



Trauma Informed Response and Care: more than being “Nice” and asking, “Open Ended Questions”

Over the last two decades, there has been an increasing recognition of the role that trauma plays in a wide range of health, mental health and other social problems. Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Assault, Human Trafficking, Child Abuse, Automobile Accidents, Natural Disasters...are all deeply traumatic experiences that can cause severe damage to survivors’ physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological well-being.

Traumatic experiences, particularly multiple experiences over the course of a lifetime, can result in a range of behavioral health problems beyond and including post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, depression, anxiety problems, childhood behavioral disorders, psychosis and some personality disorder diagnoses are all common traumatic responses. In other words, people who have experienced trauma(s) may respond to the experience(s) in different ways and are often difficult to work with. There may be no visible signs, or there may be dramatic responses ranging for irritability, sudden mood swings, anxiety, anger, denial, fear, inability to articulate or to remember- they may be illogical and/or may not be able to practice good hygiene. They may not be able to remember what you told them or to follow even the most basic of instructions.

Unfortunately, many first responders, advocates, members of law enforcement, prosecutors, counselors and other allied professionals, do not truly understand trauma and are not providing true trauma informed response and care. Too many victims of traumatic experiences are being harmed or re-traumatized by insensitive, uninformed, burnt-out, old school or inadequate community and criminal justice response. And, far too often, first responders and other allied professionals are unaware of the deep impact trauma can have on their own lives- which leads to more secondary victimization.

A trauma informed response and care emphasizes creating services and programs that are sensitive and directly responsive to the trauma that many people experience after a violent crime and/or a high stress experience. While it is currently a very popular and widely used paradigm, many providers do not provide holistic, multifaceted trauma informed response and care.

This presentation will explore different facets of a holistic, multifaceted trauma informed response and care, to include: training/education, staff support, physical space, cultural humility, policy and protocol, case management, assessment/evaluation and vicarious trauma. We will explore different models (the sanctuary model, the addiction and trauma recovery integration model, the essence of being real, the risking connection model and a few others). We will explain the physiological and neurological effect trauma has on the brain and discuss the Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview as way to gather the nuances of the complicated experience. We will deliver actionable strategies to apply trauma informed response and vicarious trauma prevention.

Objectives:

- Define a holistic, multifaceted definition of Trauma Informed Response and Care
- Explore the various trauma informed response and care models
- Deliver a brief overview of the Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview
- Explain the physiological and neurological effect of trauma on the brain
- Generate actionable ideas for applying a trauma informed response and care to your work
- Recognize, prevent and cope with Vicarious Trauma

