

Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice Toolkit

Principle	Explanation	Critical Questions	Strategy Examples
<p>Safety</p>	<p>Throughout the organization - staff, youth and families feel physically and psychologically safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do staff feel safe? Why or why not? • Do youth and families feel safe? How do you know? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a routine that starts with checking in with youth to see how they're feeling. • Be mindful and willing to adjust your tone of voice and posture – individuals who have experienced trauma may be more sensitive to non-verbal cues which could be perceived as threatening. • When introducing yourself, take care to explain your role and decrease likelihood of being seen as a potentially threatening authority figure. • If a student is new to an environment, offer to do a walk through with them and introduce them to the people who work in that setting. • Incorporate stress management techniques into activities. These might include deep breathing, stretching, exercises, yoga movements, affirmations, and calming mantras.
<p>Trustworthiness & Transparency</p>	<p>Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency and the goal of building and maintaining trust among clients, family members, staff, and others involved with the organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do youth and families trust the organization/ staff? How do you know? • How can we promote trust throughout the organization? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow through on things you tell youth and families that you'll do. When you can't, be transparent. • Be mindful of your surroundings when having conversations that may be perceived as risky for someone's status or disclosing of information. • Model asking for help. Talk about how different people at the school were able to help you do things that you needed to get accomplished. Be clear on the roles of different staff members and who a student could go to for help.

<p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Partnering and leveling of power differences between staff and youth/families and among staff from staff to administrators; demonstrates meaningful sharing of power and decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you think of changes that would significantly decrease the power differentials? • What about partnership between top-level administrators and staff? • Can you think of examples from your organization of true partnership between staff and youth/families? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If youth are working with multiple adults, work to ensure there is consensus around approaches and expectations. • Provide regular opportunity for student/parent feedback. What is working? What is not working? Work together to identify new solutions. • Promote learner independence by developing a process that works for the student. Create cards that walk the student through the process and that they can take with them.
<p>Choice & Power Restoration</p>	<p>Individuals’ strengths and experiences are recognized and built upon; the experience of having a voice and choice is validated and new skills developed.</p> <p>The organization fosters a belief in resilience.</p> <p>Youth and families are supported in developing self-advocacy skills and self-empowerment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you think of examples from your organization of empowerment, voice, and choice for youth/families? • What about for staff? Can you think of policies or practices that do the opposite—that take voice, choice, and decision-making away? Could any of these things be changed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for ways that you can explicitly offer choice to the youth and families you work with. For example, consider meeting location and times, seating arrangements, mode of communication, etc. • Have students develop work plans for projects. Help them to develop a description of what the final product will be, including a rubric that contains its essential elements so that the child can use it as a guide. If materials are needed, make sure to plan how those will be obtained. • Share stories about people setting goals and the effort it took to achieve them. Encourage children to tell similar stories from their own family or personal experiences. • Create a scrapbook that includes pictures of the student’s positive achievements. The student can look back and be reminded of past accomplishments when working towards new goals.