

7. Approaches to Client Care

Practitioners often interact with children and adults experiencing the negative effects of ACEs when they are at their most vulnerable. Creating safe spaces without triggering trauma responses can take effort, practice and skill. Person-Centered Care (PCC) and Trauma-Informed (TIC) are complementary approaches to working with clients that emphasize the ‘whole’ person and consider each client as an individual with unique experiences, living conditions and needs.

Module 4: Taking Action to Prevent and Reduce the Effects of ACEs and Build Resilience of the ACEs Coalition ACEs & Resilience Training provides more information about TIC and PCC.

What is Trauma Informed Care?

Trauma-Informed Care emphasizes:¹

- the “whole person”; and
- providing care within the context of each individual’s life.

Trauma Informed Care shifts the way organizations view and approach trauma. It involves validating and recognizing the effects of traumatic events, coping strategies and effective treatments. A program, organization, or system that is trauma informed:

1. **REALIZES** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery
2. **RECOGNIZES** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system
3. **RESPONDS** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices
4. Seeks to actively **AVOID RE-TRAUMATIZATION**.^{2,3,4}

Clients want professionals who can provide information in a way they can understand. They need professionals who are open to listening and responding to questions and concerns, and make a noticeable effort to meet their client’s needs.

¹Harris, M. & Fallot, R. (2001). Envisions a trauma-informed service system: a vital paradigm shift. *New Directions for Mental Health Services*, 89, 3-22.

² Bolton, M., Buck, S., Conners, E.A., Matthews, C., Proulx, J., Wall, T., Willette, C., MacPhee-Sigurdson, M. & Stewart, P. (2013). *Trauma-informed: The Trauma Toolkit*. http://trauma-informed.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Trauma-informed_Toolkit.pdf

³ Melz, H., Morrison, C., & Ingoldsby, E. (2019). *Review of Trauma-informed Initiatives at the Systems Levels*. https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/262051/TI_Approaches_Research_Review.pdf

⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)’s Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative (2014). *SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*. <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4884.pdf>



What are the Principles of Trauma-Informed-Care^{5,6}

- **Safety:** Staff and clients feel physically and emotionally safe.
- **Trustworthiness and Transparency:** Organizational decisions and operations are as transparent as possible, with the intention to build trust.
- **Peer Support:** Opportunities for peer support are provided. Peers are individuals with lived experience of trauma.
- **Collaboration and Mutuality:** Active efforts are made to balance power differences between staff and clients, and across different levels of the organization.
- **Empowerment, voice, and choice:** Person-Centered Care is provided through a strengths-based, hopeful approach that gives clients a voice in decision-making and goal setting.
- **Cultural, historical and gender issues:** Create an organizational environment that reflects and responds to the diverse experiences and needs of people who live in your community and access your services.

⁵ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative (2014). *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*. <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4884.pdf>

⁶ Oral, R. & Ramirez, M., Coohy, C., Nakada, S., Walz, A., Kuntz, A., Benoit, J., & Peek-Asa, C. (2016). Adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed care: the future of health care. *Pediatric Research*, 79, 227–2

What is Person-Centered Care?^{7,8,9}

Person-Centered Care views the client as a “whole person”, takes into consideration each client’s unique needs and gives the client a voice in their care. PCC also encourages engaging the client, those who are important to the client (e.g. partner, relatives) and their various service providers as active partners in care.

PCC involves:

- “advocacy,
- empowerment,
- mutual respect and
- an understanding of a person’s right to be autonomous, to self-determine, and to actively participate in decisions about their health”¹⁰

⁷ RNAO. (2015). *Person-and-family-centered care*. International Affairs and Best Practice Guidelines. https://rnao.ca/sites/rnao-ca/files/FINAL_Web_Version_0.pdf

⁸ Calisi, R., Boyko, S., Vendette, A. & Zagar, A. (2016). What is Person-Centred Care? A Qualitative Inquiry into Oncology Staff and Patient and Family Experience of Person-Centred Care. *Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Services*, 47, 309-314.

⁹ Cancer Care Ontario. (2015). *Person-Centred Care Guideline*. <https://www.cancercareontario.ca/en/guidelines-advice/types-of-cancer/38631>