

National Center for Trauma-Informed Care

Revolutionizing Mental Health and Human Services



Trauma-Informed Care: A New Framework for Healing and Recovery

NCTIC promotes a dynamic learning exchange arising from the growing recognition of psychological trauma as a pivotal force that shapes the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of those seeking healing and recovery with the support of mental health and human services.

Knowledge about the prevalence and impact of trauma has grown to the point that it is now universally understood that almost all of those seeking services in the public health system have trauma histories. Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) provides a new paradigm under which the basic premise for organizing services is transformed from “what is wrong with you?” to “what has happened to you?.” TIC is initiated through an organizational shift from a traditional “top-down” environment to one that is based on collaboration with consumers and survivors.

In true partnership, the path to healing is led by the consumer or survivor and supported by the service provider. Within this dynamic learning community where staff and clients learn from one another, consumers and survivors no longer experience a hierarchical approach in service delivery. Those seeking services are empowered to proactively set goals and manage their roads to health and wellbeing. This, indeed, is a revolutionary advance in mental health and human services delivery.

Focus Not on Sickness, but on Wellness



The Center for Mental Health Services, National Center for Trauma-Informed Care provides consultation, technical assistance, and training to revolutionize the way mental health and human services are organized, delivered, and managed, while furthering the understanding of trauma-informed practices through education and outreach.

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For consultation, technical assistance, or training requests, please contact the NCTIC Trauma Team at 301-634-1785 or NCTIC@abtassoc.com.

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About NCTIC

Violence, abuse, neglect, disaster, war, and other emotionally destructive experiences create trauma and these experiences know no boundaries with regard to age, race, ethnicity, economics, gender, geography, or sexual orientation. Trauma affects us all, directly or indirectly, and can be devastating.

While the prevalence of trauma is more recognized now than ever, there is still great need to create trauma-informed environments with trauma-specific interventions that support consumers and survivors. NCTIC offers consultation and technical assistance, education and outreach, and resources to support this revolutionary shift in publicly-funded programs. NCTIC is working closely with a wide variety of human service organizations and agencies to support the systemic changes needed to bring about TIC.

NCTIC was created in 2005 and is funded by the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) through contract number 280-03-2900 to Abt Associates. Program managers include Susan Salasin as CMHS Federal Project Officer; Gail Robinson as Abt Project Manager and Danna Mauch as Abt Organizational Change Advisor; CMHS Public Health Advisors Mary Blake and Wanda Finch; Mary Ann Beall, Ruta Mazelis, and Jacki McKinney for survivor and consumer program development; the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, National Technical Assistance Center for training and technical assistance; and Witness Justice for training, education, and outreach.

Making Trauma-Informed Programs and Services the Priority

Trauma-informed services acknowledge lived experiences as the bedrock for therapeutic decision-making and promote consumer choice and empowerment, as necessary, for successful treatment. A trauma-informed approach is based on the recognition that many behaviors and responses (often seen as symptoms) expressed by survivors and consumers are directly related to traumatic experiences that often cause mental health, substance abuse, and physical health concerns. For many consumers and survivors, systems of care perpetuate traumatic experiences through invasive, coercive, or forced treatment that causes or exacerbates feelings of threat, a lack of safety, violation, shame, and powerlessness. Unlike traditional mental health services, TIC recognizes trauma as a central issue. Incorporating trauma-informed values and services is key to improving program efficacy and supporting the healing process.

Understanding that a wide range of programs and systems need to integrate trauma-informed practices, NCTIC provides technical assistance to help these programs and services take this critical and revolutionary step forward. Programs and systems that benefit from NCTIC's services include mental health, substance abuse, criminal justice, victim assistance, peer support, education, primary care, domestic violence, child welfare, and others.

Some of the actions that programs, agencies, or institutions can take to begin the transformation to a trauma-informed environment include:

- Commit to a TIC Organizational Mission and Dedicate Resources to Support It
- Conduct Universal Screening for Trauma for All Consumers and Survivors
- Incorporate Values and Approaches Focused on Safety and Prevention for Consumers, Survivors, and Staff
- Create Strength-Based Environments and Practices that Allow for Consumer and Survivor Empowerment
- Provide Ongoing TIC Staff Training and Education
- Improve and Target Staff Hiring Practices for TIC
- Update Policies and Procedures to Reflect New TIC Mission

With a better collective understanding of trauma, more survivors and consumers will find their path to wellness and recovery. And with a greater public commitment to providing trauma-informed programs and systems for survivors, we lessen and prevent a wide range of health, behavioral health, and social problems for generations to come.