



Key Assumptions of a Trauma-Informed Approach



1 ACEs and Trauma are prevalent and impactful

- There is urgency because of broad public health implications
- Self care is essential to wellbeing and people with unhealed trauma may have difficulty exercising good self care

2 Relationships are the primary vehicle for harming and healing

- Safe, nurturing, responsive and enduring relationships prevent and/or buffer the effects of toxic stress, foster resilience, and promote healing from trauma
- Systems, organizations and individuals are relational and can cause inadvertent trauma and promote well being

3 The process of becoming trauma-informed is slow and challenging

- It involves changing each person's perspective and the culture of an organization
- It requires both broad and deep transformation
- The change process requires the investment of senior leadership

4 There is reason for hope

- The science of brain development shows us that people who have experienced trauma and ACEs can be resilient and overcome harm

Guiding Principles for a Trauma-Informed Organizational Culture



1. Ensure safety for all

- physical, emotional and relational interpersonal safety are hallmarks of being trauma-informed
- Requires input from workforce and consumers



2. Earn trust – by being trustworthy

- trust each other and work to earn the trust of partners and consumers
- recognize that trauma can shape one's view of people, organizations and systems – to see them as threats instead of resources or support
- share power, be reliable, communicate openly



3. Start each human interaction with curiosity

- trauma is individual – the same situation can be traumatic for one person and not another
- systemic oppression, historical trauma or social injustice may be difficult to acknowledge
- because of their prevalence, it's best to approach everyone as if they have experienced ACEs and trauma



4. Be aware that change is a parallel process

- organizations that change how they interact with employees, can impact how employees interact with consumers, and how consumers interact with family and community
- reflective practice, humility and compassion are essential responses to trauma and support successful transformation for individuals and organizations



5. Seek out peoples' strengths

- individuals with trauma history have developed ways to cope with the world that we may (at first) struggle to understand
- becoming trauma-informed involves a shift in perspective from focusing on "What's wrong with you?" to "What happened to you, and how can I support you?"



6. Engage consumer and workforce voices

- change requires including each member of the work force as well as the consumers' perspective
- since people are the experts on their own lives, allow for self determination through collaboration, mutuality and empowerment



7. Use data to help tell your story

- continuous feedback is vital to understanding what areas of work to focus on and for tracking on the success of changes
- data can support decision making and add depth to the stories you tell about the successes and challenges of this work

