Becoming a More Trauma-Informed Organization
Improving Trauma-Informed Care & Services for The Families We Serve

Regions 3 and 4 Conference June 2018

This material was adapted from Diana Autin’s full presentation at the NE-PACT Region 1 Parent Center Conference 2017

What is trauma?

- Emotional, psychological, physical wounding
- Traumatic reactions occur when neither resistance nor escape is possible
What is trauma?

- Traumatic events can be shocking & terrifying
- Can include interpersonal violence
- Trauma often involves betrayal by trusted person or institution
- Trauma can be cumulative

Why do we need to be "trauma informed"?

- Families we work with have faced/face trauma
- Many actions & responses (coping strategies) that seem ineffective & unhealthy in the present are adaptive responses to past traumatic experiences
- The impact of trauma is often experienced across the lifespan & across generations

Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

- Largest public health crisis study examining health & social effects of adverse childhood experiences throughout the lifespan (17,421 participants)
- 66% of women reported at least one childhood experience involving abuse, violence, or family strife
Adverse childhood experience on adulthood

- Adverse childhood experiences determine the likelihood of the 10 most common causes of death
- With an ACE score of 0, the majority of adults have few, if any, risk factors for these diseases
- With an ACE score of 4 or more, the majority of adults have multiple risk factors for these diseases or the diseases themselves

What is “trauma informed?”

- Realizes the widespread impact of trauma
- Recognizes that “symptoms” are often adaptive coping mechanisms
- Resists re-traumatization
- Responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, & settings

Qualities of a Trauma-Informed System

- Intentionality: Action rooted in “knowing”
- Mutuality: Healing happens in relationships
- Commonality: We all have a story
- Potentiality: Healing is possible for all
Trauma Informed Practice

- Reframes the conversation from “what’s wrong with you” to “what happened to you”
- Acknowledges the many pathways to recovery
- Recognizes healing happens in relationships
- Focuses on the person, not the label
- Incorporates an understanding of the impact of trauma on the body
- Creates conditions for safety, healing, recovery
- Incorporates the wisdom, experience & expertise of women with lived experience in all aspects of the work

To See (or Hear) Clearly

- It is only with the heart that one can see clearly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.
  - *The Little Prince*
  - Antoine de Saint Exupery

“Most of your healing journey will be about unlearning the patterns of self-protection that once kept you safe”

Vironika Tugaleva
You work with these families every day…

How do their stories affect you?

How do we recognize and deal with our own trauma?

How can you build in some strategies to help you and your staff?

Objectives

- Identify elements of trauma informed relationships in the workplace
- Identify knowledge, skills and values of trauma informed staff
- Strengthen core competencies for trauma informed staff within our own organizations
Spheres of Influence & Control

What you can control

What you can influence

Everything else

Core Competency Framework

Interconnection of:

We are not what we know but what we are willing to learn.”

– Mary Catherine Bateson
Core Competency Framework

Knowledge is defined as that which needs to be known to be effective. It may be acquired via:
- Research findings
- Study of best practices
- Feedback from peers and program participants

Skills are specific proficiencies and techniques that enable staff to work with efficacy and intention – They are what someone does.

Values are the principles and beliefs that underlie our work. They are made manifest through actions and interactions with colleagues and peers/participants.
Reviewing Core Competencies
“How Do You Know What You Know?”

- Vignettes, Scenarios, Case Studies
- Observation
- Feedback from peers and program participants
- Feedback from Team Members
- Prompts in Supervision
- Self-Assessment
- Annual Performance Reviews
- Storyboards

Supporting Staff Through Change

When moving to a trauma informed organization, staff roles, responsibilities, knowledge, skills, and values are continually
- Reviewed
- Reflected upon
- Revised (as needed)

What does this mean for you as staff &/or as supervisors?
What is your experience with change?

We are In this Together

In Trauma-informed organizations, staff develop intentional working relationships where
- New knowledge
- Practices
- Courage
- Commitment can develop

Adapted from Margaret Wheatley
Cultural Reciprocity

- Recognizes that people process trauma & recovery in different ways
- Understands that recovery happens in relationships
- Requires a sharing of oneself with the person we are seeking to help heal from trauma & develop resilience
- Avoids a “one size fits all” approach
- Believes that each person has it within themselves to develop resiliency…with support

Key Strategies

- Peer support
- Active listening
- Skill building
- Sharing decision-making
- Development of trust
- Recognizing the power of powerlessness, habit, & paralysis
- Replace “fixing” with “facilitating”
- Understand the dynamics of unequal power relationships

Taking Action

- What is the first thing you are going to do when you get back to work?
- Who else needs to be involved to make this happen?
- Who are your allies?
- Who do you have to inform about your intentions?