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. . . SECTION I

CONTEXT

The first chapter introduces the reader to the underpinnings of the conceptual framework of the book. Initially, we report the demographic data related to the incidence of childhood trauma in the United States. We recognize the timeliness of our contribution in developing a practice model for couples and families experiencing trauma, especially since the United States is actively engaged in a war in Iraq. Although emphasis is placed on the legacies of childhood traumatic events, attention is also paid to the effect of traumatic experiences in adult life. The first chapter introduces key constructs of our couple therapy model, grounded in a synthesis of psychological and social theories and attuned specifically to survivors of traumatic events.

Chapter 2 provides a historical overview of the place of trauma in the mental health field. We discuss how sociopolitical contexts influence both historical and contemporary practice issues, and we summarize the development of trauma theory throughout the past century. Finally we review both the historical and contemporary trends of trauma-based work with couples and families.

