Trauma-Informed Principles: Brave and Safe Meetings on Difficult Topics

We are in this together

Creating a Resilient and Trauma-Informed Community
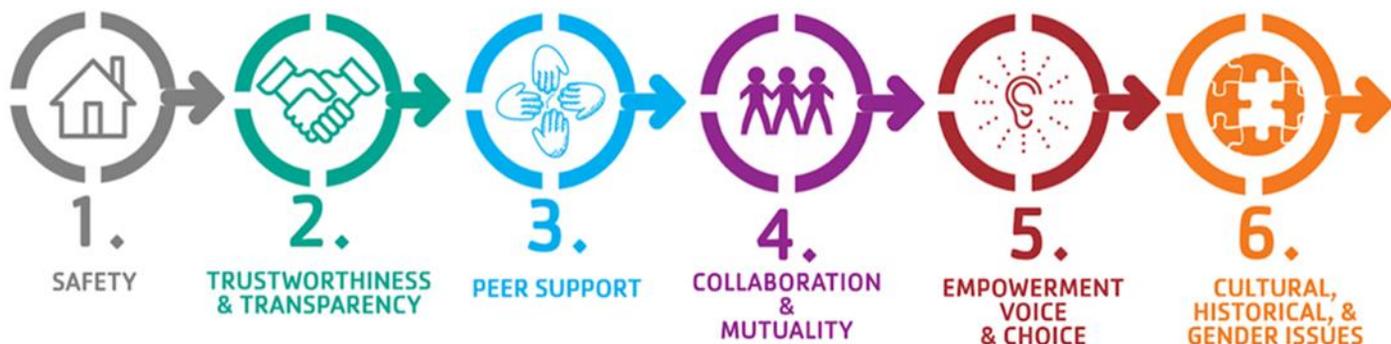
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Trauma-Informed Principles:
Brave and Safe Meetings on Difficult Topics

Conversation on difficult topics that may be controversial or sensitive can be a challenging experience for many people. Sometimes discussion on sensitive topics will occur within the organizational learning environment. Since it can be easy for these conversations to become emotionally charged, it is essential that a supportive environment is created and maintained.

Poor planning or facilitation of conversations on difficult topics can result in unintentional harm to participants, ongoing resentments, strained relationships, or an even greater divide after the conversation happens. It is critical to *create space for brave and safe meeting conversations on difficult topics* in order to have an open and productive learning environment for beneficial discussion to occur. The application of trauma-informed principles will help foster an environment in which people feel safe to engage with one another and will support a culture that enhances workplace improvements.

This figure is adapted from: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). SAMHSA's concept of trauma and Guidance for a trauma-informed approach. HHS publication no (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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SAFETY:

How can I **create a safe space that allows** for differences of perspective, growth, learning, and bravery?

How can we **develop agreements** that balance both rights and responsibilities?

How am I keeping an **equal balance of structure and nurture** that supports the physical and emotional safety of all participants?

TRUST/TRANSPARENCY:

What do my **nonverbal behaviors and choice of language broadcast** to others about my trustworthiness?

What am I doing consistently to **demonstrate that I am trustworthy**?

How am I **balancing strength and sensitivity** in the way I communicate?

PEER SUPPORT:

What can we **learn from each other**?

What options am I offering to others that support a **shared sense of community and belongingness**?

What opportunities am I taking to share stories that **promote recovery, healing and resilience**?

COLLABORATION & MUTUALITY:

Where am I **inviting others** to share their input?

How am I role modeling and teaching that **feedback is a gift**?

How do I **foster growth and learning** rather than punishing or shaming?

EMPOWERMENT/VOICE & CHOICE:

What am I doing to **recognize and validate the perspectives and strengths** of others?

How am I **modeling and teaching** assertive communication that supports the needs of everyone?

How am I **offering accurate information** so others can make their own informed decisions?

CULTURAL, HISTORICAL & GENDER ISSUES:

How does my awareness of **historical contexts and power dynamics** influence my thoughts, actions and words?

What am I doing to **educate myself** about the perspectives of community members who have different lived experiences than me?

How am I helping **all members** of the community to thrive?