

# Myths and Facts about Aging with Trauma

## 1 MYTH

Traumatic events are rare in the lives of Americans.

## FACT

Traumatic events are common in the lives of most Americans. As many as 90%\* of American adults have experienced a traumatic event.

As many as **90%\*** of adults have experienced a traumatic event in their lifetime

Trauma can cast a **wide circle of impact**, affecting older adults and their families across generations

## 2 MYTH

Trauma impacts only those who directly experience it.

## FACT

Trauma can cast a wide circle of impact. Family members, friends, communities, cultures, and generations can all feel the impact of trauma.

## 3 MYTH

Previous trauma has no impact on people as they age.

## FACT

Trauma can have negative impacts on health and well-being that can last a lifetime. Normal changes of aging can resurface feelings and behaviors associated with previous trauma.

Trauma can impact the **health** and **well-being** of older adults throughout their lifetime

Many trauma survivors **never reveal trauma history** for fear of shame, blame, or embarrassment

## 4 MYTH

It is easy to know if an older adult has experienced a trauma.

## FACT

Many older adults never reveal their trauma histories out of fear, shame, self-blame, or guilt. Screening for trauma is not common among service providers.

## 5 MYTH

There is nothing we can do to help older trauma survivors.

## FACT

There is a lot we can do to help older trauma survivors! Many are resilient and can benefit from empowering services and supports through person-centered, trauma-informed care.

**PCTI Care**, or person-centered, trauma-informed care, can help older trauma survivors

\* Kilpatrick, et al. (2013). National estimates of exposure to traumatic events and PTSD prevalence using DSM-IV and DSM-5 criteria. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 26(5)