

# TRAUMA INFORMED CARE: WHAT IS IT?

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is an approach in the human service field that assumes that an individual is more likely than not to have a history of trauma. Trauma-Informed Care recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role trauma may play in an individual's life-including service staff (University at Buffalo Center for Social Research).

There are many approaches to Trauma-Informed Care, and no single person or entity owns the definition or single best approach. However, all of the successful models have one thing in common: they emphasize regulation and connection. (Dr. Bruce Perry). Below you will find the Four R's of Trauma-Informed Care from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The full SAMSHA report can be found at [https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA\\_Trauma.pdf](https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf)



## 1 Realize

In a trauma-informed approach, all people at all levels of the organization or system have a basic **realization** about trauma and understand how trauma can affect families, groups, organizations, and communities as well as individuals.

There is an understanding that trauma plays a role in mental and substance use disorders and should be systematically addressed in prevention, treatment, and recovery settings

## 2 Recognize

People in the organization or system are also able to **recognize** the signs of trauma. These signs may be gender, age, or setting-specific and may be manifest by individuals seeking or providing services in these settings. Trauma screening and assessment assist in the recognition of trauma, as do workforce development, employee assistance, and supervision practices.

## 3 Respond

The organization **responds** by applying the principles of a trauma-informed approach to all areas of functioning. Staff in every part of the organization have changed their language, behaviors and policies to take into consideration the experiences of trauma among children and adult users of the services and among staff providing the services.

## 4 Resisting Retraumatizing

A trauma-informed approach seeks to **resist re-traumatization** of clients as well as staff. Staff are taught to recognize how organizational practices may trigger painful memories and re-traumatize clients with trauma histories. For example, they recognize that placing a child who has been neglected and abandoned in a seclusion room may be re-traumatizing and interfere with healing.

Source: SAMHSA, 2014