



# Trauma-Informed Service Delivery

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September 29, 2022

# Housekeeping

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**We encourage participation.** Please use the Q/A or chat function for questions, comments, etc.



**This session will be recorded** and posted to the FPWA website.



**You will receive a follow-up email** with the PPT slides, resources, and a short post-session survey. *Please take 2 minutes to complete the survey!*



**Please take care.** This session includes information and discussion about trauma.



## About FPWA

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- **FPWA** is an **anti-poverty policy and advocacy organization** with a membership network of over 170 human services and faith-based organizations.
- We **promote the social and economic well-being** of individuals and communities by **advocating for just public policies** and **strengthening human services organizations**.

## How we support nonprofits

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- FPWA supports nonprofit and faith-based organizations, by **building their capacity** to use a **trauma-informed** and **people-centered approach** to service delivery, organizational effectiveness, and civic engagement.

# Why the focus on being trauma-informed?

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Nonprofit and faith-based organizations play an **integral role in supporting the needs** of individuals and communities.



Often, these **needs stem from** generational, interpersonal, systemic, and/or community **trauma**.



Ultimately, we believe that a trauma-informed approach will result in an **effective and impactful human services sector**, best positioned to serve their communities and **interrupt the cycle of trauma and poverty**.



To **support organizations in addressing both the root causes and manifestations of trauma**, FPWA offers a core set of trainings and resources, focused on trauma-informed practices.

**POLL:**

**Did you attend FPWA's Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> webinar,  
*Understanding Toxic Stress and Trauma?***

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't remember (or unsure)

# Today's Agenda

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**Review:** The definition of trauma and a trauma-informed approach.

**Outline:** Essential elements of a trauma-informed approach.

**Examples:** What does trauma-informed service delivery “look like” in practice?

- *Resource: “Trauma-Informed Service Delivery: Strategies and Actions for Working with Individuals”*

# Definition of Trauma

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“Individual trauma results from an **event, series of events, or set of circumstances** that **is experienced** by an individual **as physically or emotionally harmful** or life threatening and that has **lasting adverse effects** on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”

- SAMHSA (*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*)

# Cont'd: Definition of Trauma





# Definition of Trauma-Informed

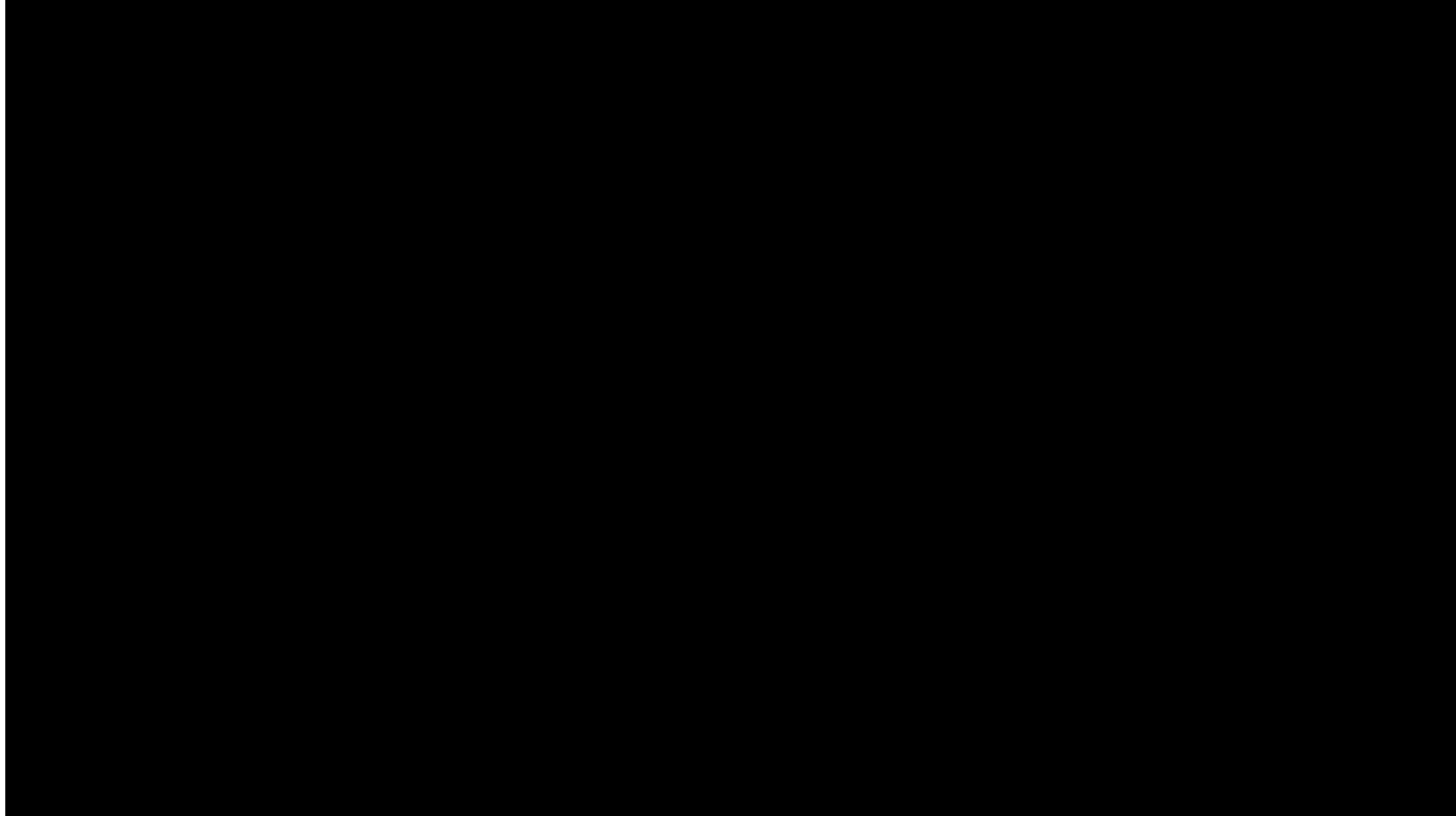
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## A Trauma-Informed Organization is ...

