

**Topic:** Cornelis Pieterse, MA, full time therapist at Greater Nashua Mental Health Center at Community Council kindly spoke to our group on November 10th regarding PTSD. Following is a list of subject matter discussed:

No one escapes trauma, there are human acts and acts of God.

Trauma is different from other mental health disorders because the onset of symptoms are caused by external events. The question will always remain for some - which comes first, trauma or the mental health disorder?

Duration and intention impact the effects, as well as if someone is a personal/individual target vs trauma visited upon a community or culture, as well as one's age during the experience .

Susceptibility and/or resilience influence impairment.

We discussed the dilemma of someone who is dependent on their perpetrator - how do you recognize your imprisonment, to whom/how/when does one disclose, and what are the far reaching effects on the whole family?

(When a victim reports abuse...) Disbelief cements trauma and often results in a crisis of identity.

Mr. Pieterse made us aware of sets of symptoms: re-experiencing the event(s), sleeplessness & nightmares, and avoidance; and guided us in recognizing disassociation as initially healthy, which transitions into an impediment.

Trauma is reality for some, it is impossible to "just get over it".

We discussed the importance of professional help, and sustaining loving relationships.

***NAMI Nashua wishes to thank Cornelis for sharing his wisdom with us as we continue to look for effective ways to support our loved ones who struggle with mental health issues.***