

Safety Protocol for Trauma-Informed Group Environments:

By Auroara Leigh – Simply Sacred Solutions

1. **Clear Guidelines:**
 - Establish clear and explicit guidelines for the group. Outline expected behaviors, communication norms, and the purpose of the group.
2. **Informed Consent:**
 - Prior to joining, ensure all participants provide informed consent, clearly explaining the nature of the group, its goals, and any potential triggers.
3. **Facilitator Training:**
 - Equip facilitators with trauma-informed training. They should understand trauma responses, de-escalation techniques, and how to create a safe space.
4. **Establishing Trust:**
 - Begin with icebreakers and team-building activities to foster a sense of connection among participants. Building trust is foundational to creating a safe environment.
5. **Trauma Sensitivity Training:**
 - Provide participants with basic trauma sensitivity training, emphasizing the importance of empathy, active listening, and respect for diverse experiences.
6. **Grounding Techniques:**
 - Introduce grounding techniques that participants can use if they feel overwhelmed. This could include deep breathing, mindfulness exercises, or simple sensory grounding activities.
7. **Empowerment Language:**
 - Use empowering and strength-based language. Encourage participants to share their experiences in a way that feels comfortable for them.
8. **Confidentiality Agreement:**
 - Establish a group-wide commitment to confidentiality. Emphasize that what is shared in the group stays within the group. Clarify the limits of confidentiality (e.g., if there's a risk of harm).
9. **Responsibility and Accountability:**
 - Encourage a sense of responsibility among participants to create a supportive community. Each member should contribute to maintaining the safety of the group.

10. **Trauma Triggers:**
 - Develop a system for participants to communicate their triggers to the facilitators discreetly. Facilitators can then adjust the session content accordingly.
11. **Respectful Listening:**
 - Cultivate a culture of respectful and active listening. Participants should feel heard and validated without judgment.
12. **Check-Ins and Check-Outs:**
 - Begin and end each session with check-ins and check-outs. This provides an opportunity for participants to share their current emotional state and express any concerns.
13. **Trauma-Informed Language:**
 - Use trauma-informed language that avoids assumptions and acknowledges the impact of trauma on individuals.
14. **Crisis Intervention Plan:**
 - Develop a clear crisis intervention plan in case a participant experiences distress during a session. This may include a designated quiet space, access to support resources, and contact information for crisis services.
15. **Feedback Mechanism:**
 - Establish a confidential feedback mechanism for participants to share their thoughts on the group dynamics and facilitation. This allows for continuous improvement.
16. **Ongoing Education:**
 - Regularly provide resources and educational materials on trauma, resilience, and self-care. This supports ongoing learning and awareness within the group.
17. **Flexibility in Participation:**
 - Recognize that participants may need breaks or may choose not to share during certain sessions. Foster an environment where participation is welcomed but not forced.
18. **Closure Planning:**
 - Plan for a gradual closure of the group, allowing participants to express their feelings about the ending and providing resources for ongoing support.

Remember, adapting these guidelines to the specific needs and dynamics of the group is crucial. Regularly reassess and refine the safety protocol based on participant feedback and evolving group dynamics.