- “ a program, organization, or system that [...]
- realizes the **widespread impact** of trauma;
  - understands **potential paths for recovery**;
  - **recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma** in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and
  - responds by fully **integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices**, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization. ”

# VIDEO: Brief Review

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# Cont'd: Definition of Trauma - Informed



## POLL:

Considering what we've discussed so far about trauma, do you think that some of the challenging interactions you've had with participants were actually trauma responses?

- a. Yes, I think this happens frequently.
- b. Yes, with at least some of the participants.
- c. No, I haven't come across this in my work.
- d. I don't know. / I have no idea what you're talking about.

# Trauma Therapy vs. Trauma-Informed Approach

## Trauma Therapy



Licensed clinical mental health professional



Intervention occurs in a therapist/counselor's office, usually in 1:1 or small group sessions



Focus is on treating the symptoms of trauma (e.g., depression, anxiety disorders, PTSD, etc.)

## Trauma-Informed Approach



**Thinking and responding differently** to a person's reactions and behaviors.



Practices that **can be used by anyone in any setting**. You do not need to be a mental-health professional.



Considering "***what happened to you?***" rather than "*what is wrong with you?*"



Moving **away from punitive consequences** and toward *next steps* that aim to build coping skills and promote healing.

# Today's Agenda

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- *Resource: “Trauma-Informed Service Delivery: Strategies and Actions for Working with Individuals”*

# Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Approach

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**Trauma-informed strategies and practices generally fall into two categories:**

Creating a  
Safe and  
Supportive  
Environment

Addresses the “flooded” nervous system and/or feelings of helplessness and hopelessness often associated with trauma.

Fostering  
Trusting and  
Meaningful  
Relationships

Addresses the feelings of isolation, blame, distrust, and shame that are often associated with trauma.

# Cont'd: Essential Elements....

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Being trauma-informed and trauma-responsive is primarily a **shift in mind frame and approach.**

*It is not a “new program” or “new initiative.”*

Most of the strategies are **free** and can be **effectively implemented by everyone** at your organization, regardless of role or "level."

*You do not need to be a licensed mental health professional.*



# Today's Agenda

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- *Resource: “Trauma-Informed Service Delivery: Strategies and Actions for Working with Individuals”*

# 10 Strategies for Trauma-Informed Service Delivery

Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment

Fostering Trusting and Meaningful Relationships

Ensure that your physical space feels safe and inviting.

