

TRAUMA INFORMED COURT SELF-ASSESSMENT

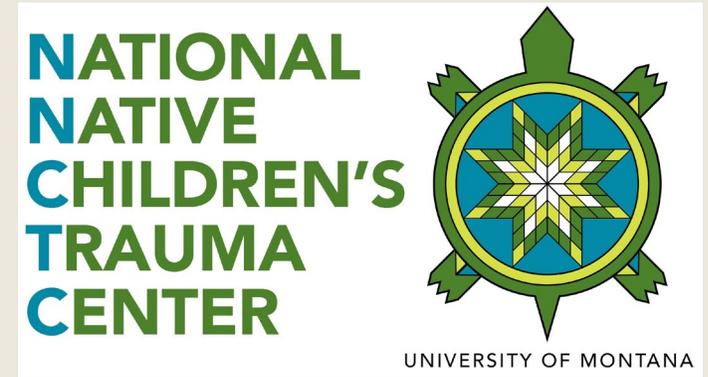
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TRIBAL YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER



A FUTURE WHERE INDIGENOUS YOUTH THRIVE
THROUGH **TRADITIONAL** LIFEWAYS.

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Essential Elements of a Trauma Informed Juvenile Justice System

1. Trauma informed **policies and procedures**
2. **Identification/screening** of youth who have been traumatized
3. **Clinical assessment/intervention** for trauma-impaired youth
4. Trauma informed **programming and staff education**
5. **Prevention and management of secondary traumatic stress**
6. Trauma-informed **partnering with youth and families**
7. Trauma-informed **cross system collaboration**
8. Trauma-informed **approaches to address disparities and diversity**

NCTSN

The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

Trauma Informed Juvenile Court Self-Assessment

- Parallels the eight Essential Elements which serve as aspirational standards
- Attempts to respond to the challenge of how to ensure those aspirational standards are adopted, infused and sustained in day-to-day operations
- Provides a framework to examine, review and rate day-to-day operations with a set of benchmarks to evaluate the extent court operations reflect the content, process, and procedures reflected in each essential element
- Suggests forming a team to conduct self-assessment and guide planning. Team should represent various stakeholders that touch the life of youth in the community and may include judges, court administrator, probation, diversion, schools, law enforcement, behavioral health, prosecutors, defense attorneys, family and youth to review

Essential Element 1: Trauma Informed Policies and Practices

Psychological safety

Resisting re-traumatization



- Trauma-informed policies and procedures increase physical and psychological safety for youth, family, and staff.
- Preventing threats to individuals who have experienced trauma means ensuring the courtroom environment, including both courtroom structures and staff behavior, eliminates the possibility of trauma triggers.
- Considerations:
 - *Policies and practices mandate creation of safe spaces where youth and families can re-group when they experience posttraumatic stress reactions that interfere with their responsible participation in the legal process. (1f)*
 - *Policies and practices related to the following activities ensure that system responses do not stigmatize, exclude or re-traumatize youth (1h):*
 - Use of physical restraints (never or rarely used)
 - Shackling practices (never or rarely used)
 - Detention decisions (is an alternative to detention possible? Diversion program? Restorative practices?)
 - Isolation (never or rarely used)
 - Court hearings (courtroom assessment determines potential for trauma triggers. Court considers alternatives to in person hearings if able).

Essential Element 1: Trauma Informed Policies and Practices

Training and education for court
personnel

Psychoeducation to youth and families



- Shared understanding of trauma and its impacts support a system where everyone who touches the life of a youth can respond in a way that minimizes the potential for re-traumatization.
- Shared language among staff creates a system that can more effectively collaborate towards a goal of reducing re-traumatization. If everyone is speaking the same language, we can more easily create goals, generate desired outcomes and assess progress.
- Training should be provided upon orientation and regularly thereafter (ideally with a scaffolding of depth in content to grow knowledge over time)
- Considerations:
 - *Policies and practices mandate education and training for all staff on the adverse effects of traumatic event exposure and traumatic stress on youth. (1b)*
 - *Policies and practices mandate education and training for all staff on appropriate responses to youth that prevent further traumatization and minimize re-activating or exacerbating current traumatic stress reactions. (1c).*
 - *Policies and practices mandate that attorneys/court advocates who represent youth receive education and training on the effects of trauma on youth and families. (1e).*



Essential Element 1: Trauma Informed Policies and Practices

Safety for victims of crimes and their families

Connecting victims to services

- Court procedures and practices should consider the impact of court proceedings on victims of crime who may also find the court process to include trauma triggers.

