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altered.

There is a study showing that people with PTSD have changes in DNA methylation. When the DNA is copied, the sequence remains methylated. That can be passed down (through generations), which is really disturbing.

A.W.: *Why do you say that?*

L.S.: (Those genetic) changes would be passed down to children, who would be much more likely to have personality changes that lend themselves toward PTSD-like behaviors, such as heightened anxiety and depression.

There is a study showing that children of Holocaust survivors all had anxiety and other types of disorders and a high level of evidence that something is being passed down. It's remarkable that this can be passed down. Through how many generations? We don't know. Other parents may not have methylation changes. You would get a correction, but it may take a generation.

A.W.: *The concept of trigger warnings, especially in the context of school, has really become a hot*

button issue recently, and it seems to be dominating public discourse about PTSD. Do you think it is productive to understanding PTSD and reducing stigma around the issue?

L.S.: The research shows that trigger warnings are not really effective. Some things will be triggering or not be triggering. Warning people is not going to stop it from being triggering. People who have been through good therapy have a better understanding, and know how to deal with their triggers. There are strategies that people can use to help them overcome the anxiety. There are so many things to overcome. It takes a lot of time to heal.

If people aren't seeking therapy and if they're constantly protecting themselves, they're going to continue to get worse, not better. One of the therapies for PTSD is exposure therapy. There are other therapies, too.

I do think there is a large proportion of people who don't understand what PTSD is. In the old days, we didn't know, and people did drop out of society. There were people who could have had productive lives and careers and did not do that because they made choices that sheltered them

from what they were experiencing.

A.W.: *Do you think that post-traumatic stress disorder is a public health problem? You seem to be suggesting that.*

L.S.: It is. We have so many children and adults who are experiencing traumatic events in their lives that are going untreated or not getting properly treated. The result is we're going to have a huge population dealing with huge problems. It will cost society - there is the financial cost of having to do long-term therapy for people, and a cost for people who could otherwise be productive members of society who will have trouble getting on with their lives.

There are people who outwardly mask their behavior to get on with it. They're still left with the nightmares, the anxiety, and all the things that will make their life very difficult going forward, including developing depression and anxiety disorders. That's something they're living with their whole life. It's always with them at some level. That's a battle.

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