

# Being a trauma-informed organizational leader during a disaster or crisis like COVID-19.



## We are in this together

Creating a Resilient and Trauma-Informed Community

[www.resilientcommunitieswi.com](http://www.resilientcommunitieswi.com)

**Sarah Johnson**  
**Mental Health Director**  
**La Crosse Area Family YMCA**  
**April/May 2020 – COVID19 Resources**  
**Resilient and Trauma-Informed Community**

[www.resilientcommunitieswi.com](http://www.resilientcommunitieswi.com)

## Being a Trauma-Informed Organizational Leader during Disaster

First of all, let us acknowledge that this is hard. As an Organizational Leader, you have always had a tremendous amount of responsibility and this global public health emergency has compounded the gravity of the decisions you face daily. Thank you for your steady head and open heart.

I would like to share a few thoughts for your consideration:

**Mental health is how we think, feel, and act.** We all have mental health and the disruptions to our daily lives are impacting the mental health of our entire planet. This includes the teams we lead--both retained and furloughed, the populations we serve, our community members, our families, and ourselves. Many of us by necessity have gone into hyper-drive, which leaves little time or space for reflection. High levels of unrelenting stress without the buffers of rest, reflection, and acknowledgement of our own internal state put our physical and mental health at risk.

If you do not already do so, I encourage you to evaluate what daily practices you are implementing to care for your mental health. As often as you can, I also encourage you to share what you are doing to care for yourself with your teams, family, friends, and community members. Acknowledging, attending to and communicating about mental health is a form of trauma-informed practice as it establishes a culture of transparency and openness.

### **Sharing your self-care actions with others communicates that:**

You value mental health and are caring for yourself.

You are role modeling skills you want your team and others to use to stay healthy.

You are demonstrating how to have a conversation with someone about mental health.

You are building the resilience of others by deepening your relationship with them.

You are strengthening our community.

Please take care of yourself. This is not a sprint. This is not a marathon. This is a relay.

We are all in this together and here for each other.