

TRAUMA-INFORMED TREATMENT:

Recognizes the need of survivors to be respected, informed, and hopeful regarding their recovery.

Understands the relationships between trauma and the variety of symptoms of trauma as they may be presented in rape crisis, mental health, and substance abuse settings.

Involves working collaboratively with survivors, their support network and other service providers in a manner that empowers and does not re-traumatize the survivor.

Focuses on individual strengths of the survivor and does not over-emphasize symptoms.

TRAUMA TASK FORCES

Many survivors across New York State have helped initiate collaborative task forces with providers as partners to create multi-disciplinary, trauma-sensitive services in their communities.

These task forces focus on improving and coordinating services for sexual assault survivors, particularly those who have been given a mental health diagnosis. The Building Connections Project supports existing trauma task forces and assists in the development of additional task forces throughout the state.

To learn more about sexual assault trauma, mental health, or starting a trauma task force in your community, please contact:

Building Connections

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The Sexual Assault
and
Mental Health Project

Building Connections

Fostering collaborative initiatives among mental health programs, victim assistance and rape crisis programs, and diverse community partners **to serve and support survivors of sexual trauma.**

NYSCASA
New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
www.nyscasa.org

What is Trauma?

Psychological trauma is the personal experience of an event, such as sexual assault, or an enduring condition, such as child abuse, which overwhelms an individual's ability to process that experience.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

The Sexual Assault and Mental Health Project is a collaboration between the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NYSCASA) and the and the Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. (MHANYS). It is funded by the New York State Office of Mental Health.

OUR MISSION

To provide residents of New York State with **education, advocacy** and **support** to strengthen trauma-informed services for survivors of sexual violence with mental health needs.

We provide **technical assistance, consultation** and **training** to agencies and individuals serving survivors of trauma.

The BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Project advocates for services which are strength-based, collaborative, respectful, and non-stigmatizing.

SURVIVORS OF TRAUMA

▣ An estimated 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience a sexual assault in their lifetime.

(National Institute of Justice, 2000)

▣ As many as 80% of men and women in psychiatric hospitals have experienced physical or sexual abuse, often as children.*

▣ Up to two-thirds of men and women in substance abuse treatment report childhood abuse or neglect.*

*From: The Damaging Consequences of Violence and Trauma 2004, compiled by Ann Jennings, PhD.

Trauma-informed organizations, programs, and services are based on an **understanding of the vulnerabilities** or triggers of **trauma survivors** that traditional service delivery approaches may aggravate. **Services** and programs are designed to be **supportive** and avoid re-traumatization.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS:

Distributes resources on a wide range of topics relating to trauma and people with mental health needs.

Shares information on support groups, trainings, courses and opportunities for professional collaboration in trauma-sensitive skill building.

Offers workshops and presentations to professionals and survivors highlighting the work of the project and community-based trauma task forces.

Builds trauma-informed awareness among mental health staff and other providers.

Convenes two annual statewide meetings for people working with survivors. These meetings foster supportive networking, teach skills and techniques, and enhance professional development.

Creates a semiannual newsletter, available to professionals and survivors, that contains a calendar of upcoming events and resources.