Prepare for meetings.

Set clear expectations and continuously check-in about them.

Focus on "What happened to you?" rather than "What's wrong with you?".

Focus on partnership and minimize any power differential (real or perceived).

Take a strengths-based approach to conversations and/or problem solving.

Demonstrate Empathy.

Actively listen.

Offer predictability – be reliable and consistent.

Be mindful about closing the case or relationship.

# FYI: Post-Session Resource

## “Trauma-Informed Service Delivery: Strategies and Actions for Working with Individuals”

Examples of What You Can Do

Examples of What You Can Say

100 FPWA

Please customize your responses to meet the unique needs of your participants.

Trauma-Informed Service Delivery: Strategies and Actions for Working with Individuals	
A trauma-informed approach to service delivery is rooted in two primary areas: 1) <b>Creating a safe and supportive environment</b> and 2) <b>Fostering trusting and meaningful relationships.</b> Below are specific strategies and examples of what you can do and say to effectively deliver trauma-informed services.	
<b>Strategy: Ensure that your physical space feels safe and inviting.</b>	
What you can do	What you can say
Greet people in the waiting area, even if they're not there to meet with you.	"Welcome. Have you been helped?"
Ensure decorations, brochures, and other materials are culturally responsive and available in the language(s) spoken by program participants.	"Our materials are available in 10 languages and are located in the reception area."
Make sure your meeting space is well lit, calm, and comfortable. Ensure that the basics are available such as water, tissues, adequate seating, coloring books for kids, etc.	"Feel free to take a seat. Can I get you anything before we get started?"
Whenever possible, move to a private space and/or use a white noise machine to conduct sensitive conversations.	"I want to respect your privacy. Let's move into the small conference room for this conversation."
<b>Strategy: Prepare for meetings.</b>	
What you can do	What you can say
Before meeting with a participant or family, familiarize yourself with the case, name(s), preferred pronoun(s), and the reason for their visit.	"Hello Andrea. It's nice to meet you. Thank you for coming in today to talk about..."
Prepare the participant for the intake process (or meetings) - what types of question you will be asking, why you will ask certain questions, etc.	"I have some personal questions I need to ask, in order to figure out what services and supports will be most beneficial to you. If you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions, you can simply say 'pass.'"
Make sure participants know what to expect when they arrive at your office (e.g. where to go, who to ask for, what childcare and/or activities are available, etc.).	"When you arrive, please take the elevator to the 3rd floor. Walk through the glass doors and check in with the receptionist. We have trained childcare providers so feel free to drop Cody off in the Children's Room to the left of reception while we discuss your case."
Make sure participants know what to bring to an appointment at your office (e.g. photo ID, court orders, bank statements, bills, etc.).	"Please remember to bring your passport and a document proving residency, such as a utility bill or bank statement dated within the past 60 days."
For external meetings or referrals (e.g. intake sessions, court appearances, etc.), let the participant know what to expect including documents needed, space layout, security, and translation/interpretation options.	"When you arrive at The Center, you'll need to show a form of ID. There will be a metal detector. You'll ask to meet with Cynthia on the 3rd floor. There may be police officers in uniform in the waiting area. Cynthia will call an interpreter for you. Do you have questions about any of this?"
<b>Strategy: Set clear expectations and continuously check-in about them.</b>	
What you can do	What you can say
Be clear about the scope of your role. Before asking personal questions, outline the goals of the conversation and explain why you will be asking such questions and what the information you gather will be used for. Only ask what you really need to know (i.e. avoid unnecessary retelling of trauma histories).	"I'm an economic empowerment specialist. I'm able to assist you with exploring educational, training and employment opportunities. The information you provide will help us determine together which programs might be a good fit."  "I am not an attorney. I am a paralegal. I will not be giving you legal advice, but the information you share with me will help me support you in drafting your family offense petition."
Discuss who the participant will talk to, what services they will receive, and what the timeline is.	"I'm a mandated reporter. This means..."  "I will return your call within 24 hours."  "Maria Meeenas from our Adult Education department will call you within the next 2 weeks to schedule your placement exam."
Be clear about what you expect from the participant.	"In order to receive the certificate, you would need to arrive no later than 9:15 each session and attend 6 out of 8 sessions. Please let me know if you will be unable to attend a session or if you will be arriving late."
Determine the best time of day and method of communication (phone, text, email) to reach the participant.	"What is the best way and the best time to reach you? Is this a safe number to call, text and/or leave voicemail messages?"
Make sure the participant knows who their contact person will be and how and when they can be reached.	"Your contact person moving forward will be Mary Gonzalez. You can reach her at extension 689. She's in the office Mondays and Tuesdays from 12:00-5:00."
<b>Strategy: Offer predictability - be reliable and consistent.</b>	
What you can do	What you can say
Keep appointments and give reasonable notice when an appointment must be changed.	"I apologize. We have an emergency staff meeting that conflicts with our appointment on Wednesday. Do you have any availability to reschedule later this week? If not, what day(s) work best for you?"
Follow through on everything you say you'll do, even if that means calling the participant to tell them that nothing has changed yet.	"Hi Sam, I just wanted to call to let you know we're still waiting to hear back about your voucher approval. I'll give you another call next week to let you know if anything has changed."
Talk through changes (e.g. going on vacation, updated timelines, changes in staff contact, closing out cases, changes in service times, etc.).	"Hi, I wanted to let you know that I'll be out of the office for 2 weeks starting July 1. If you need anything during that time, you can reach Cynthia at extension 342."
<b>Strategy: Demonstrate empathy.</b>	
What you can do	What you can say
Normalize and validate the individual's reaction to, or feelings about, difficult experiences.	"I'm sorry that happened to you. It sounds extremely upsetting."  "I can't begin to imagine what that was like for you. I can understand why it might be difficult to talk about it."  "No one should have to face such upsetting and scary situations. No one has the right to threaten or hurt you. It's understandable that you might have difficulty trusting others."  "Everything you're feeling is valid."  "Your reactions are totally understandable given the situation."
Help minimize self-blame or self-doubt by avoiding judgmental statements or phrasing.	Instead of asking "Why did you wait so long to report this?", try "Tell me about your decision to report this now?" or "Did something happen to lead you to call now?"

