

### **What Are Characteristics of A Trauma Informed Agency/ Group:**

- training around trauma. awareness of trauma basics
- assumption clients have trauma issues - pervasiveness of trauma
- see human experience as coping tools/ protective mechanisms not "symptoms" of disease/pathology
- trauma spotlighted in mission statements
- focus on current experience of safety for clients
- safety and trust not assumed qualities of providers but may emerge from client through time
- focus on social change not treatment -- creating safety, relationships, finding resources, empowering people
- awareness of how hospital, agency, police practices cause trauma + retraumatize
- prevention of retraumatization
- understanding principle of resilience and what cultivates it
- compassionate recognition that trauma drives repetitive behaviors, addictions, self-defeating patterns
- understanding role of family in trauma but not blaming family - abusers were themselves abused
- identify and focus on strengths and capacities not deficits, lack, or problems. Build on existing empowerment
- collaborative relationship with providers
- prioritizing needs of children
- child trauma always reflects family
- confidentiality and physical space safety (i.e. protection)
- offering connections to trauma-specific services, offering trauma education
- sensitivity to gender dynamics, power imbalances between men and women. empowered women staff
- Staff members ask for definitions of emotional safety.
- Staff members practice motivational interviewing techniques (e.g., open-ended questions, affirmations, and reflective listening).
- The program uses "people-first" language rather than labels (e.g., "people who are experiencing homelessness" rather than "homeless people").

- Staff uses descriptive language rather than characterizing terms (e.g., “having a hard time getting her needs met” rather than “attention-seeking”).
- Cultural trauma sensitivity -- Program information is available in different languages.
- People are encouraged to speak their native language within the program.
- Recognize racial oppression and conflict.
- People are encouraged to prepare or have ethnic-specific foods.
- Staff shows acceptance for personal religious or spiritual practices.
- On-going opportunities to share their cultures with each other (e.g., potlucks, culture nights, different types of art and music, etc.).
- Outside agencies with expertise in cultural competence provide on-going training and consultation.