Taking a Trauma-Informed Approach to Serving Vulnerable Customers

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The Four R's: Key Assumptions in a Trauma-Informed Approach

1. A realization that trauma is not confined to the behavior health specialty sector, but is integral to other systems and is often a barrier to effective outcomes in those systems, as well.

2. While trauma screening and assessments are effective tools for recognizing trauma, so is workforce development, employee assistance, and supervision practices.

3. The system responds by applying the principles of a trauma-informed approach to all areas of functioning.

4. A trauma-informed environment includes a staff educated on recognizing how organizational practices may trigger painful memories and re-traumatize customers.

Has trauma been a barrier to effective outcomes of customers in your system? If so, how?

Does your system recognize trauma and if so, how are staff educated about trauma? How often is supervision?

How does your system prioritize responding to trauma?

What organizational practices can re-traumatize customers?
6 Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach

**Safety**
- Understanding safety as defined by all served is a high priority.
- How does your system ensure that all customers feel safe?

**Trustworthiness & Transparency**
- Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency with the goal of building and maintaining trust.
- How does your system build trust with all customers?

**Peer Support**
- Peer support and mutual self-help establish safety and hope, build trust, enhance collaboration, and utilize their stories to promote recovery and healing.
- How do your system build trust with customers of various backgrounds and life experiences?

**Collaboration & Mutuality**
- Partnering and leveling the power differences between all staff and customers demonstrates that healing happens in relationships and meaningful sharing of power and decision making.
- How does your system share power and decision making with customers?

**Empowerment, Voice, & Choice**
- Customers are supported in shared decision-making, choice, and goal setting.
- How are customers' voices heard when choosing services?

**Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues**
- The system actively moves past stereotypes and biases and incorporates policies, protocols, and processes that are responsive to the racial, gender-specific, ethnic and cultural needs of individuals.
- How is your system responsive to the racial, ethnic and cultural needs of individuals served?