- Considerations:
 - Victim is offered a space within the court that is separate from the offender.
 - *Policies and practices ensure that juvenile court activities maximize physical and psychological safety for victims of crimes and their families. (1o)*
 - Policies and practices ensure victims of crime engaging with the juvenile court are made aware of available victim assistance resources. (1n)

Essential Element 2: Identification/ Screening of Youth who have Experienced Trauma

Recognition of trauma symptoms
impacting youth wellness

Building safety for youth and staff

Screening, assessment and treatment
services

- A universal trauma-informed strategy is to identify a youth's trauma symptoms that may have contributed to their offense(s) and impact success in the program.
- Considerations:
 - *Training for staff who administer the screens (2h)*
 - *Selection and adaptation of a brief, reliable and valid tool that reflects the diversity of youth served (2c)*
 - *Results are used to inform treatment services (2d)*

Essential Element 2: Identification/ Screening of Youth who have Experienced Trauma

Collaboration across providers
supporting the youth

Youth voice and choice

- For youth with significant trauma symptoms, referrals to additional supports may be necessary.
- Accurately interpreted screeners reduce redundancy in assessment and create opportunity for cross-program collaboration
- Well-timed and empathetic assessments create space for youth to share their story and begin a path forward
- Considerations:
 - *Coordination among justice system professionals such that results are shared and the # of screenings minimized (2e)*
 - *Results are shared with youth and caregivers in an empathetic and non-technical way (2f)*

Essential Element 3: Clinical Assessment & Intervention

Responds to trauma-related needs of youth with services that integrate trauma knowledge and TI practices

Cross-sector collaboration

Screening, assessment and treatment services

- Clinical assessments and treatment services are trauma-specific and the standard of care for youth identified with traumatic stress reactions
- A trauma-informed clinical assessment provides a holistic understanding of the youth's experiences and TI treatment services support healing from trauma while promoting prosocial skills for managing trauma symptoms

Essential Element 3: Clinical Assessment & Intervention



- Considerations
 - *Assessments evaluate the connection between past/current traumas and the impact on current social/ emotional functioning(3Ae)*
 - *Interventions are tailored to the unique needs of each family with respect to their culture and personal characteristics (language, community, intellectual ability, available resources) (3Bc)*
 - *Youth receive services designed to reduce posttraumatic stress reactions (3Bd)*

Essential Element 4: Trauma- Informed Programming and Staff Education

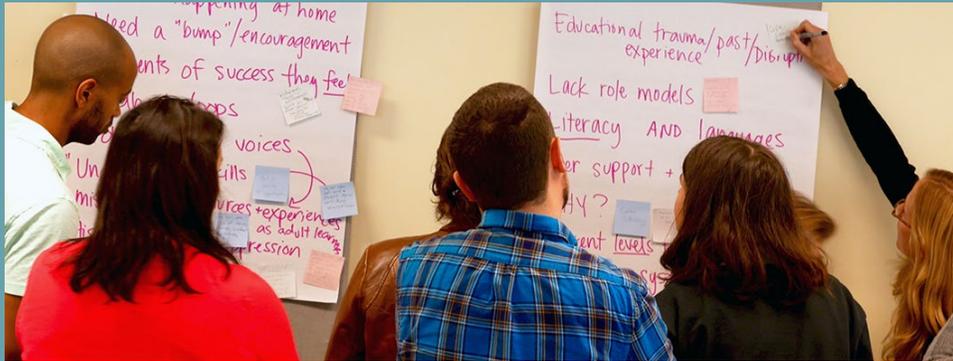
Realize the widespread impact of trauma and respond with trauma knowledge and skills

Builds physical and psychological safety for youth and staff

Enhance workforce development and capacity

- Evidence-based training on trauma's impact on development and functioning is essential to providing services that respond to youth who have experienced trauma
- Training on trauma-informed care begins at the onset of employment and continues as required professional development
- Staff are equipped and skilled in response to trauma symptoms manifesting in youth

Essential Element 4: Trauma- Informed Programming and Staff Education



- Considerations:
 - Staff receive on the effects of trauma and the nature of traumatic stress reactions? (4a, 4b)
 - TI-training is provided to new hires (4d)
 - TI-training is provided in an ongoing way to increase expertise (4d)
 - Training is provided around the impacts of historical trauma, racism, and discrimination as a result of gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ability, etc. (4f)