# Strategy #1: Space

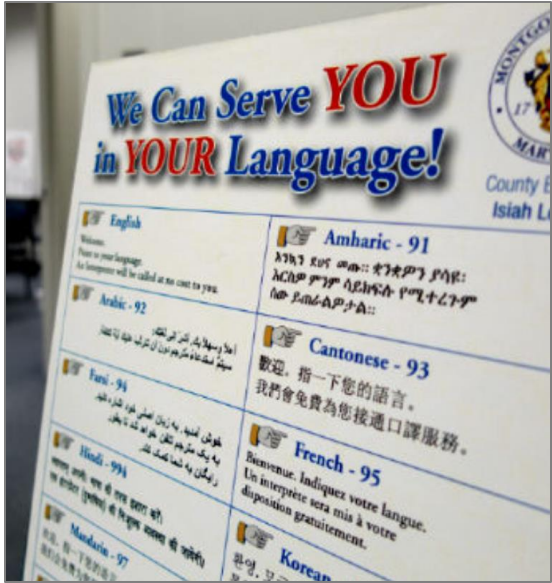
Ensure that your physical space feels safe and inviting.



A waiting room in a health center.



A calm-down corner in a childcare center.



Welcome sign outlining where to go for language support.

## Why it matters...

For people who are hypervigilant or easily “triggered” as a result of traumatic experiences, a physical space that is calm, inviting, and inclusive can be a powerful de-escalation tool. It also creates opportunities to learn/or build healthy coping skills.

# Strategy #2: Preparation

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## Prepare for meetings.



*When you arrive, you'll need to show a form of ID. There will be a metal detector. You'll ask to meet with Cynthia on the 3rd floor. There may be police officers in uniform in the waiting area. Cynthia will call an interpreter for you.*

