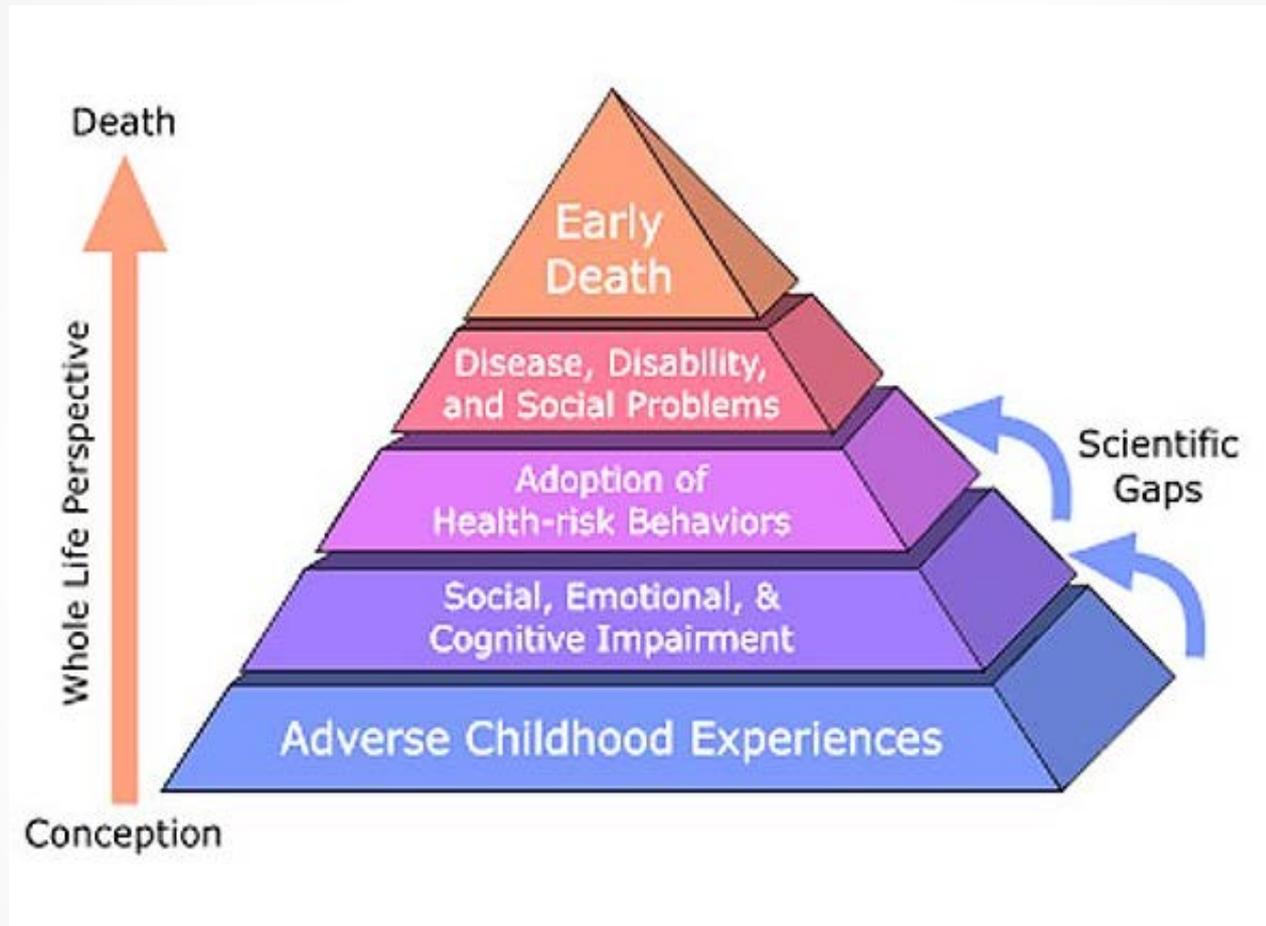
1. History of subjection to totalitarian control over a prolonged period of time
2. Alterations in affect regulation:
3. Alterations in consciousness:
4. Alterations in self-perception
5. Alterations in perception of perpetrator
6. Alterations in relations with others
7. Alterations in systems of meaning

# Healing & Recovery Principles

- First principle of recovery is empowerment, the therapy relationship vital
  - Incest survivor: “Good therapists were those who really validated my experience & helped me to control my behavior rather than trying to control me”
- Traumatic syndromes basic features in common
- Recovery process common pathway
  - **Establishing safety**
  - Reconstructing the trauma story-rememberance and **mourning**
  - Restoring connection between survivors & their community- **reconnection** with ordinary life & community.

# ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACE) STUDY

- Ongoing collaborative study, US Centers for disease Control & Prevention, & Kaiser Permanente, Dept. of Preventive Medicine, San Diego, CA.
- 1985, Vincent J. Felitti, MD, Preventive Medicine specialist – helping obese people to lose weight
- Study of 286 patients found:
  - Obesity shield against unwanted sex, form of defense, unconscious solution to concealed problems
  - Many physically and/or sexually abused as children
- [www.cestudy.org](http://www.cestudy.org)



## **Mechanisms by which Adverse Childhood Experiences influence Adult Health Status**

# Lisa M. Najavits, Ph.D.

- Professor of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine; Lecturer, Harvard Medical School; Psychologist, Boston Veteran's Administration Healthcare System & McLean Hospital.
- Third generation of women in her family who overcame posttraumatic stress disorder. In New York City in 1987, a stranger slashed her face with a razor in an attempted rape.
- The Seeking Safety treatment is based in CBT and psychodynamic tradition, action-oriented & informational. It now has over 10 years of research behind it as is listed in the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs & Practices
- <http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov>

