



# What happened to you? Moving beyond blaming the body

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# We do not exist in vacuums

- People suffer for a reason
- Trauma and adversity
- How do you define trauma?



# “Trauma” often invisible

Gaslighting

Microaggressions

Low-income in a rich environment

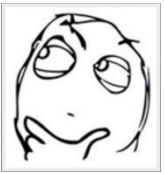
Emotional manipulation

Lack of autonomy

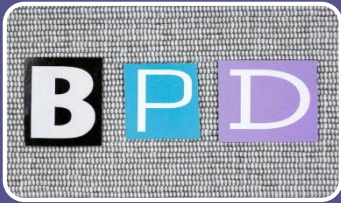
Emotional neglect

Chronic oppression

Parent/child role-reversal



# Trauma in “mental illness”



## Borderline Personality Disorder

- 80-90% report overt trauma
- Almost exclusively women, often little more than an epithet



## Schizophrenia

- Predicted by being Black, discrimination, poverty
- Most likely to minimize previous harm and pain
- Severe abuse 48.4 times more likely to get diagnosed



## Depression

- Child abuse differentiates psychotic depression
- Trauma leads to “treatment resistant”



## Bipolar Disorder

- Developmental trauma = impulse control, lack of emotion regulation
- Mania most closely associated with child abuse, especially emotional abuse
- 28% of women experienced sexual abuse involving bodily contact

# Trauma rarely assessed

- Up to 93% of hospitalized adolescents report overt trauma, such as abuse
  - 32% meet full criteria for PTSD
  - Almost 50% of females hospitalized victims of sexual abuse
- Foster care children account for 41% of Medicaid mental health users and 27% of inpatient population
  - Prescribed neuroleptics at double to quadruple the rate of non-foster care children
  - Most on 5 or drugs
- Up to 98% of hospitalized adults report overt trauma, such as abuse
  - In general, trauma noted around 50%

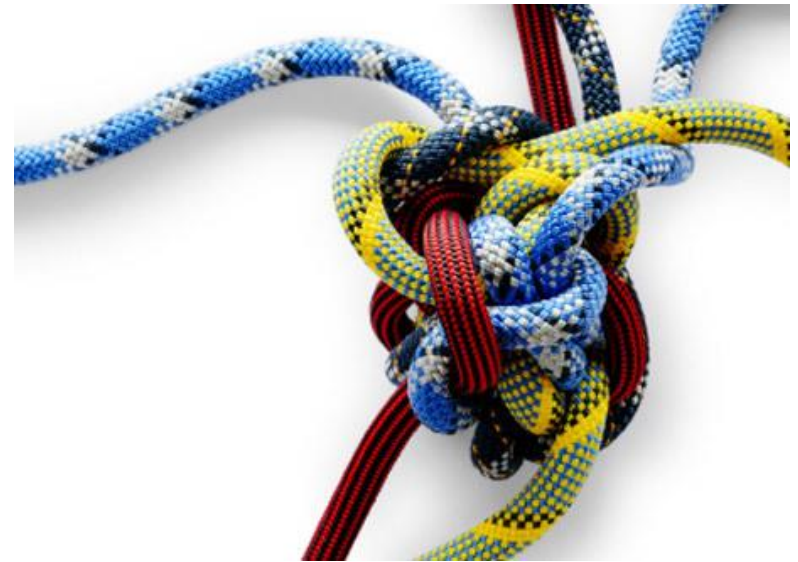


## But what about the brain?

- Not based on diagnoses
- Cannot be differentiated from trauma/stress
- Large areas affected, non-specific
- Drugs
- Difference does not equal disease

# People are complex

- Mitigating factors
- Secrets and denial
- Protecting the family
- Shame
- Fear
- Tolerating uncertainty
- Individualized approach -  
takes time to unravel

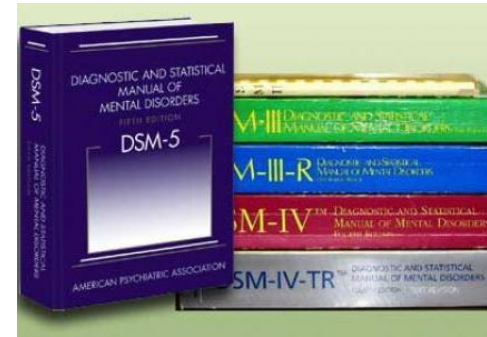


# Clinician's family dynamics

- What led you into this field?
- Whose needs are being fulfilled?
- Providing what someone needs vs. needing to be helpful
- The role of the rescuer
- Unhealed wounds
- Acknowledging privilege



# On Diagnoses



- Need to recognize pain as not a character or moral flaw
- Medicalized paradigm
- Lack validity and reliability
- Can alter identity and sense of agency/hope
- Confirmation and expectation biases
- Increased suicidality
- Shifts focus from what happened to what's wrong



## What helps?

- Grounding/calming techniques
- Relationship
- Compassion
- Forgiveness
- Validation
- Hope
- Collaboration
- Respect for subjectivity
- Balance of pushing vs. support
- Alternative ways to communicate
- Coping tools
- Helping others
- Finding meaning/purpose