



TRAINING SERIES OUTLINE

Trauma-Informed Care

A three-part series for community-serving organizations

1 SESSION PER WEEK · 3 WEEKS

90 MINUTES EACH

VIRTUAL

From Understanding to Organizational Practice

The shift from “What’s wrong with you?” to “What might be happening to you?” is the foundation of trauma-informed care.

Trauma is common among the people nonprofits serve, especially in communities affected by violence, poverty, and systemic inequities. It shapes behavior, engagement, and trust, even when it is never visible or disclosed. Many challenges in community programs are trauma-driven, not motivation-driven, and without a shared understanding, staff can unintentionally escalate harm or disengagement.

This three-part series gives teams a common language, practical tools, and the organizational systems to deliver trauma-informed, effective, and equitable services. Delivered one session per week for three weeks, each builds on the one before it, moving participants from knowledge, to practice, to lasting organizational change.

01

FOUNDATION

Understanding Trauma and Its Impact

What trauma is, how it shows up, and how it affects engagement with services.

02

KNOWLEDGE TO PRACTICE

The Six Trauma-Informed Care Principles in Action

Applying the six principles to everyday nonprofit operations.

03

TOOLS & SUSTAINABILITY

Trauma-Informed Skills, De-Escalation & Organizational Integration

Practical tools, staff safety, and the systems that make TIC last.

FORMAT

Virtual

SESSIONS

3 × 90 minutes

TIMELINE

Weekly, 3 weeks

STYLE

Interactive

Who It’s For

- Frontline and direct-service staff
- Program managers and supervisors
- Executive leaders and board members shaping policy and culture

How Sessions Are Delivered

- Real-world scenarios and case studies
- Group discussion, chat shares, and open mic
- Guided self-reflection on bias and practice

SESSION ONE · FOUNDATION

01

Understanding Trauma and Its Impact

90
minutes

Building a shared language and foundation

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- 01 Define trauma and its different forms
- 02 Recognize common trauma responses in youth and adults
- 03 Understand how trauma impacts the brain and behavior
- 04 Identify how trauma affects engagement with nonprofit services
- 05 Apply this knowledge to a real-world case study

What We Cover

- What trauma is, and what it is not
- Five forms of trauma: individual, developmental, community, systemic and historical, and vicarious
- Fight, flight, freeze, and fawn as survival responses
- The brain under stress and why reasoning fails in the moment
- Why clients disengage: fear, shame, mistrust, and loss of control

How Participants Engage

- Opening scenario: two staff responses to the same disengaged participant
- Staff self-reflection on personal bias and the labels we use
- Case study: applying trauma responses to a youth in an after-school program

KEY TAKEAWAY Behavior in high-stress moments is driven by the nervous system, not intent.

02

The Six Trauma-Informed Care Principles in Action

*Converting knowledge to practice***90**
minutes

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- 01** Recap what trauma-informed care is, and what it is not
- 02** Describe the six trauma-informed care principles
- 03** Explore how those principles show up in nonprofit operations
- 04** Identify concrete ways to make their organization more trauma-informed

What We Cover

- SAMHSA's 4 R's: realize, recognize, respond, resist re-traumatization
- Why TIC must be organizational, not dependent on individual staff
- The six principles: safety; trustworthiness and transparency; peer support; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment, voice and choice; and cultural, historical and gender issues
- TIC across policies, programs, physical spaces, communication, decision-making, and client pathways

How Participants Engage

- Walk-through: what a participant experiences in their first 10 minutes with your organization
- Before-and-after case studies for each principle, showing system changes and results
- Identifying where people may feel confused, rushed, or unsafe

KEY TAKEAWAY When trauma-informed care is built into systems, the organization itself becomes a source of safety.

03

Trauma-Informed Skills, De-Escalation & Organizational Integration

90
minutes

Practical tools, sustainability, and organizational alignment

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- 01 Use practical, trauma-informed de-escalation tools
- 02 Strengthen staff safety before, during, and after incidents
- 03 Apply trauma-informed responses in real situations
- 04 Identify the systems and policies that sustain TIC long-term

What We Cover

- The connection between trauma and escalation, and early warning signs
- Nine de-escalation techniques, from nervous system matching to exiting with dignity
- The Staff Safety Triangle: clarity, permission, and backup
- Post-incident support, secondary stress, and burnout
- Long-term systems: governance, hiring, training, incident protocols, wellness, language standards, data, equity, and leadership accountability

How Participants Engage

- Open mic: what helps staff feel safe when things get tense
- Group share on why clients escalate with your organization
- Real-life scenario practice with trauma-informed responses
- Leadership TIC system check

KEY TAKEAWAY If staff safety depends on individuals being good at de-escalation, the system has failed. Lasting TIC is a leadership and policy commitment.