

Trauma and Suicide: The Impact of Direct and Secondary Exposure

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Abstract. Various traumatic events have a role in predicting suicidal behaviour. In this presentation we will focus on direct and secondary exposure to traumatic stress, with an emphasis on trauma in interpersonal relationships and trauma related to violent events. More specifically, we will discuss the implications of direct traumatic exposure in intimate-partner violence and of secondary traumatic exposure in gatekeepers working with people who experienced trauma. Exposure to traumatic events can result in long lasting psychological consequences, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety. These psychological outcomes are related to increased risk of suicidal behaviour. The role of mental health problems as a consequence of traumatic experiences in predicting suicide will be discussed in this presentation. We will also discuss the role of trauma in suicidal risk through the

lens of the interpersonal theory of suicide by Thomas Joiner, specifically the role of trauma in the presence of thwarted belongingness, perceived burdensomeness and acquired capability for suicide. Treating trauma-related suicidality often requires approaches helping a sufferer to overcome the traumatic experiences. Thus, we will raise certain specifics of suicide prevention interventions when working with people who experienced or are experiencing direct or secondary trauma exposure.