

USING A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Being informed about trauma

is essential for anyone working with families and individuals. People experiencing trauma in their lives can have long-lasting effects, especially if the trauma was in childhood.

There is a direct link between trauma and physical health. Children with four adverse childhood experiences (trauma) are 12 times more likely to have a long list of chronic health problems as adults than children without trauma. They are also at much higher risk for depression, promiscuity, drug abuse and suicide attempts.*

A trauma-informed approach to care helps shift the care given to individuals that experience these traumatic events.

Anyone following a trauma-informed approach to care:**

1. Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery.
2. Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff and others involved with the system.
3. Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices.
4. Seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.

A trauma-informed approach adheres to six key principles rather than a prescribed set of practices or procedures. **

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and transparency
3. Peer support
4. Collaboration and mutuality
5. Empowerment, voice and choice
6. Cultural, historical and gender issues

Trauma-specific intervention programs generally recognize the following:**

- The survivor's need to be respected, informed, connected and hopeful regarding their own recovery;
- The interrelation between trauma and symptoms of trauma such as substance abuse, eating disorders, depression and anxiety;
- The need to work in a collaborative way with survivors, family and friends of the survivor, and other human services agencies in a manner that will empower survivors and consumers.

**Information from Collaborative for Educational Services*

***Information from the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services/ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*