

Trauma-Informed Strategies Checklist

Taking a trauma-informed approach does not require being a health expert or therapist.

In its simplest form, trauma-informed means you are aware of the impact of trauma on the brain and body and that you actively implement strategies to avoid intensifying trauma related problems. Individuals who have experienced trauma may find it difficult to trust others. Below are some best practices when dealing with members who may have experienced trauma.

Trauma-Informed Checklist

- Be fully transparent with the member about their case – even if the outcome may not be positive.
- Be clear about boundaries, expectations, possible outcomes, and what to expect from their relationship with you.
- Preview for the member what is to come, both in the relationship and during the broader grievance process.
- You can begin interviews or conversations with members who are experiencing racial trauma by simply asking the opening question: what happened to you?
- Follow through on commitments and appointments. Don't make promises you might break. Tell members when they can expect to hear from you, how long tasks will take and, if you make a mistake, own it, explain what happened and explain how, if it is possible, you will rectify the error.
- Be patient with yourself and your member. Grievances can be complex, stressful, and challenging, even under the best of circumstances. Give yourself and the member the space to make mistakes, learn, and grow together over the course of your representation.
- Create a welcoming space and welcoming intake procedures
- Adapt the physical space to be non-threatening.
- Offer opportunities to ground the client during stressful discussions
- Provide clear information about procedures and policies.



- Create a clear outline/agenda for meetings.
- Go slow, providing more time than normal if necessary.
- Check in with the member about how they are feeling.
- Encourage the member to schedule a therapy appointment after your appointment as they may be feeling upset.
- Offer the member breaks.
- Give members a choice in decisions that affect them, in a way that is purposeful and goes beyond just your ethical requirements
- Trust the member, where possible, let them drive the plan for their success. Listen to them, allow them to be heard.
- Try to maximize the number of choices the member has. Give the member the choice of where they want to sit for interviews and when they want to take a break. Make processes explicit and transparent for the member, tell them what's required of them.
- It is important to recognize and promote resilience. Apply a strengths-based approach to working with traumatized people as it can help draw out, identify and build on people's abilities and positive attributes.
- Empathy, patience, consistency, transparency, and reliability are crucial for establishing a trusting relationship with a member who has experienced trauma.
- Ultimately, a trauma-informed approach can help people who have experienced trauma to successfully navigate workplace systems/processes; feel in control and safe; minimize the risk of re-traumatization; and hopefully, diffuse the effects of a traumatic incident.
- Remember, applying a trauma-informed approach begins with you. Critically self-reflect on your relationship to control, trauma, emotional expressions and processes.
- Creating a trauma-informed approach requires your intentional commitment to do no further harm to those who you represent and advocate on behalf of.

This has been adapted from the Golden Eagle Rising Society Trauma-Informed Toolkit. <https://www.goldeneaglerising.org/docuploads/Golden-Eagle-Rising-Society-Trauma-Informed-Toolkit-2020-10-18.pdf>

