

Helping to Heal:

Conversations About Trauma-Informed Principles

Empowerment, Voice, and Choice



“I’m in control of my feelings. I’m in control of my life. And I am also in control of who I choose to be friends with. And I am also in control of my body. And nobody will ever violate my body again.”

Cindy Bentley, Advocate



Respect people’s private places and ask permission



Help someone have voice and choice



Help people know their rights



Help people build a circle of support

Throughout the organization and among the clients served, individuals’ strengths and experiences are recognized and built upon. The organization fosters a belief in the primacy of the people served, in resilience, and in the ability of individuals, organizations, and communities to heal and promote recovery from trauma. The organization understands that the experience of trauma may be a unifying aspect in the lives of those who run the organization, who provide the services, and/ or who come to the organization for assistance and support. As such, operations, workforce organization and services are organized to foster empowerment for staff and clients alike. Organizations understand the importance of power differentials and ways in which clients, historically, have been diminished in voice and choice and are often recipients of coercive treatment. Clients are supported in shared decision-making, choice, and goal setting to determine the plan of action they need to heal and move forward. They are supported in cultivating self-advocacy skills. Staff are facilitators of recovery rather than controllers of recovery. Staff are empowered to do their work as well as possible by adequate organizational support. This is a parallel process as staff need to feel safe, as much as people receiving services.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.

For more information and resources on trauma and trauma informed practices, visit The Link Center website: thelinkcenter.org