



## **Understanding Trauma: How Do We Strengthen Resilience?**

### *Trauma Sensitive Approaches for Working with Trauma Affected Populations*

Instructor: Senior Program Officer Nina Sughrue

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Trauma affects individuals, families, communities, and nations. Unhealed trauma is a contributing factor to the cycle of violence in communities suffering from intractable conflict. Trauma tends to be the “elephant in the room” that is sometimes ignored because practitioners do not feel confident in their ability to address the needs of trauma-affected populations. By developing trauma-sensitive tools, practitioners can be more aware of trauma behavior, and can therefore be more effective in their professional capacities.

Practitioners working in conflict zones require more trauma awareness, or a “trauma lens,” when working in these challenging environments. Developing tools and techniques to more effectively work with trauma-affected populations, whether it be during interviews or training workshops, is critical for successful projects in conflict zones.

Last, but not least, practitioners need to take care of themselves. Practitioners can experience “compassion fatigue” when working with trauma-affected populations. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that practitioners develop self-care strategies to work healthily and successfully in emotionally challenging environments

Participants will:

1. Explore and enhance trauma-sensitive tools and approaches for working in conflict zones;
2. Discover how trauma affects the body and behavior;
3. Learn from real-world examples;
4. Develop self-care strategies to strengthen resilience and prevent compassion fatigue

NOTE: This is an “introduction to trauma” class, **not** a trauma-healing class.

## **Day One**

9:00 – 9:30 am	<b>Introductions and course overview</b>
9:30 – 10:15 am	<b>Trauma and resilience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is trauma? What are the different levels of trauma? Why does this matter?</li> <li>• What is resilience? Why is this important?</li> </ul>
10:15-10:30 am	<b>Professional self-reflection exercise</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual work on your experience with, or in situations with, potentially traumatized populations</li> </ul>
10:30 – 10:45 am	<b>Break</b>
10:45 – 11:00 am	<b>Professional self-assessment exercise debrief</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with your neighbor</li> <li>• Group discussion</li> </ul>
11:00-12:30 pm	<b>Why don't we just get over it?</b> <i>Guest Speaker:</i> Elaine Barge, STAR Program Director, Eastern Mennonite University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Flight or fight or freeze” response</li> <li>• What happens in the brain during a trauma? How does this affect you and influence your field work?</li> </ul>
12:30-1:30 pm	<b>Lunch</b>
1:30 – 2:30 pm	<b>Why don't we just get over it? (cont.)</b> <i>Guest Speaker:</i> Elaine Barge, STAR Program Director, Eastern Mennonite University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flight or fight or freeze response</li> <li>• What happens in the brain during a trauma? How does this affect you and influence your field work?</li> </ul>
2:30 – 2:45 pm	<b>Break</b>
2:45 – 4:30 pm	<b>Individual resilience and self-care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Self-care strategies</li> </ul>

**Day Two**

9:00 – 9:15 am	<b>Review of day one</b>
9:15 – 10:30 am	<b>Trauma-sensitive skills building: do no harm</b> <i>Guest Speaker:</i> Ann Marie Willhoite, International Clinical Advisor, The Center for Victims of Torture <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lessons from the field: trauma-sensitive tools</li></ul>
10:30 – 10:45 am	<b>Break</b>
10:45 – 12:30 am	<b>Trauma-sensitive skills building: do no harm</b> <i>Guest Speaker:</i> Ann Marie Willhoite, International Clinical Advisor, The Center for Victims of Torture <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interactive discussion</li></ul>
12:30 – 1:30 pm	<b>Lunch</b>
1:30-2:30 pm	<b>Community resilience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What contributes to community resilience?</li><li>• How do you recognize and incorporate this in your work?</li></ul>
2:30 – 3:15 pm	<b>Contemporary trends: the body keeps score</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interactive presentation and discussion</li></ul>
3:15-3:30 pm	<b>Break</b>
3:30-4:15 pm	<b>Contemporary trends: the body keeps score (cont.)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion</li><li>• Exercise</li></ul>
4:15-5:00 pm	<b>Wrap-up, evaluations, certificates</b>