



Trauma informed care/practice for multi- disciplinary teamwork in child and youth advocacy work: The Sapher Model

Dr. Ramona Alaggia

**Margaret and Wallace Chair in Child and
Family**

Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work

University of Toronto

October 2023

Trauma- Informed Practice ...

Is a culture which supports all the people we work with, whether we know of a trauma history or not

Requires environmental systems change

Ensures people affected by trauma are not further traumatized while receiving services

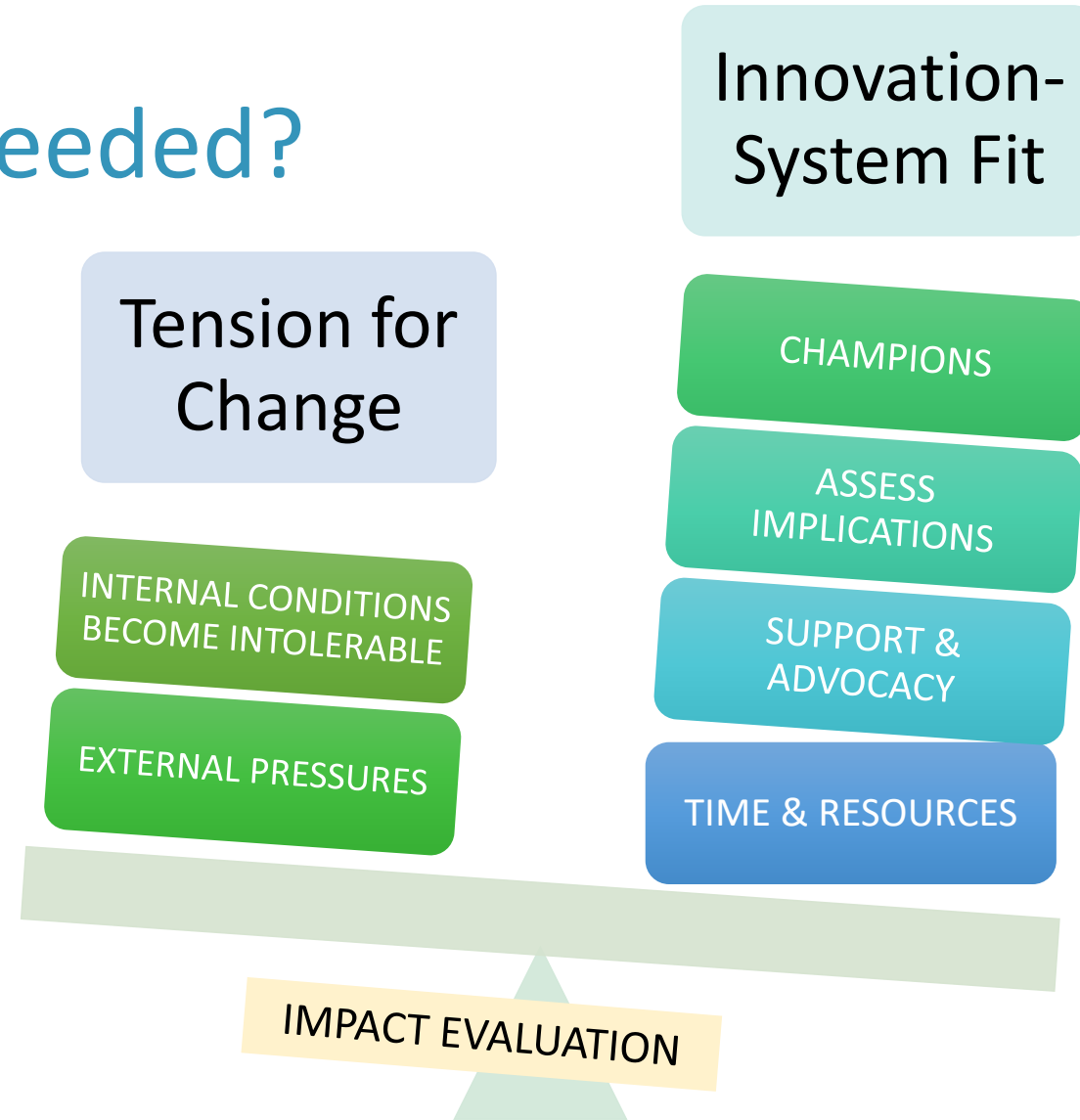
Understands the potential impact of trauma in therapeutic settings and on therapeutic relationships

Creates safety for victims and survivors of violence as well as for workers

Trauma Informed Principles

- Safety
- Trust
- Control and choice
- Collaboration
- Strengths based
- Empowerment
- Transparency
- Intersectional (rights and equity based)

What is Needed?



