



International Association of Trauma Recovery Coaching

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TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

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Trauma informed care has four key operational goals:

- It realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery.
- It recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system.
- It responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices.
- It seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.

Trauma informed care prioritizes these six principles to meet the operational goals:

- Safety – many survivors of trauma live in unsafe situations, others deal with suicidal thoughts, urges to self-harm and addictions that threaten their physical health. Trauma informed care focuses on a client’s safety first and foremost and maintains that safety over the course of treatment and/or interactions with their client.
- Trustworthiness and Transparency – many survivors of trauma, especially trauma within interpersonal relationships such as child abuse or domestic violence, have endured years of emotional manipulation and grooming. They have difficulties trusting and are highly sensitive to interactions that have the faintest whiff of deception and coercion. Trauma informed care does not put down clients with difficulties trusting but understand it’s a consequence of their trauma. Instead,

they are very transparent with their policies and actions, working to gain their client's trust.

■ **Peer Support** – Trauma informed care recognizes and utilizes the power of peer support. Many individuals with PTSD feel isolated and alone. They often feel misunderstood. At times they feel like they're the only one in the world who feels and thinks the way that they do. The way to unlock each of those negative feelings is through peer support. When survivors of trauma come together there is a powerful sense of community. Survivors know they aren't alone and that there are others who are going through what they are. They feel an incredible amount of support, and lack of judgment, through peer interactions.

■ **Collaboration and mutuality** – Trauma informed care utilizes a team approach to treating and interacting survivors. The client's needs are evaluated holistically. Rarely does one form of treatment resolve PTSD. Clients often need a collaboration of methods, such as talk therapy, EMDR and art therapy. Just as importantly, trauma informed systems recognize the survivor as a valid and valuable member of their own treatment team. When survivor's wishes and experience are treated as an afterthought it takes them back to their trauma, which by its very nature is something they powerless against.

■ **Empowerment, voice and choice** – Trauma informed care recognizes that survivors had very little voice or control during their trauma. Children couldn't speak up against a parent abusing them. Spouses couldn't defend themselves against a violent husband or wife. Soldiers could not predict when the next Improvised Explosive Device was going to be buried in the roadway ahead of them. Trauma strips away a survivor's belief that they are powerful. Appropriate treatment restores their ability to choose, values their voice and empowers them to build a life where they exercise the power and control over themselves.

■ **Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues** – Trauma informed care is not a cookie cutter approach. It recognizes that different cultures, genders and personal histories color each survivor's experience. It actively seeks to understand a survivor's experience and incorporate their individual needs into treatment.

The four operational goals and six principles of Trauma Informed Care have been set forth by the United States' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (SAMHSA)