

Trauma Inquiry and Response in Perinatal Settings: An Application of TRIADS

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Background & Significance

Background:

- Lifetime experience of trauma, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), intimate partner violence (IPV), racism, and obstetric trauma, has a cyclical impact on perinatal health outcomes.
- Trauma is associated with a variety of reproductive health risks, including increased risk of amenorrhea and infertility, complicated birth, and pregnancy loss.¹
- In the perinatal period, trauma increases the risk for:²⁻⁵



pre- and postnatal depression
smoking rates during pregnancy
emotional, physical and sexual abuse during pregnancy
preterm birth
hypertensive disorders of pregnancy
stressful birth experiences
insecure infant attachment
breastfeeding difficulties

- The Trauma and Resilience-informed Inquiry for Adversity, Distress, and Strengths (TRIADS) framework guides conversations about trauma and ACEs inquiry and response and can be applied to the perinatal setting.

Significance: Although there is a Grade B USPSTF recommendation for routine IPV screening for women of reproductive age, there is a gap in clinical guidelines around other forms of trauma inquiry in perinatal settings.

Objective: To investigate how the TRIADS framework can be applied to perinatal settings to address this gap.

Methods

- Environmental scan of online resources, clinical trainings and webinars, and patient education materials (N=6) were identified through professional listservs and internet searches
- Literature review PubMed search terms included: trauma, IPV, ACEs, inquiry, screening, family planning, and reproductive health (N=43 articles)
- Environmental scan and literature review findings were mapped to the three subcategories of the TRIADS framework:

- Inquiring about Adversity
- Recognizing Signs of Distress
- Identifying Patient Strengths

