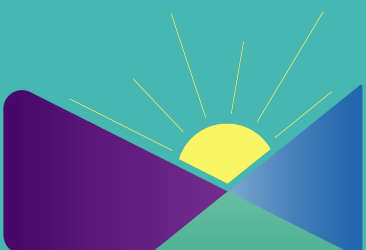


Toolkit for Trauma- Informed Training Facilitation



Family Safety Center

Why Trauma-Informed Training?



A trauma-informed approach leads us to recognize and respond to the impact of trauma on those we have contact with, which includes those we interact with as facilitators. We recognize the importance of continuing education for helping professionals, which also recognizing that these individuals often have trauma histories of their own. We believe in the importance of creating safe training spaces, and this toolkit will serve to provide a foundation for these efforts.

SAMHSA Principles of Trauma-Informed Care



Ahead of Time



Before a workshop, consider the following general questions:

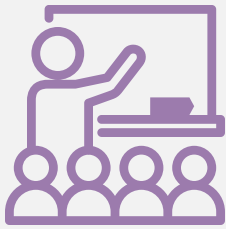
- Am I the best person to give this training? Consider your own triggers, personal experiences, and *bias*.
- What topics will I cover that might be traumatic or triggering to someone?
- Am I equipped to handle a disclosure during this training? What would I need to be prepared?
- Whose help can I enlist in the case of someone responding negatively? Does the hosting agency have capacity for support? Do I need a co-facilitator?

Audience Considerations



- Who is in the audience?
- What are their identities: visible and invisible? What historical trauma might I need to be aware of?
- What are their relationships to one another? Consider how this can benefit and complicate the learning experience.
- What dynamics already exist in the space? (workplace culture, shared trauma histories, etc.)
- Is this training mandatory or voluntary? How does that impact power dynamics and safety in the space?

Creating an Environment of Safety



Room set-up:

- Do attendees have adequate physical space?
- How will you communicate logistics to attendees? Are restrooms and exits clearly labeled?
- Do you want to provide items for audience members to fidget with to aid in focus? Does the space allow for this?
- Is the space physically accessible?

Beginning a training:

- Give attendees permission to leave - this can take the form of a trigger warning, or just an acknowledgement that content may be difficult and that attendees are **empowered to take care of their needs**.
- Follow up with anyone who seems activated or needs to leave the space - check in after, provide resources.
- **Be clear** about your objectives and agenda so people know what to expect, and then **follow them!**
- Build in space for a break and communicate when it will take place.
- Clarify that attendees have **choice** about how they participate in training. (i.e., only share what they wish to, give an option to "pass" if needed during activities)

Considerations for Designing Content

Language Matters!

1. Do your research: What chosen language or terminology are marginalized groups using to describe themselves?
2. Use the most inclusive language available, with the recognition that no group is monolithic.
3. Avoid assumptions - when in doubt, ask those in the room how they identify!
4. Follow the lead of those more marginalized than you and take a cultural humility approach.

- **Implement variety:** use a range of training methods to appeal to varied learning styles and personalities. Will introverts and extroverts be comfortable with this presentation?
- **Recognize the expertise in the room:** give opportunities for attendees to teach and lead when appropriate.
- **Know the "why":** can you identify the purpose of each activity and then communicate that to the audience? Prepare how to introduce activities, give clear instructions, monitor and debrief.

Trauma and Attendee Behavior

Consider what might be behind problematic audience behaviors - is this a trauma response?

"Difficult" audience members may seem:



- Withdrawn
- Agitated
- Disruptive
- Disconnected
- Inappropriate
- Anxious
- Resistant



Ask yourself: "Is this how they react to try to manage a trigger? How might I try to mitigate any harm this may have caused?"

Challenging Attendee Behavior

A facilitator's response to challenging behavior will depend on factors like size of group, physical set-up of the space, content of presentation, etc. Below are some strategies that may be effective for some common behaviors.

Begin by asking yourself:

- What personal experience might be guiding this reaction and how can I be sensitive to that as I respond?
- How can I address the behavior without fully disrupting the presentation?
- Is this person making oppressive, offensive, or otherwise discriminatory statements? How do I ensure this space remains safe for ALL attendees?
- Could taking a short break to regroup be useful?
- What am I noticing in myself?



TYPES OF BEHAVIOR

Victim-blaming: someone is making statements regarding victims or survivors being responsible for interpersonal violence

Trauma Response: someone seems to be especially negatively affected by the material and is visibly upset or has to leave

Steamrolling: someone is monopolizing the conversation or talking over you or other participants.

Non-participation: audience members are not responding to prompts or interacting as planned.

Racism/Bigotry: an audience member is making offensive or oppressive comments.

IMPACT OF BEHAVIOR

- Normalizes negative stigma against survivors,
- May make survivors in the audience feel hurt, frightened or retraumatized,

- Can make others afraid to share for fear of triggering someone.
- May be alarming or upsetting for other participants

- Shuts down participation from other audience members and can feel frustrating for participants who really want to hear the material.

- Can cause a training to "stall out" or feel like a lecture.
- May make audience members feel bored or uncomfortable.

- Causes harm to audience members who are part of the group targeted by the comments.
- Creates an environment where oppressive behavior is viewed as acceptable.

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO RESPOND

- It is the responsibility of facilitators in interpersonal violence work to address victim-blaming comments directly - do not ignore or gloss over them.
- Turn it to the group if needed: "What do you all think about what John said? Do you agree?" Open up dialogue to debunk myths. Whenever possible, reframe as part of the curriculum.

- Check in (or have a co-facilitator or other support individual check in) as soon as possible.
- Offer debrief if possible or identify additional resources for support.
- Consider taking a break for all to stretch, breathe & regroup.

- Redirect the individual, ask for others to share: "I'm really interested in hearing from some other voices on this..."
- Set norms around "take space, make space" at the beginning of the presentation and refer back to this agreement if needed.

- Engage audience members from the beginning, ensuring you're not just lecturing.
- Have an engaging activity on hand to utilize and plan for participatory exercises.
- Take into considerations various learning styles, and try to incorporate varied methods of participation.
- Name it! Let participants know the learning experience will be greatly improved by giving input.

- It is the presenter's responsibility to shut down oppressive comments and mitigate harm to oppressed groups. Be simple and direct, such as: "That statement is racist towards *name of people group*. Please refrain from using that language in this space."
- If racist comments get out of hand and the participant does not respond to initial efforts of the facilitator to teach and redirect, it is reasonable to ask them to leave.

**People are complex: You will never be able to anticipate every possible trigger, and it is often essential for people to engage with content they find difficult. Practice empathy with every audience.*