## Why it matters...

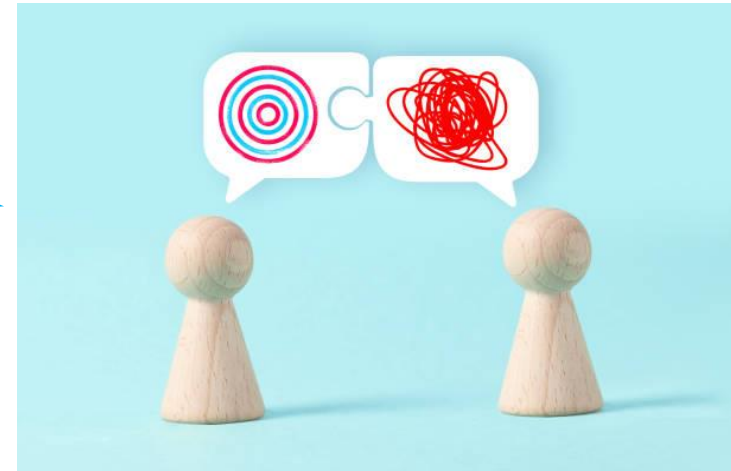
There is often a lack of control associated with traumatic events and circumstances. As a result, a person's body may constantly be in "fight or flight mode." Understanding who they will be talking to, and what they will be talking about can help restore that sense of control and help the nervous system to return to a resting state.

# Strategy #3: Expectations

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**Set clear expectations and continuously check-in about them.**

*My name is Maggie, and I am a paralegal here. I won't be giving you legal advice during this conversation, but the information you share will help me draft your petition. I can be reached via e-mail, and I will respond within 48 hours.*



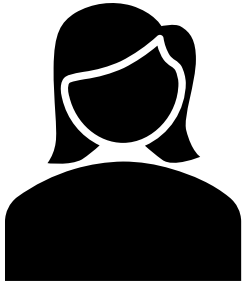
Creator: Nazan Akpolat | Credit: GettyImages/iStockphoto

## Why it matters...

Setting clear expectations with participants about what they can expect from you, what you expect from them, proposed services or treatment plans, who will provide services, and how care will be provided is essential to building and maintaining trust.

# Scenario: NOT Trauma-Informed

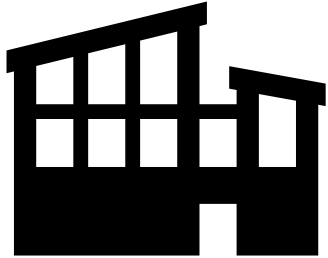
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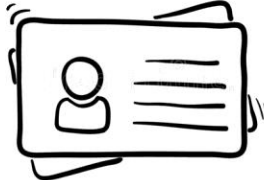
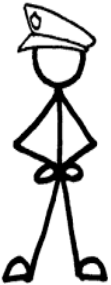
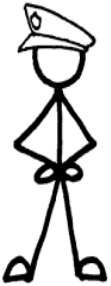
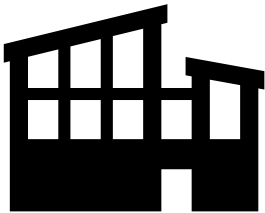
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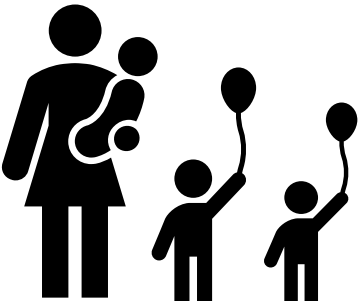




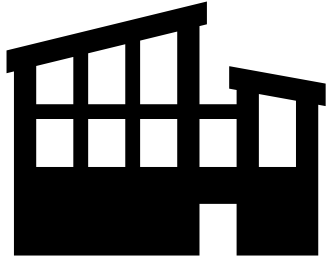
# Scenario: Trauma-Informed



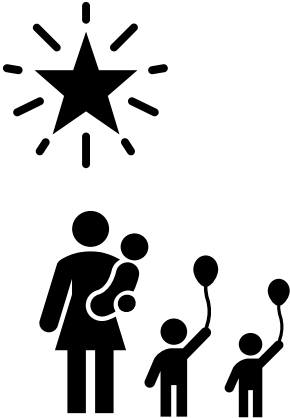
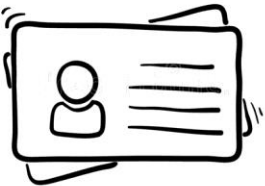
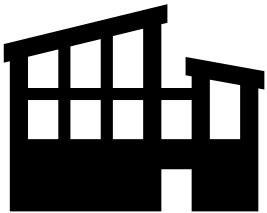
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# Strategy #4: Shift Your Mind Frame

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Focus on “*what happened to you*” rather than “*what’s wrong with you?*”

## Why it matters...

Reactions don’t come out of thin air.

