

Trauma Informed Supervision (TIS)

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To end the HIV epidemic, we must consider the impact of organizational environments frontline staff are a part of.

- The oppressive socio-political-economic context of the Deep U.S. South has contributed to and exacerbated the HIV epidemic at individual, community and structural levels.
- This context, in combination with organizational factors (e.g. minimal resources, under-staffed organizations and cumbersome caseloads) are barriers to frontline staff providing quality care to people living with HIV.
- For frontline staff, this environment results in burnout, turnover and compassion fatigue as well as dissatisfaction and poor quality care for clients.

We must create effective strategies and interventions to build healthy, trauma-informed environments.

IMPORTANCE OF TIS

Trauma-informed supervision is part of a larger strategy to implementing trauma-informed care. Supervisors are in a unique position to influence work culture and therefore, help organizations move along the continuum of implementation for trauma-informed care.

BENEFITS OF TIS

- ✓ Increases staff satisfaction
- ✓ Promotes staff retention
- ✓ Decreases burnout and staff turnover
- ✓ Negates vicarious trauma
- ✓ Enhances staff wellbeing
- ✓ Improves services provided to clients

"CARE OF THE STAFF IS A PREREQUISITE FOR LEADERSHIP WHO WANT TRAUMA RESPONSIVE CARE FOR [THE COMMUNITIES] THEY SERVE."

- Olton, Martin, & Meeker, 2016¹

TRAUMA-INFORMED SUPERVISION AS PART OF TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

Trauma-informed care is grounded in a set of four assumptions and six key principles. It **realizes** the pervasiveness of trauma, **recognizes** the signs and symptoms, **responds** to trauma and **resists** re-traumatization. A trauma-informed approach reflects adherence to six key principles rather than a prescribed set of practices or procedures.

TIC PRINCIPLES²

Safety

Collaboration & Mutuality

Trust & Transparency

Empowerment, Voice & Choice

Peer Support

Cultural, Historical & Gender Factors



TIS CONCEPTS³

Communication

Flexibility

Partnership

Empathy

Support

Self-care

SOURCES

1. Olton, G., Martin, C., & Meeker, E. (2016). [Supervision trauma-informed care series: session four](#). | 2. SAMHSA. (2014). [Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#).
3. Guroff, E. (2018). [Trauma-Informed Supervision: It's for Everyone](#). Relias.

ACTIONS TO TAKE NOW

TIC PRINCIPLES²

EXAMPLES

<p>Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship-oriented • Learning focused • Mutual accountability • Feedback-oriented • Self-care centered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear about providing a safe/brave space for staff to voice their concerns and ideas. • Set regular meeting times and inform your staff what the meeting is about so that they are prepared. • Address staff concerns privately (rather than in a group setting). Focus on solutions, rather problems. • When policies and/or processes change, explain to staff why those changes have been implemented. • Use non-shaming, non-blaming, and non-violent language.
<p>Collaboration & Mutuality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open & honest communication • Consistency • Inclusive speech • Feedback-oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff on decisions in complex client cases. • Set aside time to debrief with staff after major incidents and/or complex cases. • Listen to staff ideas and support these changes when possible. • Advocate on behalf of your team with leadership. • Foster opportunities for connection among staff.
<p>Trust & Transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear expectations • Open & honest communication • Mutual accountability • Relationship-oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be transparent with staff (ex: explain why you're rescheduling a meeting). • Explain professional boundaries to staff, and do so early on. • Review policies and procedures with staff and ensure they understand, encouraging them to ask questions. • Be clear about who is responsible for what and in what time frame, especially on collaborative projects.
<p>Empowerment, Voice & Choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared vision • Strengths-based • Offers choices • Provide tools & resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate individual staff's success with clients and professional accomplishments. • Model self-care and learn your staff's self-care strategies and encourage staff to practice them. • Understand and value that staff have other social roles to fulfill outside of work (ex: allowing a staff member come in late, so they can attend their child's event at school).
<p>Peer Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback-oriented • Partnership-oriented • Supportive • Empathy • Team-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in on staff general well-being. • Offer feedback on performance (both encouragement and corrections). • Do not shame staff for mishandling a situation; rather use it as a teaching opportunity. • Debrief after complex cases.
<p>Cultural, Historical & Gender Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Consistency & flexibility • Respect, validation & affirmation • Follow through • Learning-orientated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be transparent; share notes and document key decisions. • Listen to and consider new ideas from staff. • Use and respect pronouns. • Avoid making assumptions about staff and/or clients. • Discuss historical traumas with staff, and recognize possible triggers in the workplace.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

1. Do you know what your staff enjoys about their job? Do they have the opportunity to do that on a daily basis?
2. In the last week, have you used words of affirmation with staff?
3. Does staff feel that you care about them as a person? Do you know staff's self-care strategies?
4. Do you encourage the professional development of your staff?

CONTACT US

For questions and/or a list of other TIC principles and opportunities, email laguila9@central.uh.edu.

WHO WE ARE

SUSTAIN Wellbeing COMPASS Coordinating Center is a social justice-oriented grant making and capacity building center dedicated to strengthening community-based organizations across the U.S. South. Visit our site to learn more about our [center](#) and [opportunities](#).