

Core Values of Trauma-Informed Services

1. Understand trauma and its impact on individuals, families, and communal groups

This expertise is critical to avoid misunderstandings between staff and clients that can retraumatize individuals and cause them to disengage from a program. Two strategies promote understanding of trauma and its impacts: trauma-informed policies and training. Trauma-informed policies formally acknowledge that clients have experienced trauma, commit to understanding trauma and its impacts, and detail trauma-informed care practices. Ongoing trauma-related workforce training and support is also essential. For example, staff members need to learn about how trauma impacts child development and attachment to caregivers. Appropriate support activities might include regular supervision, team meetings, and staff self-care opportunities.

2. Promote safety

Individuals and families who have experienced trauma require spaces in which they feel physically and emotionally safe. Children need to advise what measures make them feel safe. Their identified measures need to be consistently, predictably, and respectfully provided. Service providers have reported that creating a safe physical space for children includes having child-friendly areas and engaging play materials. Creating a safe emotional environment involves making children feel welcome (e.g., through tours and staff introductions), providing full information about service processes (in their preferred language), and being responsive and respectful of their needs.

3. Ensure cultural competence

Culture plays an important role in how victims/survivors of trauma manage and express their traumatic life experience(s) and identify the supports and interventions that are most effective. Culturally competent services are respectful of, and specific to, cultural backgrounds. Such services may offer opportunities for clients to engage in cultural ceremonies, speak in their Indigenous language, and offer specific foods. Culturally competent staff are aware of their own cultural attitudes and beliefs, as well as those of the individuals, families, and communities they support. They are alert to the legitimacy of inter-cultural difference and able to interact effectively with different cultural groups.

4. Support client's control

Client control consists of two important aspects. First, victims/survivors of trauma are supported to regain a sense of control over their daily lives and build competencies that will strengthen their sense of autonomy. Second, service systems are set up to keep individuals (and their caregivers) well informed about all aspects of their treatment, with the individual having ample opportunities to make daily decisions and actively participate in the healing process.

5. Share power and governance

Power and decision making is shared across all levels of the organization, whether related to day-to-day decisions or the review and creation of policies and procedures. Practical

means of sharing power and governance include recruiting clients to the board of directors and involving them in the design and evaluation of programs and practices.

6. Integrate care

Integrating care involves bringing together all the services and supports needed to assist individuals, families, and communities to enhance their physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and cultural well-being.

7. Support relationship building

Safe, authentic, and positive relationships assist healing and recovery. Trauma-informed services facilitate such relationships; for example, by facilitating peer-to-peer support.

8. Enable recovery

Trauma-informed services empower individuals, families, and communities to take control of their own healing and recovery. They adopt a strengths-based approach, which focuses on the capabilities that individuals bring to a problem or issue.

Source: Trauma-Informed Services and Trauma-Specific Care for Indigenous Australian Children, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2013