



## **Fostering Futures Peer Learning Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care**

### ***GUIDING PRINCIPLES***

Fostering Futures is built upon several guiding principles that will guide all work in developing, adopting and implementing TIC promising practices. These principles are interrelated and work together. The order does not reflect a judgment of each principle's respective significance or importance. Below is what Fostering Futures believes about TIC:

1. **PREVALENCE and IMPACT** — Exposure to and difficulty adjusting to adverse experiences is common. The prevalence of trauma is vast and its effects can be seen in individuals, families and communities. Many adult caregivers have life-long trauma histories. All behaviors have meaning and serve as communication. Problematic behaviors (symptoms) are adaptations from exposure to traumatic experiences.
2. **SAFETY and RELATIONSHIPS**—Healing happens in safe, authentic and positive relationships. Strong relationships help create resilience and play a significant role in shielding children and adults from the effects of trauma. In trauma-sensitive organizations, interactions are respectful, consistent and predictable. The environment pays attention to physical and emotional safety and to reducing barriers to access. It is understood that many people with trauma histories must develop trust over time and as a result may not engage in services as quickly as service providers may expect.
3. **CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT and CHOICE**—People practicing within a trauma-informed system communicate with compassion and respect resulting in a 'level playing field' that reduces power differentials. Trauma-informed systems support individuals in gaining empowerment through informed decision making, collaborative planning, and access to a variety of healing options. The system is open to and inclusive of children, youth and families' voices and offers opportunities for people with lived experience in systems of care to serve in leadership roles (e.g., steering committees, advisory councils, boards, etc.)
4. **INTEGRATION of CARE with a HOLISTIC APPROACH** —All parts of the system need to have a shared understanding of trauma-informed care for services to be provided effectively and efficiently. A holistic approach incorporates a developmental or life-span perspective when understanding a person's history; from early childhood to adult services. Priority is given to addressing all of the issues and concerns an individual presents, including economics, dental, mental health, and physical health.
5. **CULTURE MATTERS** — Cultural context influences perception and response to traumatic events and the healing process. It is necessary for systems of care to understand cultural practices, beliefs and non-traditional family structures including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Questioning (LGBTQ) families. Trauma-informed systems of care respect diversity, provide opportunities to engage in cultural rituals, and use interventions respectful of and specific to cultural backgrounds.

6. **SECONDARY TRAUMA & STRESS**—Those providing care should approach the work with families from a place of optimal health and well-being. Responsibility for staff wellness falls on both the individual as well as the supporting structure, e.g., organizations supporting staff, communities supporting caregivers, etc.
7. **RANGE of SERVICES**—Healing can begin via strong relationships and the engagement of informal community supports. When more formal support is necessary, healing can come through the use of trauma treatments and interventions used by trained clinicians and trauma-informed caregivers. It is paramount to know how and when to engage children and families in the right evidence-based treatments. This would include using sensory strategies that address the lower or primitive parts of the brain such as drumming, singing, yoga, etc., which have been shown to be effective in addressing trauma.