

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE



The key lessons from the Sexual Assault Demonstration Initiative are rooted in an understanding of trauma-informed care. Trauma-informed care is a philosophy and a skill set. Its underlying philosophy is grounded in grassroots and survivor-centered models that came from the early rape crisis center and domestic violence movements. Programs using trauma-informed care are strengths-based, look at the effects from all forms of trauma, and are multi-dimensional in their approaches. Trauma-informed care provides a framework for understanding the impact of trauma on survivors, communities, and those who serve them and builds strong organizations and sexual assault services that are responsive to those needs.



Strengths-Based

Recognizes each person is the expert on their own experiences, with resilience as the core focus
Views each person's ways of coping and surviving with curiosity and awe rather than with judgement or as symptoms or problems that need solved



Survivor-Centered

Understands survivors within their family, social, and community contexts and life experiences
Respects each survivor as a whole person and recognizes the entire context of their lives
Includes addressing all forms of trauma past and present including racism, genocide, state violence, homophobia, and religious discrimination



Multi-Dimensional

Includes six core elements: safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural relevance

These core elements are applied throughout the three spheres of an organization: organizational culture, services, and staff

Organizational culture

- Actively addressing all forms of oppression
- Mission statement
- Policies
- Values, beliefs, attitudes about sexual violence & healing
- Safety and comfort of offices & meeting spaces

Services

- Rooted in anti-oppression and empowerment-based frameworks
- Services made available across the lifespan and throughout the healing journey
- Accessible accommodations
- Culturally rooted response
- Available in a wide range of settings

Staff

- Support for staff development
- Caring for staff as whole human beings
- Empowering staff to make decisions & be creative
- Access to regular supervision & debriefing
- Proactively addressing vicarious trauma and building individual and organizational resilience

A trauma-informed framework enables programs providing services to survivors of sexual violence to support each survivor's journey and build healthy and sustainable organizations.

This publication is supported by Grant No. 2009-TA-AX-K011 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. This document was adapted from The National Sexual Assault Coalition Resource Sharing Project and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center's publication entitled *Building Cultures of Care: A Guide for Sexual Assault Services Programs*. This guide is available by visiting www.nsvrc.org.