



Trauma-Informed Community Network

Part of the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax

Creating Trauma-Informed Spaces

Trauma-Informed Approach

According to SAMHSA's concept of a trauma-informed approach, "A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed:

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; and
4. Seeks to actively resist *re-traumatization*."

A trauma-informed approach can be implemented in any type of service setting or organization and is distinct from trauma-specific interventions or treatments that are designed to address the consequences of trauma.

SAMHSA's Six Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach

A trauma-informed approach reflects adherence to six key principles rather than a prescribed set of practices or procedures. These principles may be generalizable across multiple types of settings, although terminology and application may be setting or sector specific:

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer support

4. Collaboration and mutuality
5. Empowerment, voice and choice
6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

From SAMHSA's perspective, it is critical to promote the linkage to recovery and resilience for those individuals and families impacted by trauma. Consistent with SAMHSA's definition of recovery, services and supports that are trauma-informed build on the best evidence available and prioritize consumer and family engagement, empowerment, and collaboration.

What is an Organizational Assessment?

An Organizational Assessment is a strategic and systematic examination of policies, procedures and practices. An important component of any Organizational Assessment is the thoughtful examination of the physical spaces that we use to offer our services.

We want our facilities to:

- Promote a sense of safety, calming, and de-escalation for clients and staff
- Recognize that there may be aspects of the physical environment that are re-traumatizing, and work to develop strategies (policies, procedures and practices) to manage that
- Provide space that both staff and clients can use to practice self-care
- Keep the safety of both staff and clients/consumers in mind
- Tightly guard client confidentiality

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services*. Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series 57. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 13-4801. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.