Essential Element 5: Prevention and Management of Secondary Traumatic Stress

Court personnel well-being

Identification of Secondary Traumatic
Stress

Strategies to prevent and cope with
Secondary Traumatic Stress



- Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another.
- It is important to identify when we may be experiencing symptoms of STS in order to respond appropriately. Timely response may help prevent significant long-term impacts to wellbeing, burnout and workforce turnover
- Examples:
 - *Juvenile court staff/judges/administrators/ attorneys are provided training and resources to identify when they or their co-workers are experiencing STS as well as prevention and coping strategies. (5a)*
 - *Trainings are provided upon hire as a component of orientation.*
 - *Court personnel are made aware of Employee Assistance Programs and encouraged to take advantage of those benefits*
 - *Court personnel are encouraged to use available vacation and sick time in order to take care of mental/emotional well-being*

Essential Element 6: Partnering with Youth and Families

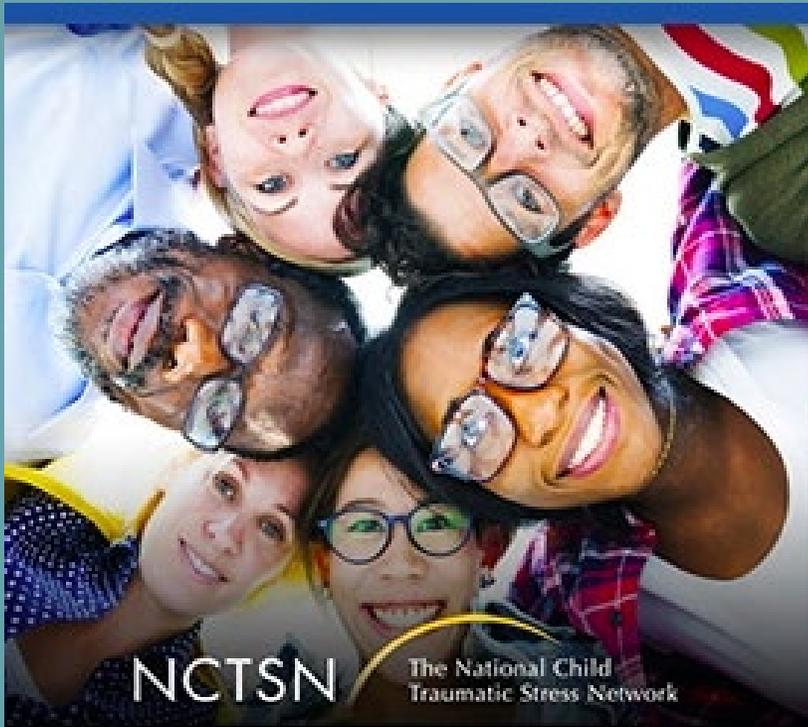
Empowerment, voice and choice

Collaboration and mutuality



- Youth and families are engaged as partners in programming and therapeutic services.
- Trauma can leave youth and families feeling powerless and isolated, it can lead to reluctance to trust, cooperate, and engage in services
- Having meaningful control reduces reliance on problematic coping strategies like avoidance, defiance, blaming, etc. And supports learning how to manage trauma reactions and work towards productive coping skills.

Essential Element 6: Partnering with Youth and Families



- Considerations:
 - *Court service planning includes input from the youth and family and targets the adverse effects of trauma and behavioral health challenges (6b)*
 - *Youth and families identify supportive adults in their lives to be included in the case plan to encourage engagement and increase success (6e)*

Essential Element 7: Trauma- Informed Cross System Collaboration

Response embeds trauma-informed knowledge and strategies while resisting re-traumatization