# PTSD & Substance Use

- Ongoing research re: Dual diagnosis, co-occurring dx of PTSD & Substance abuse
- Enduring connection between PTSD & SA (Bolo, 1991; Kofoed et al., 1993)
- Combat veterans, victims of domestic violence, prisoners, the homeless & adolescents have high rates of dual diagnosis (Bremner et al, 1996; Clark & Kirisci, 1996; Dansky et al., 1999; Davis & Wood, 1999; Jordan et al., 1996; Kilpatrick et al., 2000; Ruzek et al., 1998)
- People with dual diagnosis are vulnerable to repeated traumas (Fullilove et al., 1993; Herman, 1992), more so than those with substance abuse alone (Dansky et al., 1998)

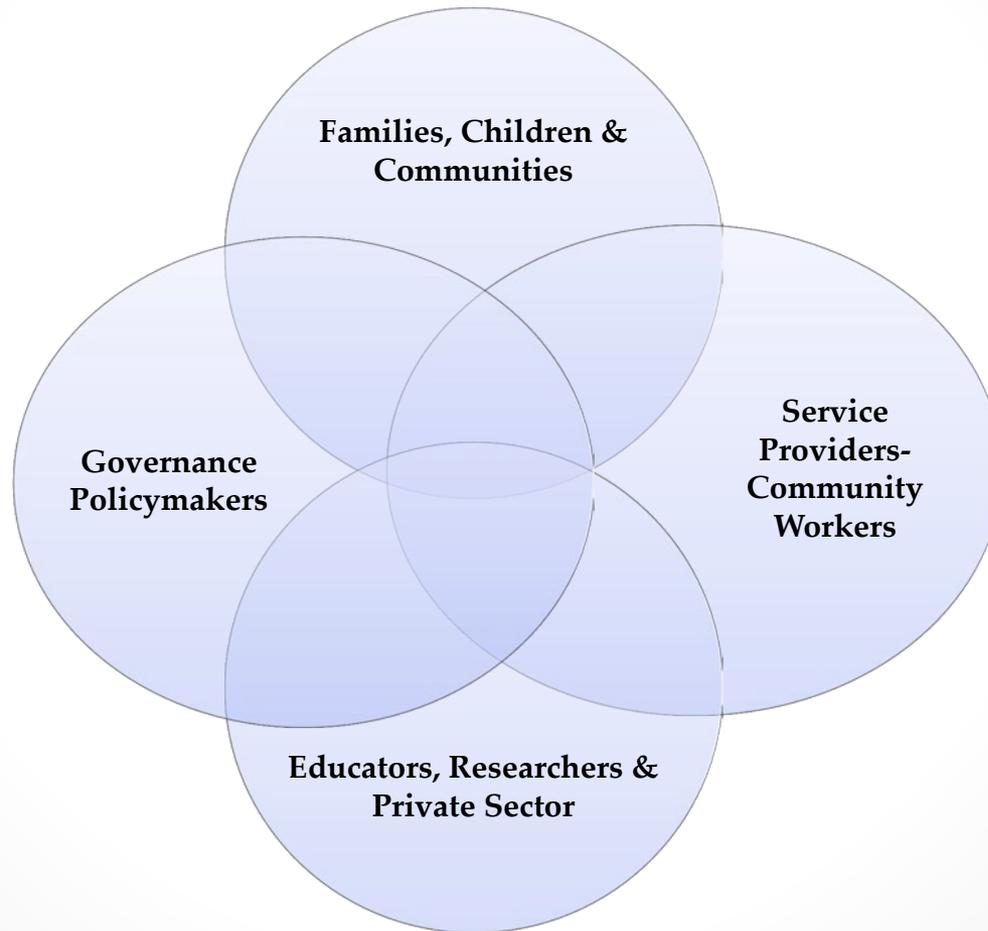
# Adolescents, Trauma & Substance Use

- U.S. more than 30% of children experience at least one traumatic event by late adolescence (Copland, Keeler, Angold & Costello, 2007). UN (2006) reports across the world 80% of children experience traumatic events
- Experiencing trauma at an early age increases risk for substance abuse (Strine et al., 2012; Keyes et al., 2012; Blalock et al., 2011; Peltan et al., 2011)
- Children suffering developmentally adverse interpersonal trauma which interferes w/psychological development & can lead to psychobiological impairments, which may appear to be severe disorders (e.g. bipolar, conduct, addictive dissociative & psychotic disorders) (Ford, 2011)
- Adolescents experiencing posttraumatic stress symptoms utilize substances to regulate PTSD symptoms (Bujarski, et al., 2012)
- Adolescents experiencing PTSD symptoms & using substances suffer psychological and social impairments that may have serious developmental consequences (Giaconia et al., 2000)

# Impact of Research

- Research in trauma impacts treatment modalities, practice, health care policies, funding, public attitudes & more. Examples:
- US Health care systems focusing on comprehensive assessments for more effective, appropriate treatment & cost-savings
- Hawaii: Women's prison, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division, Adult Mental Health Division, Drug Court, etc. moving toward consistent implementation trauma assessments & trauma informed care.
- Consistent research is critical to mitigating trauma and its effects
- Each one of us is critical to research & the process of change-making

# Impacting Wellbeing: Communities, Providers, Research & Policy



# Questions

- What are your concerns about research and evaluation research?
- Where do you see it enhancing your work?