Client-Centered, Trauma-Informed, and Culturally Proficient Practice

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What is Traumatic Stress?

- Overwhelming experience.
- Involves a threat.
- Results in vulnerability and loss of control.
- Leaves people feeling helpless and fearful.
- Interferes with relationships and beliefs.

Traumatic Stress: Review

• Homelessness and trauma are interrelated.

• Trauma overwhelms ability to cope.

• Persistent trauma impacts physical, emotional, relational, and cognitive functions.

• Behaviors are adaptations to past threats.
Impact of Trauma: Client World View

- The world is an unsafe place to live in.
- Other people are unsafe and cannot be trusted.
- The client’s own thoughts and feelings are unsafe.
- Clients anticipate continued crises, danger and loss.
- Lack of belief in self-worth and capabilities.
Difficulties Encountered Within Systems of Care

• Fragmented, unresponsive systems lead to:
  – Long waits and wait lists.
  – Red tape – confusing instructions, lack of information about options.
  – Lack of communication among service providers.

• Re-traumatization: Lack of respect and safety and an absence of control and choice that mimics past traumatic experiences.
Re-Traumatizing Clients

- Re-experiencing original trauma (symbolically or actually).
- Client responds as if there is danger even if it is not actual danger.
- Triggers may be subtle and difficult to identify.
What Does It Mean to Be Trauma-Informed?
Trauma-Informed Services

“Understanding, anticipating, and responding to the issues, expectations, and special needs [that each trauma-survivor may have]. At minimum, trauma-informed services should endeavor to do no harm...”

Trauma-Informed Services

A system “…whose primary mission is altered by virtue of knowledge about trauma and the impact it has on the lives of consumers receiving services”

Transformation at Every Level
Principles of a Trauma-Informed System

- Promote safety.
- Understand trauma and its impact.
- Ensure cultural competence.
- Share power and governance.
- Support client control, choice, and autonomy.
- Integrate care.
- Recovery is possible.
- Healing happens in relationships.
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Putting the Principles Into Practice
Trauma-Informed Organizational Toolkit

- Trauma-Informed Organizational Self-Assessment
- User’s Guide
- How-To Manual for Creating Organizational Change
Trauma-Informed Organizational Self-Assessment

- Translates trauma-informed principles into concrete practices.
- Allows programs to evaluate the extent to which they incorporate these practices.
Applying Principles to Organizational Domains

- Promote safety.
- Understand trauma and its impact.
- Ensure cultural competence.
- Share power and governance.
- Integrate care.
- Healing happens in relationships.
- Recovery is possible.
- Adapting policies
- Promote safety.
- Ensure cultural competence.
- Involving clients
- Support client control, choice, and autonomy.
- Assessing & Service Planning
- Understand trauma and its impact.
- Supporting Staff Development
- Integrating care.
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