Trauma-Informed Approach Spreads Across Utah

Learning Objectives
In this session, participants will:
Objective 1: Learn about trauma-informed approaches at the agency and organizational level
Objective 2: Summarize tools that were used to assess Utah’s statewide trauma-informed efforts
Objective 3: Learn how Utah built and leveraged strategic partnerships to implement state-wide trauma-informed efforts

Statement of Purpose
In 2018, HB177 was passed in Utah which required five state agencies to become trauma-informed. Multiple partners have come together to focus attention on shifting the culture of their organizations. We will explore three different partner perspectives on assessment, training, and implementation of trauma-informed efforts across the state.

Methods
We have all been impacted by trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)- on a personal level, or on a societal level. “Trauma-informed” might sound like a buzz term, but, in reality, it is saying that we recognize the impact that trauma might have on a person’s physical, emotional, or mental health. This approach is crucial to uncovering what is protective for individuals and communities, especially in our efforts to prevent injury and violence.

In 2018, the Utah legislature passed HB 177 “Trauma-Informed Justice Provisions” that sought to create a trauma-informed seamless system of victim advocacy in the state. In a statewide effort to become trauma-informed, multiple organizations have joined together to develop tools, create assessments, analyze data, and develop next steps.

In Utah, health, criminal justice, and statewide coalitions have come together to transform our organizations. This presentation will explore the partnerships that have advanced trauma-informed efforts across Utah.

Results
Multiple partnerships, two surveys (one statewide, one agency-level), and data analysis have helped inform next steps for efforts in Utah.

The Intergenerational Poverty Commission (IGP) works to improve the lives of those experiencing intergenerational poverty in Utah. In 2018/2019, a subcommittee of the IGP conducted a statewide survey of various agencies to understand if and how they are implementing a trauma-informed approach. In addition to asking agencies about trauma-informed approaches, the VIPP added questions on how agencies are carrying out prevention efforts in their communities. The statewide survey conducted by the IGP was well responded to, with over 850 organizations across Utah responding. The Social Research Institute (SRI) staff analyzed the data from statewide agencies and organizations that are focused on victim advocacy services and the VIPP analyzed statewide data on prevention efforts. The results revealed a medley of noble yet disconnected efforts to implement trauma-informed approaches and prevention efforts. IGP partners are discovering how to use the rich data and interest from the statewide survey to uncover next steps in community training and capacity building.
Simultaneous to the statewide survey, at the agency level, the psychometrically validated ARTIC-45 (Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care) survey was administered to individuals employed in criminal justice agencies. This baseline assessment is to identify priorities for program and environmental change, assist in professional development planning, and organizational policy change. The results of the statewide survey and the agency assessment will be shared. This is the first time multiple agencies are presenting their individual roles, goals, and perspective.

Conclusions

The intersection of partnerships and findings provides insights into critical next steps. The key, how to remove the “BS,” the blame and shame associated with both the past and present impacts of ACEs at the individual level so that we as a broader community can work toward reducing ACEs in the next generation and support efforts to become a trauma-informed state. Utah is excited to share the process of implementing this trauma-informed effort to help advance the field of injury and violence prevention.

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Safe Harbor for All: Expanding Support of Adult Trafficking/Exploitation Survivors

Learning Objectives
Review a successful participatory research approach to support strategic planning in the response to sex trafficking and exploitation.
Describe a community assessment process designed to advance state policy making.
Demonstrate how state/private research partnerships can change practice.

Statement of Purpose
Over the past decade, Minnesota’s Safe Harbor response to sex trafficking and exploitation has focused on youth up to age 24. In 2017, the Minnesota Legislature sought recommendations on extending Safe Harbor to all adult victim/survivors of sex trafficking and exploitation regardless of age. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) awarded the project to the University of Minnesota’s Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC), The Advocates for Human Rights, and Rainbow Research. MDH was tasked with providing a strategic plan to the legislature using the report from the research partnership as well as input from the Minnesota Departments of Human Services and Public Safety. The focus included: 1) Prevention and intervention services for adult survivors; 2) Intersections of trafficking and sexual exploitation with forces of oppression; and 3) Impact of criminal liability on individuals engaging in prostitution.

Methods
The legislative mandate required input from survivors, victim services coalitions and providers, nonprofit organizations, task forces, prosecutors, public defenders, tribal governments, public safety and corrections professionals, human services professionals, and impacted community members. The project team led a community engagement process involving nearly 300 stakeholders. The team used a participatory approach informed by a 35-member process advisory group. They conducted focus groups and interviews involving participants in the legislation. In January 2019, MDH submitted a strategic plan to the legislature providing immediate and long-term suggestions. The documents are at: https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/response/safeharborforall.html.

Results
Participants agreed that prostitution arrests of people with lived experience:
Harm individuals, families, and communities
Create problems in housing, employment, and discrimination
Perpetuate a downward cycle keeping people vulnerable to trafficking
They also agreed that:
Intersectional oppressions contribute to harms
All people with lived experience deserve safety, health, dignity and justice

Conclusions
The results contribute to the field of injury and violence prevention by:
Encouraging leadership by people with lived experience
Promoting policies that mitigate the negative impact of arrest
Reforming current systems to reduce stigma and discrimination
Encouraging more cultural and community forms of healing
Promoting health equity and harm reduction practices

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Caroline Palmer, JD, is the Safe Harbor Director at the Minnesota Department of Health. Her focus is on providing support and services for survivors of sex and labor trafficking. She is responsible for policy development, grantee oversight, budget management, training, research/data support, and cross-disciplinary collaboration across government, nonprofit, and private sectors. Prior to joining MDH in 2018, Caroline served as the Public and Legal Affairs Manager at the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault for over a decade. While there she co-edited the Safe Harbor Protocol Guidelines. Caroline is a graduate of Hamline University School of Law and Barnard College. She received the Distinguished Service Award from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety in 2018.