Oversized, inappropriate, or puzzling behaviors are all “normal reactions” to “abnormal situations.”

Considering “**what happened to you**” helps to put those reactions into perspective and can help you **respond in a way that avoids escalation or re-traumatization.**

# Strategy #5: Listen

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## Actively listen.

Summarize

What can I do to help?

Can you tell me more about that?

Offer support

Focus

Encourage

Be present

Go on.

Clarify

Reflect

Would it be helpful...?

What would you like to do?

Be mindful of your reactions

Don't interrupt

React

## Why it matters...

Even when your role is not that of counselor or social worker, you can still create an environment in which the other person feels heard, seen, believed and/or understood.

# Strategy #6: Empathy

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**Demonstrate empathy.**



## Why it matters...

People who have experienced trauma may blame themselves. They may feel shame or fear judgement and rejection. To counter those feelings and perceptions, it is especially important to demonstrate empathy.

# Strategy #7: Strength-Based Approach

Take a strengths-based approach to conversations and/or problem solving.



## Why it matters...

Individuals who have experienced trauma may see themselves as “bad” or “damaged.”

**Focusing on strengths counters that negative narrative** by building up a person’s confidence, resilience, and sense of self-accomplishment.

# Strategy #8: Partnership

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**Focus on partnership and minimize the power differential (real or perceived).**



## Why it matters...

Trauma can make a person feel as though they have no control over their own decisions, life, or future. By partnering with the individual and honoring their choices, we can begin to restore their sense of autonomy and control over their future.

# Strategy #9: Predictability

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Offer predictability – be reliable and consistent.



**Keep appointments** and give reasonable notice when an appointment must be changed.



**Follow-through on everything you say you will do**, even if this means calling the person to tell them that nothing has changed.



**Talk through changes** such as vacation schedules, change in case manager, changes in service times, etc.

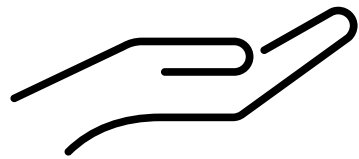
## Why it matters...

By providing predictability, reliability, and consistency, even with the small things, we are countering a person's trauma narrative that the world isn't safe or that people are inherently untrustworthy.

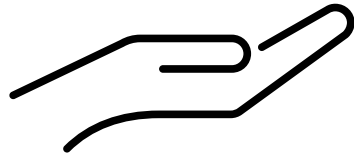
# Strategy #10: Closing the relationship

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## Be mindful of closing the case or relationship.



*"Now that you've graduated High School, we won't be seeing each other on a regular basis. You are welcome to come back for our college support programs that are run by Adrian. Let's go together to meet him today."*



*"Starting in October, I will be going on leave for 6 months. Diana will be taking over your case. I'll make sure that the 3 of us meet together before I leave."*

## Why it matters...

Feelings of abandonment, especially for young people, are often at the root of a traumatic experience. By taking steps to close a case or relationship with care, we are lessening the risk that the individual will be re-traumatized by a sudden loss of a supportive relationship.

# Key Take-Aways

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- A trauma-informed approach to service delivery involves **thinking and responding differently** to a person's reactions and behaviors.
- Trauma-informed service-delivery aims to **create safe and supportive environments** and **cultivate trusting and meaningful relationships**.
- Trauma-informed practices **can be used by anyone in any setting**. You do not need to be a mental-health professional to be trauma-informed.
- Familiarize yourself with the resource, **“Trauma-Informed Service Delivery: Strategies and Actions for Working with Individuals.”** Print it out and review strategies individually or highlight them during staff meetings.



# Next Steps

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Join us in October for the next two Foundational Webinars focused on **restorative justice**:

Oct. 13 @ 10:00 am – 11:30 am

**“Restorative Justice as a Trauma-Informed Practice”**

Oct. 20 @ 10:00 am – 11:30 am

**“Restorative Practice in Action: A Panel Discussion”**

The registration link will be in our follow-up email and is also available on our [website](#).

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# Thank You

Please remember to complete our **short post-training survey** that automatically opens after this session.