


Hanna Institute to offer free training on mitigating trauma

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Marissa La Brecque, director of Hanna Institute in Sonoma. (Courtesy of Hanna Center)

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Hanna Institute in Sonoma will be offering a free online training series next month for Sonoma County residents and businesses on mitigating the impacts of trauma.

“Mitigating the Impact of Trauma for You and Your Community” is a four-part series that will be offered by the institute’s Trauma Responsive Sonoma on four consecutive Wednesdays—March 6, 13, 20 and 27 — from 2 to 4 p.m.

“It is a training Hanna Institute created in response to the fires, COVID and violence that have caused community trauma for Sonoma County residents,” said Marissa La Brecque, director of Hanna Institute. “We were selected by our partner organization, Sonoma Connect/Sonoma Unidos, as part of their funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to deliver these trainings.”

Cameron Safarloo, CEO of Hanna Center (which includes Hanna Institute) said that the “good news” is that there are strategies to address trauma in teaching and learning.

“We can use professional development in adult education to teach them,” he said. “Our training model aims first to build an understanding of trauma and then introduce instructional strategies and skill development through scenarios, group work and reflection.”

Rayna Friendly, the training and consulting manager for Hanna Institute, will lead the trainings. She also led the first round of the trainings, in 2013.

“It was well received in the last round,” La Brecque said. “Collective trauma is often unrecognized or untreated. We are passionate about offering spaces to recognize trauma and its effects — and even more importantly, offering the resources and skills to change your relationship to your experiences and connect with others.”

“The name (of the series) may seem intimidating, but these are really trainings to help us all move through feelings, especially those feelings that stay with us and can affect us for years and even through generations.”

Mariana Rivarola will provide Spanish translations during each training and every breakout session will have a Spanish-speaking Zoom room. All materials used will be available for download in English or Spanish.

“It was very important to us and our partners that Spanish speakers do not feel like an afterthought during these trainings,” La Brecque said.

The training is available free of charge to all people who live or work in Sonoma County. Those who do not need to pay \$25 for the series.

“You will find value if you drop in for one session or join for all four,” La Brecque said. “We will cover different information each time.”

Throughout the series, participants will have the opportunity to experiment with different strategies and skills that can help improve their individual practice of self-regulation and resilience as well as promote these qualities within their family, workplace and community.

Part 1, offered on March 6, will focus on “Trauma’s Impact on the Brain, Body & Behavior.” The various types of trauma, toxic stress, trauma-informed care and adverse childhood experiences will be defined.

“We like to start by explaining how trauma affects the brain and body, and how those impacts ripple out in our lives and communities,” La Brecque said.

“Resisting Re-traumatization & Vicarious Trauma,” the basics of traumatic stress responses and the benefits of following Bruce Perry’s Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (regulate, relate and reason), will be summarized during Part 2, on March 13.

“We will talk about how we can move from reactive to responsive in our relationships,” La Brecque said. “When we are communicative with compassion, we build trust.”

Part 3, “Peer Support & Collaboration to Benefit Trauma Survivors, to be presented on March 20, will summarize the basics of traumatic stress responses and the importance of practicing active listening techniques that help to enhance peer support.

“Collaboration and empowerment are the cornerstones of this training,” La Brecque said. “We dive into tools to foster community in all our efforts.”

During Part 4, “Addressing Cultural, Historical & Gender Issues,” adverse childhood experiences, racial trauma, historical and intergenerational trauma and oppression will be explained. Presented on March 27, it will also examine different social norms about trauma and asking for help.

“And of course, we will discuss how we can use our voices to combat these traumas,” La Brecque said.

She said that trauma should be viewed as part of the human experience.

“Studies show that unsolved trauma has a major impact on life expectancy, mental and physical health, and the success of our relationships,” La Brecque said. “The most important things in life can all be improved by recognizing, processing and healing from traumas, big and small.”

Safarloo added, “Everyone has a choice in how they respond to toxic stress and trauma, but to see and exercise that choice, we need to understand what’s happening and healthier ways to respond. Workplaces depend on healthy cognitive function in their schools and communities to succeed with their missions.”

Anyone interested in participating in one or more parts of the series needs to register [here](#), where more information about it also is available.

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