Guiding Principles and Recommendations for Trauma-Responsive Treatment Courts

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Disclaimer

Learning Objectives

- After attending this session, participants will be able to:

  - Understand the importance of incorporating trauma-responsive policies and practices into their treatment court.

  - Have strategies for implementing the recommendations for a trauma-responsive treatment court in their jurisdiction.

  - List the key principles of *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*.

Overview of Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach

SAMHSA's
Concept of Trauma
and Guidance for a
Trauma-Informed Approach

Prepared by
SAMHSA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative
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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SAMHSA
www.samhsa.gov • 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

SIX KEY PRINCIPLES OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice and Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, and **Other issues**

TEN IMPLEMENTATION DOMAINS

1. Governance and Leadership
2. Policy
3. Physical Environment
4. Engagement and Involvement
5. Cross Sector Collaboration
6. Screening, Assessment, Treatment Services
7. Training and Workforce Development
8. Progress Monitoring and Quality Assurance
9. Financing
10. Evaluation

Development Process

- Expert panel meetings

- Reviewed and synthesized output from EPM sessions

- Developed initial draft guidance to the field

- Sought additional input and review from the field – All Rise conferences

- Convened additional groups to review draft guidance/recommendations

- Pilot tested guidance/recommendations with selected courts

- Anticipated official release of publication in summer 2025

Implementation of a Trauma-Informed Approach

- Requires change at multiple levels of an organization

- Requires alignment with the Six Key Principles

- Must involve stakeholders of all types and at all levels within the organization

- Requires a systematic review and comprehensive organizational assessment aligned with the 10 Implementation Domains

10 Implementation Domains for Trauma-Informed Approach

1. Governance and Leadership
2. Policy
3. Physical Environment
4. Engagement and Involvement
5. Cross Sector Collaboration
6. Screening, Assessment, and Treatment Services
7. Training and Workforce Development
8. Progress Monitoring and Quality Assurance*
9. Financing*
10. Evaluation*

Domain 1: Governance/Leadership

- Leadership of the organization support implementing and sustaining a trauma-informed approach

- Presence of trauma specialist/champion and workgroup to oversee the work

- Integration of peer perspectives

Domain 1: Governance/Leadership

Guidance

The Treatment Court (TC) judge must serve as a champion for the implementation of a trauma-informed approach and must strive to communicate support and guidance in a manner that is inclusive and welcoming for both TC staff and persons receiving services

Domain 1: Governance/Leadership

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

Domain 2: Policy

- Formal policy/mission statement that refers to importance of trauma and the need to account for trauma across all aspects of operation
- The approach must be 'hard-wired' into practices and procedures, not solely relying on training workshops or the direction of a leader
- Ongoing review program settings, procedures, and formal policies to ensure using a trauma-informed approach and avoid re-traumatizing

Domain 2: Policy

Guidance

Written policies and procedures should acknowledge the prevalence and impact of direct and vicarious trauma on TC staff and participants and should aim to ensure a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives in the composition of TC teams.

Targeted documentation for TC staff and TC participants should be accessible in a variety of formats, and provide clear, but flexible, rules and opportunities for safeguarding the physical and emotional safety of staff and persons receiving services.

Domain 2: Policy

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

Domain 3: Physical Environment

- Promotes a sense of safety (physical and emotional) and collaboration

- Supports a trauma-informed approach through openness, transparency, and shared spaces

Domain 3: Physical Environment

Guidance

Whenever possible within the TC process, modifications to the physical setting, relational arrangements and professional interactions should be introduced to minimize triggering occurrences and language, and to promote both perceived and actual safety.

Domain 3: Physical Environment

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

Domain 4: Engagement and Involvement of Persons in Recovery, People Receiving Services, and Family Members Receiving Services

- Significant involvement, voice, and meaningful choice at all levels (e.g., program design, implementation, service delivery, quality assurance, addressing community characteristics, workforce development, etc.)

- Actively solicit opinions of people in recovery with trauma experiences through advisory boards, focus groups, suggestion boxes, etc.

Domain 4: Engagement and Involvement of Persons in Recovery, People Receiving Services, and Family Members Receiving Services

Guidance

Whenever possible, TC leadership should introduce initiatives designed to expand family and social supports with targeted goals of lessening stress, strengthening resilience and promoting recovery.

Trained and fairly-compensated peers should play prominent and diverse roles in all aspects of court operation, goal setting and process improvement. Peers should be recognized as core members of the TC team and provided with opportunities for professional growth.

Domain 4: Engagement and Involvement of Persons in Recovery, People Receiving Services, and Family Members Receiving Services

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

Domain 5: Cross Sector Collaboration

- Built on a shared understanding of trauma and principles of trauma-informed approach

Domain 5: Cross Sector Collaboration

<u>Guidance</u>

TC leadership should undertake and support cross sector efforts to promote trustworthiness and transparency, and support empowerment, voice and choice of TC stakeholders.

These efforts should be designed to invite greater collaboration, enhance communication, and provide culturally inclusive training across multiple stakeholder groups - among TC members and participants, between the TC and community providers/referral agencies, and within the general public.

Domain 5: Cross Sector Collaboration

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

Domain 6: Screening, Assessment, Treatment Services

- Universal trauma screening and assessment, using appropriate, validated tools

Domain 6: Screening, Assessment, Treatment Services

<u>Guidance</u>

Each Treatment Court should employ comprehensive, evidence-based, and culturally appropriate instrumentation for screening and assessment of all persons being considered for referral to services and supports.

Screening instruments should be universally administered; targeted assessments should follow positive screens. Instruments used for purposes of assessment should be validated and normed and, when possible, standardized across providers.

Domain 6: Screening, Assessment, Treatment Services

- Practitioners use and are trained in interventions based on evidence-based practices

- Services are culturally appropriate and reflect principles of trauma-informed approach

- Trauma-specific interventions are acceptable, effective, and readily available

Domain 6: Screening, Assessment, Treatment Services

Guidance

Interventions should be multi-faceted and culturally informed.

Clinical interventions and supervision plans should be delivered by providers who are appropriately credentialed and who engage in on-going training on evidence-based practice.

Trauma-specific practices should be incorporated across TC operations.

Domain 6: Screening, Assessment, Treatment Services

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

Domain 7: Training and Workforce Development

- Training about trauma should be ongoing and include all staff at all levels

- Human resources incorporates trauma-informed principles in hiring, supervision, staff evaluation

- Maintain awareness of the experience of direct, secondary, and vicarious trauma and make resources and supports available and accessible to staff

Domain 7: Training and Workforce Development

Guidance

Comprehensive trauma training is a critical need. Each TC should establish a schedule for the regular delivery of trauma-informed and trauma-responsive content that should be mandated for TC staff and affiliated personnel, and strongly encouraged for all clinical, supervision, and recovery service providers. TCs should identify a preferred provider for staff education and quality assurance.

Decision-making on workforce employment, retention, and development should consider the broad range of backgrounds and perspectives needed for ideal TC team composition. These issues should also be prioritized in drafting policy and procedure, staffing, service delivery and program assessment.

Domain 7: Training and Workforce Development

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

Implementation Domains for Trauma-Informed Approach

Additional Implementation Domains*

8) **Progress Monitoring & Quality Assurance**
   - Ongoing assessment, tracking, and monitoring of trauma-informed principles

9) **Financing**
   - Financing structures are designed to include resources for staff training on trauma, peer support, and allow for the incorporation of implementation domain principles

10) **Evaluation**

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