



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: One of the areas where organizations can begin a shift in culture to be more responsive to the impact of trauma is through human resource policies and practices, including hiring, onboarding, supervision and performance reviews. Below are some ideas and suggestion for ways to put this into action. Feel free to adapt, modify, and create your own scripts and practices. (TIO, 2014)

Human Resources

Practices to Support Trauma Informed Care in Your Organization

Hiring Protocols

- Resume review
 - Look for evidence in a resume that applicant has experience working with trauma survivors.
 - Look for any documentation of training in trauma and trauma informed care.
- Interview protocol/questions
 - Include statement/orientation to organization’s commitment to trauma informed care, for example:

“One of the things we want applicants for positions at [agency] to know is that many, if not most, of the people who come into our programs have experienced trauma in their lives – often in the recent past, but in many cases going back to childhood. As an agency, we have made a commitment to trauma informed care. That means that all our employees will have or will develop an understanding of trauma and how it affects individuals as well as staff – and also that we learn to incorporate an understanding about trauma into our work with our clients and with each other.
 - Include questions related to trauma informed care in hiring interviews, for example:

“Can you talk to us a little bit about any experience you’ve had working with trauma survivors and your understanding of how their trauma histories affect the capacity to engage in and benefit from services.” [The idea is to gauge interest, openness, and willingness to learn – not to expect everyone to be an expert.]

“Can you point to an example of how trauma may have been at work in an interaction you’ve had with a service recipient in the past (or anyone you’ve encountered) and how you handled that?” [Again, it needs to be okay for the applicant to say I don’t know.]

“Have you had any specific training on trauma services or trauma informed care? What, when, and where?”

New Employee Orientation and Training

- Clarify that the agency mission includes trauma informed care and what that means.
- Provide Initial core training on trauma and trauma informed care within the first three months of employment.
- Provide advanced workshop/training as appropriate.

Regular Supervision

- Include questions/discussion related to trauma informed practice in regular supervision sessions, e.g.,

“Can you think of something you’ve observed or learned about trauma during this period [since last supervision session]?”

“Can you think of a way that you’ve incorporated your understanding of trauma into your work, interactions with clients, or interactions with other staff?”

“What kinds of self-care strategies have you used to manage your reactions to your work and take care of yourself? How can I/we be helpful?”

Case Staffings, Staff Meetings

- Be sure that discussions of individual cases, problems, and challenges include consideration of how trauma might be at work in the situation, as well as how that that understanding might help shift the energy, help in communicating with the client, and help in determining next steps, for example:
 - “So, it sounds like [client] is not showing up for meetings and avoiding staff, acting pretty furtive, maybe using. Can anybody relate that to possible trauma in her life? How would we talk about that with a trauma lens?”*
- Encourage joint problem solving, especially trying out trauma education statements.
 - “Does anybody have any idea how we might be able to communicate with her more effectively right now, given that she’s probably pretty anxious and triggered?”*
- Include staff debrief time and problem solving for self-care needs, e.g.,
 - “How is this situation affecting you? How can the rest of us help? What are you doing or what do you need to do to take care of yourself in the situation?”*
- Avoid asking, “are you okay?” Instead, ask about specific ways the individual might be affected (sleep, mood state, etc.) and be prepared to offer suggestions (time off, change in schedule, etc.).

Performance Review Protocols

- Include review of employees’ progress in developing and sustaining and understanding of trauma and incorporating trauma informed care into their practice/work.
 - “What kinds of things have you learned over this year about how trauma affects the people we work with and our staff?”*
 - “How would you rate your ability to use what you are learning about trauma on a day-to-day basis? What have you done differently as a result of what you’ve learned? Where are you struggling? What further training or support do you need?”*
 - “How have you incorporated self-care into your work this year? What support do you need to reduce the impact on you of vicarious trauma and the stresses of the job?”*
- Provide feedback on employee’s:
 - Clarity and transparency of communication with clients and other staff.
 - Respectful language to and about clients.
 - Ability to bring a trauma lens to bear on challenging behaviors.
 - Ability to talk about agency policies, procedures, and rules in trauma informed language.