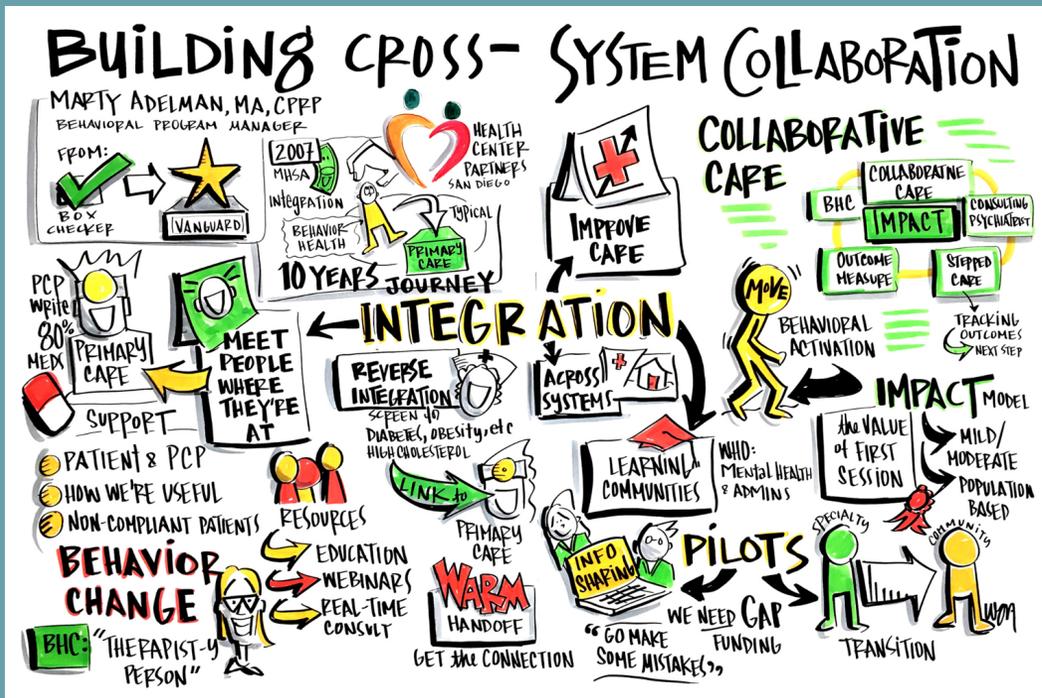
Cross sector collaboration

Screening, assessment and treatment

- Maximizing collaboration amongst systems can increase effectiveness and continuity of interventions employed to address youths' behavioral challenges
- Collaboration can also help repair the social contract in community systems
- Improves information sharing across programs
- Reduces redundancy in intakes and assessments for youth involved in multiple systems

Essential Element 7: Trauma- Informed Cross System Collaboration

- Considerations:
 - Partnerships exist across the numerous programs/ systems where youth are involved (7a)
 - Partnerships have communication plans that allow for information sharing while protecting youth and family confidentiality (7e)
 - Partnerships identify strategies to ensure successful transition across systems and settings, preserving access to trauma-informed or trauma-specific treatments and services that are working well and discontinuing those that are not working well for youth and families (7d)



Essential Element 8: Address Disparities and Diversity

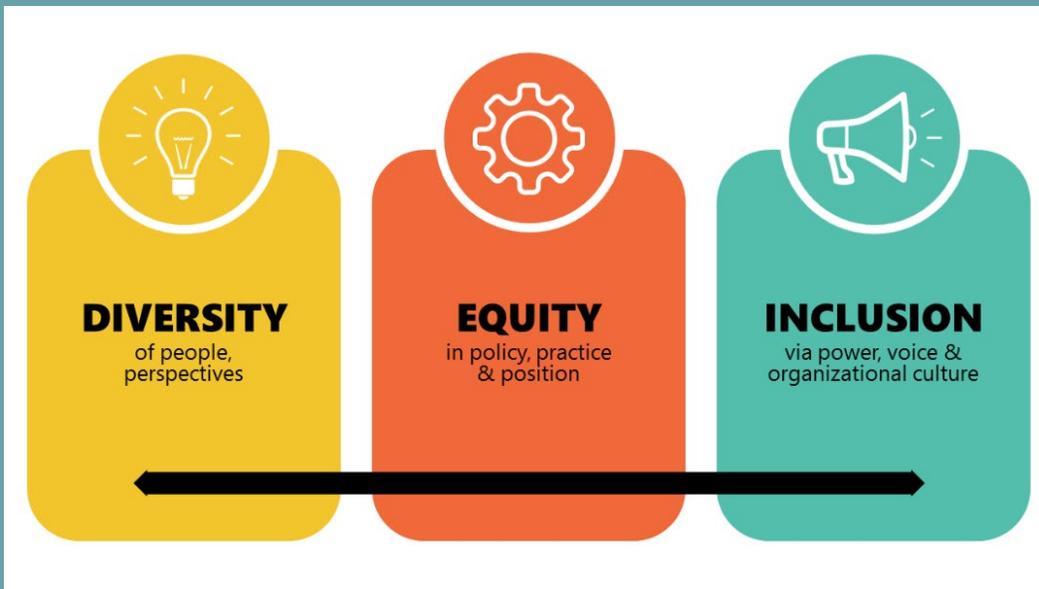
Resist re-traumatization

Safety

Culture, history and gender issues

- Practices and policies address the diverse and unique needs of all groups of youth and do not result in disparities related to race, ethnicity, gender, gender-identity, sexual orientation, age, intellectual and development level or socioeconomic background.
- A continuous process or review and reform

