

What is trauma-informed care and how can it help my patients? An introduction for physical therapists and physical therapy assistants

Cristina Colón-Semenza, PT, MPT, PhD Latasha Raineault, PT, DPT Natalee Cifuentes, PT, DPT

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have acute and long-lasting effects on physical, behavioral and mental health. ACEs are prevalent in the US and are highly correlated with chronic diseases and are an underlying factor contributing to a current public health crisis. Trauma-informed care is an approach to healthcare that acknowledges the entire person and their life experiences, including ACEs. Participants will learn how this approach defines ACEs, trauma, and trauma-informed care to improve patient and provider outcomes. Participants will learn about the six core principles of trauma-informed care: safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration, empowerment, humility and responsiveness. Additionally, participants will learn how to identify the signs of vicarious trauma associated with patient care. This presentation will review the evidence on trauma-informed care and provide a practical guideline for physical therapists to use in clinical practice.

Participants will explain what adverse childhood experiences and trauma are and what are the effects on health.

Participants will explain what trauma-informed care is and what the core principles are.

Participants will interpret the available evidence for trauma-informed care in rehabilitation.

Participants will apply initial steps for trauma-informed care in clinical practice.

Participants will identify self-care strategies to use to reduce burnout associated with secondary or vicarious trauma."

1. Ranjbar N, Erb M. Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma-Informed Care in Rehabilitation Clinical Practice. *Arch Rehabil Res Clin Transl.* 2019;1(1-2):100003. doi:10.1016/j.arrct.2019.100003
2. Nation L, Spence N, Parker S, et al. Implementing Introductory Training in Trauma-Informed Care Into Mental Health Rehabilitation Services: A Mixed Methods Evaluation. *Front Psychiatry.* 2021;12:810814. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.810814
3. Randall K, Miller-Cribbs J, Isaacson M, et al. Using Social Simulation to Teach Rehabilitation Science Students About Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Informed Care. *J Allied Health.* 2020;49(1):36-44.
4. Freeman Williamson L, Kautz DD. Trauma-Informed Care Is the Best Clinical Practice in Rehabilitation Nursing. *Rehabil Nurs.* 2018;43(2):73-80. doi:10.1097/RN.0000000000000091
5. Berg-Poppe P, Anis Abdellatif M, Cerny S, LaPlante K, Merrigan M, Wesner C. Changes in knowledge, beliefs, self-efficacy, and affective commitment to change following trauma-informed care education for pediatric service providers. *Psychol Trauma.* 2022;14(4):535-544. doi:10.1037/tra0001083"

Cristina is an Assistant Professor at the University of Connecticut in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program. Dr. Colón-Semenza has extensive experience working as a physical therapist across the spectrum of neurological disorders and across practice settings. Additionally, she is a Board-Certified Clinical Specialist in Neurologic Physical Therapy. She has published several peer-reviewed articles and has presented both regionally and nationally on topics related to neurologic physical therapy practice. Dr. Colón-Semenza's research is focused upon determining best strategies to enhance the use of physical activity and physical therapy in the management of Parkinson disease and other neurodegenerative diseases, specifically in underrepresented groups. She is active in the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) nationally and locally and is the chairperson of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee of the APTA Connecticut and the Neurologic Special Interest Group.

Latasha Raineault is a physical therapist working for Hartford healthcare, managing the outpatient clinic servicing the Hartford community. She graduated University of Hartford with her Doctor of Physical Therapy in 2010. Over the years, Latasha has served as an adjunct professor in the University of Hartford DPT program in the areas of Gross Anatomy, Musculoskeletal Examination and Intervention and Vestibular Rehabilitation. Since 2020, Latasha has been deeply involved in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging efforts at Hartford Healthcare and with the APTA CT and is passionate about health equity in the physical therapy profession.

Natalee is a physical therapist that graduated from the University of Hartford in 2016. She then practiced physical therapy and served as a clinical educator at Gaylord Physical Therapy in North Haven. In 2021 Natalee started working for Hartford Healthcare and is now getting ready to start an orthopedic residency program in collaboration with the University of Hartford. Natalee also serves as a lab instructor for the University of Hartford Physical Therapy and Prosthetics and Orthotics program.