

## Trauma Informed Practice

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### What is Trauma Informed Practice (TIP)?

Trauma informed practice is the implementation of policies and practices that reduce the likelihood that someone will be traumatized or re-traumatized by virtue of engaging with a service or system. We do not need to know someone's trauma history or be a qualified counsellor who deals with treating trauma; instead, the idea is that the following trauma informed principles are widely utilized to make a service or system more physically, emotionally, psychologically and culturally safe.

### Principles of TIP:

#### 1. Trauma Awareness

- We are required to have a basic understanding of what trauma is (experience vs. event) and how it impacts people – trauma can occur at the individual (e.g., childhood abuse; exposure to traumatic content through employment) or system (e.g., contact with the child protection system; lack of support to process employment related stress) level.
- We must operate from the core belief that people do the best they can with the tools they have to meet their needs – a person's behaviour may be maladaptive or socially unpleasant, but we can know the feeling that we are sensing is behind it.

#### 2. Safety and Trustworthiness

- Trauma disrupts a person's sense of physical, emotional, psychological and/or cultural safety and perception of the world – something happened that the person did not want or expect.
- Being transparent, predictable and consistent is an effective way to build trust and safety – anxiety thrives on the unknown, and anxiety can manifest as a need for control.

#### 3. Choice, Collaboration and Connection

- Offering choice and collaboration at any opportunity helps to convey respect for and affirm a person's sense of dignity and self-determination.
- People are hard-wired to be relational beings – connection helps us co-regulate during heightened stress, and we respond better to interactions that we perceive to be reciprocal (rather than transactional).

#### 4. Strengths-Based and Skill-Building

- The identification of strengths and development of resiliency and/or coping skills helps to empower people and promote recovery.
- Strengths-based and person-centred language is respectful – we want to avoid reducing a person to their behaviour (e.g., "resistant", "manipulative") or disorder (e.g., "addict").
- Utilize opportunities to develop your own practice – an increased sense of competency helps build confidence, which strengthens your ability to remain grounded and engage TIP principles consistently; both support your wellbeing and sustainability.

### Resources

[Trauma Informed Practice Guide – BC Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Planning Council](#)

[Trauma Informed Legal Practice Toolkit – Golden Eagle Rising Society](#)

[Guide to Trauma Informed Legal Writing – British Columbia Law Institute](#)