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Sexual Violence: Changing the conversation on colleges and universities - Russell and Myra Strand, Strand Squared

Colleges and Universities transform people's lives through education and through the wider impact of their research. They help students develop the skills and knowledge that employers desperately need. They stimulate the economy by creating businesses and jobs thus providing a future prosperity. They enrich society in countless ways including through art, music, philosophy and innovation. Each student has the potential to change the world.

That said, it is essential that we improve upon the response to traumatic and high stress incidents. Over the last two decades, there has been an increasing recognition of the role that trauma plays in a wide range of health, mental health and other social problems.

Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Assault, Human Sex Trafficking, Automobile Accidents, Natural Disasters...are all deeply traumatic experiences that can cause severe damage to survivors' physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological well-being. How is a student going to change the world if they are crippled by trauma? How much does it cost a university every time a student drops out of school because they are being stalked or they were raped?

Neuroscience has discovered that when human beings experience high stress and trauma, they often undergo a process that is highly misunderstood by both the professionals responding to them and the victim themselves. We now have information provided by hard science to support the fact that we need change the way in which we respond to victimization and other complex experiences.

Traumatic experiences, particularly multiple experiences over the course of a lifetime, can result in a range of behavioral health problems beyond and including post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, depression, anxiety problems, childhood behavioral disorders, psychosis and some personality disorder diagnoses are all common traumatic responses. In other words, people who have experienced trauma(s) may respond to the experience(s) in different ways and are often difficult to work with. There may be no visible signs, or there may be dramatic responses ranging for irritability, sudden mood swings, anxiety, anger, denial, fear, inability to articulate or to remember- they may be illogical and/or may not be able to practice good hygiene. They may not be able to remember what you told them or to follow even the most basic of instructions.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the difference between cognitive thinking and experiential memory
- Deliver the results of decades of neuroscience research as it relates to traumatization
- Define a newly recognized class of evidence called psychophysiological evidence
- Title IX: campus community sexual assault
- The culture plays a definite role
- Consent and Alcohol: taking on the tough cases
- Who are sexual assault offenders
- Trauma Informed Response and Care is more than being nice and asking open ended questions