

Treatment of Trauma, Abuse and Deprivation

by Bob Rhoton, Psy.D.

Having worked with children and families, it has always been interesting over the years to see what foods they enjoy blending in their act of creating something that they enjoy and that is unique to them. Surprisingly many of these blends can include chocolate and peanut butter as at least two significant ingredients. As part of the professional family that exists in the trauma community, IATP (International Association of Trauma Professionals) and Ottawa University are looking for ways to create a pleasing blend that will serve and create a strengthened trauma community. While chocolate and peanut butter are not part of the recipe, there is still an intriguing possibility to this blending. Possibilities that can expand the effective treatment of all forms of trauma and shorten the time required to grow into efficient trauma professionals.

So what is there to blend? Most readers are familiar with the tremendous work and reputation of the International Association of Trauma Professionals and have a genuine and heartfelt respect for the primary players and the initiatives for improving the quality of treatment available throughout our global community. However, Ottawa University originally based in Kansas since 1869 has had a masters in counseling program in **Arizona** that has focused on Trauma treatment for just over 10 years. Returning to the question of what is there to blend between these two organizations can be a fruitful thought process. What if we could blend academic information and theory with real, applicable hands-on mentoring and tutoring of the trauma professional? What if we could produce healers who understand not only the landscape of traumatic experience, but also understand and can apply the science of clinical work without one overshadowing the other?

There has been a distancing over the last two decades, where counseling programs have become increasingly theory or model dependent, graduating well educated professionals, who sometimes struggle in sitting with those who are in pain, and attending without a personally demanding agenda. While these newly minted professionals possess a tremendous breadth of theory, they are frequently perplexed and even fearful in approaching and engaging the trauma cases they are assigned. This of course has nothing to do with good intentions or a compassionate heart, only that most programs do not adequately prepare the fresh clinician to sit with the painful complexity presented by a traumatized client. Increasingly, it is observable that these fresh therapists deliver treatment as a mechanistic process where a model of treatment becomes the driving force, rather than the individuality and uniqueness of the trauma client. The fresh professional then applies the model without adequate regard to individuality of those in pain and seeking aid. Through this blending of a university and a professional organization, it is hoped that the relational aspects of therapy necessary to be successful with clients regardless of treatment model will be strengthened, and perhaps elevated in both stature and value for those working with trauma.

Since Ottawa University is an unknown to most of the readers, perhaps a little background might be useful. Ottawa has been developing well-qualified, caring and competent trauma professionals for a decade. Upon graduation, the trauma trained counselors are in tremendous demand because they possess a specific skill set that enables them to identify trauma and the impact of trauma, treat and communicate hope and resilience to the individuals and families with whom they work. In addition, they will acquire the basic skills needed for creating a sanctuary clinical environment and trauma sensitive practice management. The Ottawa University Counselor Education

program is both a ground based and online 60 hour program, giving access to those who want to become trauma professionals operating as a counselor. For those who already have a masters or doctorate degree and wish to obtain a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Trauma (CAGS), this is also offered through the Ottawa System. Additionally, programs for education and nursing that also have embedded trauma education are available. If you have specific questions about the **Treatment of Trauma, Abuse and Deprivation** please feel free to email Dr. Robert Rhoton bob.rhoton@ottawa.edu or call 602-749-5159 and leave a message, the counseling department administrative assistants will call you back within 24-48 hours.

Ottawa University is highly involved in the community. Faculty members in the trauma program invest time and energy working with the State of Arizona Department of Health Services, multiple community behavioral health organizations, foster and adoptive parents, and other miscellaneous organizations as trauma consultants. Ottawa believes that it is essential to make a difference in the lives of those struggling with traumatic experiences. The Masters in Counseling for the **Treatment of Trauma, Abuse and Deprivation** is one way Ottawa works to that end. Additionally, it donates faculty time to the support of agencies that need consultation and basic education to increase recognition of trauma. This counseling degree program gives a background and thorough understanding of current theory and research in the assessment and treatment of all kinds of traumatic stress. The trauma concentration allows students to develop understanding and clinical skills for working with individuals, families and groups who are recent victims or adult survivors of violence, abuse, emergency and disaster, loss, and the traumagenic effects of difficult, aversive and stressful childhoods and deprivation.

The courses that are pivotal to the Ottawa University Trauma Concentration are as follows:

- Fundamental Theory for the Treatment of Trauma, Abuse and Deprivation
- Clinical Assessment and the Treatment of Trauma, Abuse and Deprivation
- Advanced Clinical Theory and Application in the Treatment of Trauma, Abuse and Deprivation
- Assessment and Treatment of Child Trauma
- Advanced Clinical Treatment of Child and Family Trauma
- Expressive Arts Therapy with Trauma, Abuse and Deprivation

Additionally, Ottawa offers professional growth seminars for students and the general public. A sampling of the titles are listed below:

- Psychological First Aid
- Trauma Informed Care and the Neurobiological Consequences in Treatment
- Traumagenesis and Attachment
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing
- Forgiving Those Who are Not Sorry or Already Gone
- The Mindful Therapist and the Treatment of Sexual Disorders
- Discovering Strengths and Creating Hope
- Advocating systemically for children and families: working with child protective services, courts, probation departments and school around issues of trauma
- Fundamentals of Sandplay Therapy: Part 1-4

- Trauma and Addiction
- Trauma and Eating Disorders
- Trauma and Compulsive Sexuality
- Engaging Traumagenic Families in Treatment

Look for more information to come forward over the next year as Ottawa University and the International Association of Trauma Professionals navigate the blending of what is hoped to be a cutting edge system of education and integrated effective healing practice for those that are seeking and needing relief from the complexity of trauma in their lives. The blending process has been initiated, so an exploration of what is most tasty to the global community can be more fully understood. Metaphorically, as new flavors and combinations of nuance are discovered it is hoped that the mingled knowledge, skill and talent will lead to the creation of the most effective trauma support and education system for all levels of helpers that has been seen up to this point in clinical history.