(Alaggia & Vine, 2015;
Alaggia, Morton & Vine, 2019;
Greenlagh et al., 2004)



The SAPHER Model (Alaggia - in development)

S is for systems change and social ecological approach

A is for 'all hands on deck' -coordinated and integrated response

P is for parents as partners

H is for holistic with the child at the centre

E is for engagement

R is for building resilient systems

Systems change/Social ecological orientation

- Identify all systems in the child's ecology (family, school, community, cultural connections, policies, accessibility, resource availability)
- This forms the multi-disciplinary team –counsellors, health care providers, police, child protection, legal professionals
- Those are all players that will need to be engaged in the 'change transformation'
- Create shared narratives/use language of a transformational journey
- All levels of government involved in most efficient streamlined ways
- Non-partisan issue

All hands on deck

- Full-on, all-out response –i.e., Operation Unicorn
- Policy framework that is ‘actionable’
- EDI focused policies for the most vulnerable and marginalized
- Embedded in integrated children’s rights framework
 - Bill-57 Katelynn's Principle states that children must be at the centre when they are receiving services through the child welfare, justice and/or education systems –their voice must be heard
 - Bill-C233 Keira's law which ensures that judges receive education on domestic violence and coercive control in intimate partner and family relationships so that children are no harmed
 - CYFS Act
 - Convention of the Rights of the Child

Parents as partners

- Family systems work
- Parents come with trauma histories
- Kids want to be with their parents
- Early in-home interventions –evidence based
- Workers skilled in trauma informed engagement
 - Training
 - Sector specific and cross-sectoral training

Holistic

- Child is at the centre –at the heart of all matters concerning them
- All the people and systems in their lives need to be seen as part of the whole picture of the child
- Scottish model of Changemakers; Child Poverty Pathfinders
- Includes social services, school boards, legal systems, law enforcement; recovery counselling workers, health care services, child protection –who are made to have interactions with each other
- Policies and practices for children should be developmentally tailored
 - Recovery work; police and legal responses; health care services, etc.

Engagement

With clients first and foremost -and then also with ourselves across disciplines

We're all in this together for the child –at the heart

Building networks

University of Toronto and McGill University (Montreal) host trainings with service providers since 2016

Facilitator based: KMb expert bringing knowledge to action; Speaker Series bringing leading edge research and practice

Engagement Strategies

Develop **theory of change** and tracking of progress, set-backs & impact (Alaggia, Morton & Vine, 2019)

Identify **engagement** approaches with each sector

Use **participatory methods** for embedding TICP
(Greenhalgh et al. 2004; Walsh et al., 2020)

Conduct **focus groups** with relevant disciplines to establish group norms, TICP definitions; identifying practices already in place; identify gaps in TICP

Identify **champions** -start with them first

Engagement Tips

Start discussions with groups separately, then bring together -i.e., **World Café** model

Hopes and fears to be explored -sparkling moments are shared
Opportunities for embedding and collaborating are mapped out

Barriers are addressed –avoid problem saturated discussions move towards **seeking solutions**

Use **facilitators** -identify and maximize
Victories are celebrated

Develop **training** materials, train the trainers, **network building** and making community where the multi-disciplinary partnerships are knit together – a shared vision with the child at the heart of it.

Resilience building

Build in infrastructure/governance

Build in self-care opportunities

Value and learn from lived experiences (service recipients and providers)

Formalize networking channels

Canadian Consortium on Child Youth and Trauma (home base McGill U)

Partnership of academics and child serving agencies across Canada

Bi-lingual annual Symposium (hosted by Collin-Vezina and Alaggia): Bessel van der Kolk, Bruce Perry, Sandra Bloom; Christine Courtois, Judith Herman, etc.

Youth voices are represented; agency sharing opportunities

ThRiVe labs across the country: *Toronto Trauma and Resilience Lab*

Closing remarks