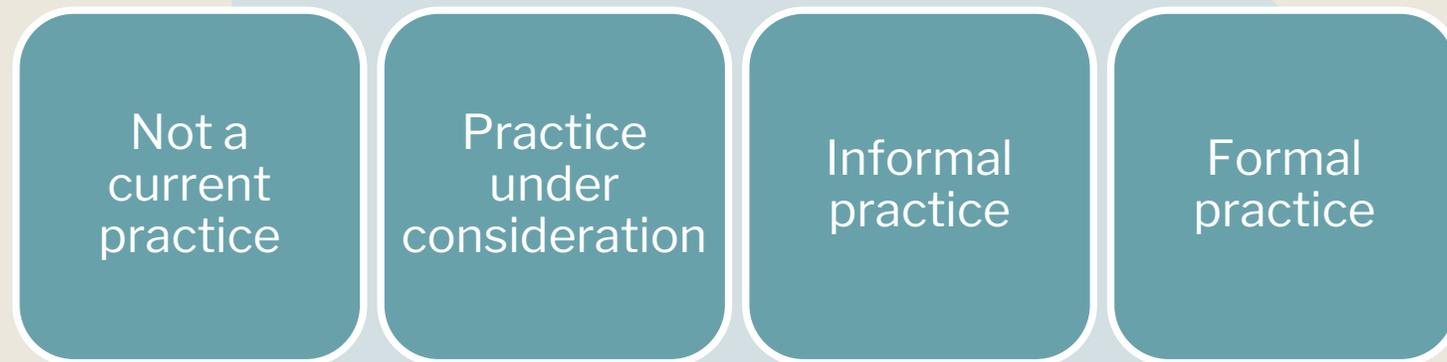
Essential Element 8: Address Disparities and Diversity



- Considerations
 - *JJ staff receive training and resources on strategies to support vulnerable populations (8a)*
 - *Youth have opportunities to receive prosocial support from youth and adults who share similar identities (8c)*
 - *There are specific strategies in place to ensure access to effective services for youth and families with language or comprehension barriers. (8g)*

Conducting the Self-Assessment

- Rate the Element benchmarks on a continuum



EPIS Framework Phase

Exploration

- Majority of benchmarks are not a current practice
- May be just considering trauma informed practices with no formal plan for how this will be accomplished

Preparation

- Majority of benchmarks are rated as under consideration or informal practice

Implementation

- Court has formally adopted practices that are supported by policy.
- Staff members are trained and have working knowledge of the policy or practice.

Sustainment

- Practices and procedures have been implemented system wide and considered ingrained and stable throughout the system.
- Practices are regularly monitored through quality assurance processes
- Commitment to maintain practice through routine training, secure funding, etc..

Develop a Plan for System Improvement

- Strategic planning around identified priorities
 - *Self-assessment strategic planning worksheet for each element may help guide the strategic planning process*
- Three step strategic planning process
 1. *Prioritize the changes recommended by the self-assessment team. What are the team's priorities for strategic planning under this element?*
 2. *Develop key tasks (concrete next steps) for addressing priorities and outline a timeline for completing tasks. Tasks should be concrete, quantifiable and tracked.*
 3. *Establish a proposed timeline to ensure there is a deadline for completing tasks and individual(s) responsible for their completion*

Considerations for the Self-Assessment Team

- **Assess organizational capacity:** Determine how organizational capacity will inform the prioritization and goal development
 - *What resources, in what quantity, can be devoted to this project right now?*
 - *Are there gaps in what or who is needed to make changes?*
 - *Are there ways to leverage existing partnerships to fill gaps or are new partnerships needed?*
- **Build on strengths:** Consider what has worked in the past and explore what factors contributed to that success.
 - *Who supported those practices? What strategies were utilized to engage and prepare staff and other stakeholders? What resources were utilized?*
- **Trauma-Informed Implementation:** Consider that to be truly trauma informed, implementation of new practices should also be trauma informed.
 - *Include stakeholders from all groups impacted by change*
 - *Involve frequent and open communication about what is being implemented and why, when and how the process is working*
 - *Allow all participants to provide feedback and receive answers to questions or concerns*
 - *Address concerns or suggestions that stakeholders raise*

Understanding and Communicating Timeline and Scope

- Courts can choose any number of approaches to completing the assessment, from completing the entire assessment in a short period of time to extending the assessment over a long period of time while focusing on only one element at a time.
- Courts should consider how many resources they have to complete the assessment and develop a reasonable timeframe given these resources
 - *Staff, time, competing strategic priorities, ect.*
- Prior to initiative the assessment, courts should orient their staff to the Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System and highlight the assessment is based solely on those eight elements

Questions?