TRIADS Framework

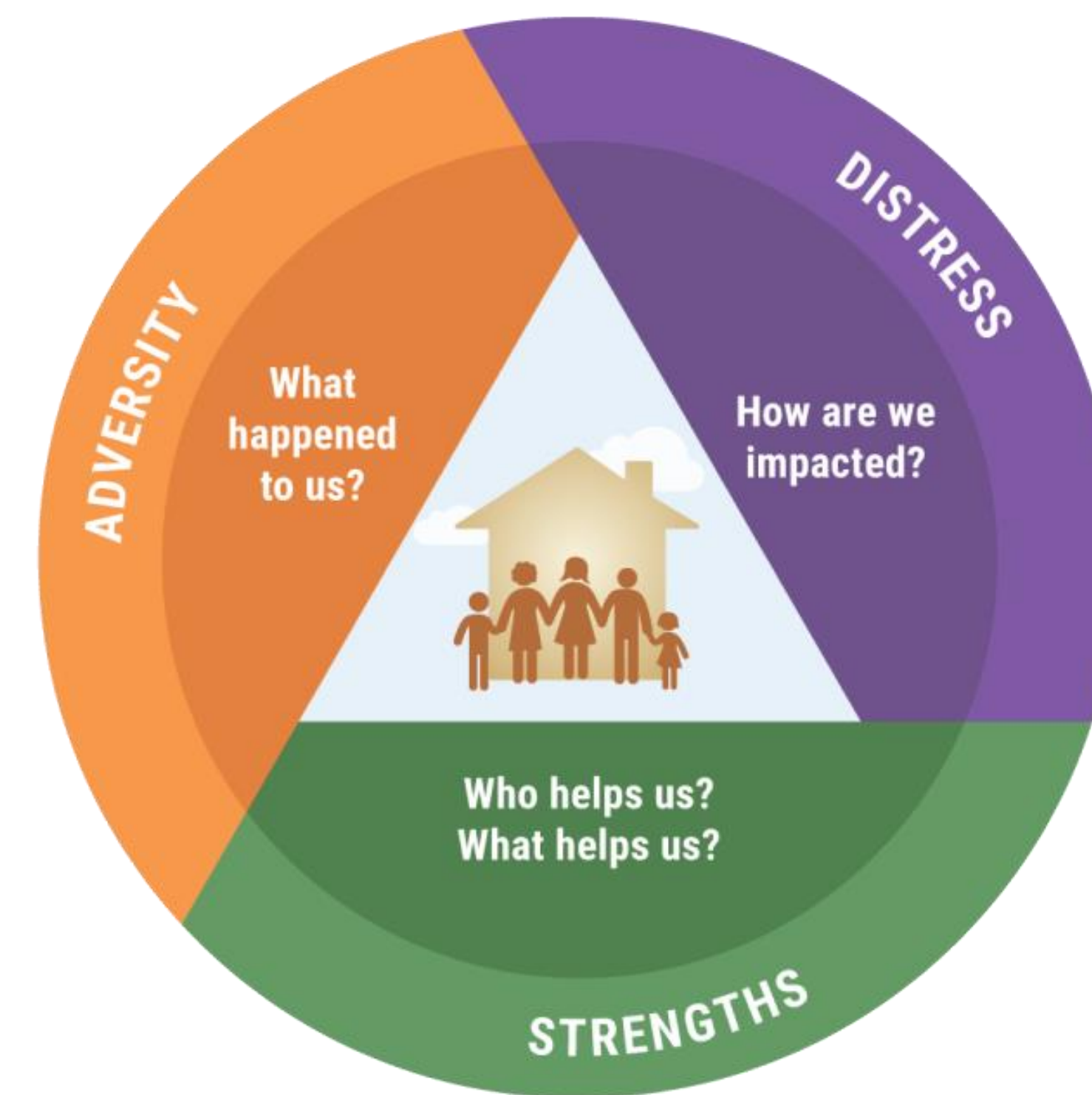


Figure 1: From Lieberman et al. 2020. TRIADS: Trauma and Resiliency-informed Inquiry for Adversity, Distress and Strengths. UCSF Center to Advance Trauma Informed Health Care.

- TRIADS emphasizes an empathetic, respectful, and equity-based approach of addressing trauma.
- TRIADS focuses on three main areas of trauma and resilience inquiry:

Adversity

- Asking with empathic interest about the patient's experiences of adversity and trauma

Distress

- Linking a patient's adverse life experiences to physical and emotional health conditions, including behaviors and habits that may be harmful to health, in a supportive, nonjudgmental manner

Strengths

- Guiding the patient to identify personal characteristics, relationships, or community resources that provide support and enhance wellbeing

Results

Adversity

- Adversity and trauma are common, and it is helpful to normalize inquiry in healthcare settings.
- Patients prefer to complete screening in private spaces like exam rooms.⁶
- Screening can be done verbally, on paper, or electronically and in combination with other screenings (i.e., substance use).⁷
- If positive screen, minimize the time the patient is waiting in room alone and ask the patient if it is ok for a clinician to talk more about their answers.

Distress

- A history of trauma, including reproductive coercion, ACEs, birth trauma, and racism, has a cyclical impact on female reproductive, physical, and mental health.
- Manifestations of trauma across the lifespan can include PTSD, endometriosis, pregnancy complications, and earlier and worse menopause.¹
- Clinicians who counsel their patients on the impact of trauma on health build better rapport and can promote positive health behaviors.⁸
- Promote safety and limit re-traumatization with trauma-informed physical and pelvic exams.⁹⁻¹⁰

Strengths

- Promote resilience and empowerment by focusing on patient strengths.
- Support patient goals and values by empowering their contraceptive preferences, referring patients to community resources or mental healthcare, and developing safety plans.
- Support patient's coping mechanisms and interaction with their support systems.
- Counsel patients about the impact of ACEs, which can strengthen parenting skills to prevent future generational cycles of trauma.¹¹⁻¹²

Conclusions

- TRIADS is applicable to patient populations served in perinatal settings.
- TRIADS provides a framework to relate prior trauma to reproductive health behaviors and outcomes, as well as focus on patient resilience and strengths.

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