



## TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH CONTINUUM

The New Jersey Office of Resilience’s Trauma Informed Approach Continuum describes the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are associated with the process of understanding and integration of trauma informed principles and practices within an organization. This continuum is a modified version of the Missouri Model (2019), combined with the Healing Centered Engagement Model (Ginwright, S., 2018). It moves from trauma awareness to healing-centered, articulating a profound shift in which policies, environments, and interactions consistently prioritize [trauma-informed principles](#) to prevent re-traumatization and foster healing. The stages move progressively from foundational behaviors and skills to more complex ones. The behaviors and skills are not mutually exclusive, and organizations may attain competencies across the continuum. As new knowledge becomes available, the stages in the continuum may be repeated.

### **Trauma Aware**

- Organizations have become aware of how prevalent trauma is and have begun to consider that it might impact their clientele and their staff.
- Staff are introduced to the paradigm shift from, “What’s wrong with you?” to “What happened to you?” when considering the root causes of behavior.
- Staff at all levels understand the word trauma and how it can change the way they view and interact with others.
- Workplace safety is prioritized and considers physical, psychological, and moral factors.

### **Trauma Sensitive**

- Organizations promote and value a trauma-informed lens, through exploring the principles of trauma-informed care within their environment and daily work.
- Organizations are building consensus around trauma-informed principles.
- Organizations consider the implications of embedding trauma-informed principles across policies and practices. Avenues for change are considered and explored.
- Trauma training is facilitated for all staff, including when onboarding new employees.
- Staff feel supported and have space/s for their voices to be heard.



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### **Trauma Responsive**

- Organizations have begun to change their organizational practices to highlight the role of trauma. At all levels of the organization, staff begin rethinking the routines and infrastructure of the organization.
- Staff utilizes language that supports safety, trust and transparency, voice and choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Staff applies knowledge of trauma and resilience internally and externally.
- Organizations have policies that support addressing staff's personal, secondary and vicarious trauma.
- A "universal precautions" approach is used, presuming that any/all clientele and staff may be trauma impacted.
- People with lived experience, including staff, are engaged in meaningful roles throughout the agency.

Individuals outside the organization understand that trauma-informed approaches are at the center of the mission.

### **Healing Centered**

- Organizations shift from an individual's "identity focused on trauma" to "identity focused on possibility"; paradigm shift moves from "What happened to you?" to "What's right with you?" to counteract the tendency of traumatic experience being seen as, 'less than'.
- Behavior is understood as an indicator of stressors, rather than "misbehavior" or as a symptom of individual trauma; organization works to address factors that cause trauma, mitigate its effects and prevent trauma from re/occurring,
- Trauma interventions shift from individual-focused to community-focused as healing centered: policies and practices that are impartial are integrated into the fabric of the work.
- Aim is for restoration and healing that is rooted in identity, versus coping with symptoms, utilizing authentic human connection to heal.
- Healing-centered engagement focuses on the well-being we want.
- Approaches to providing services are trauma shielding or trauma reducing. Practices are reflective and collaborative, promoting learning, growth and prevention. Past experiences are utilized for making meaning and relational leadership is thriving.



## References

*Delaware Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed Care (2019).*

<https://governor.delaware.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2019/02/Delaware-Developmental-Framework-FSCC.pdf>

*Ginwright, S. (2018, May 31). The future of healing: Shifting from trauma informed care to healing centered engagement. Medium, retrieved from <https://ginwright.medium.com/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c>*

*Missouri Model (2019). <https://dmh.mo.gov/media/pdf/missouri-model-developmental-framework-trauma-informed-approaches>*

<https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/trauma-violence/trauma-informed-approaches-programs>