

# Delaware Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed Care

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Family Services  
Cabinet Council



# The Delaware Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed Care

Becoming a trauma-informed organization requires knowledge of the principles of trauma-informed care and a commitment to change. The implementation of a trauma-informed approach is an ongoing organizational change process. A “trauma-informed approach” is not a program model that can be implemented and then simply monitored by a checklist. Rather, it is a profound paradigm shift in knowledge, perspective, attitudes and skills that continues to deepen and unfold over time. Some leaders in the field are beginning to talk about a “continuum” of implementation, where organizations move through stages. The continuum begins with becoming trauma-aware and moves to trauma-sensitive to responsive to being fully trauma-informed. Trauma-informed philosophy and principles will become embedded in the organization’s practice, written policies and reputation. Successful trauma transformation will be evident; i.e., seen, heard and felt by all members of the organization and those they serve.

The purpose of trauma-informed care:

- to create an environment where people are respectful, competent, sensitive and culturally aware;
- to implement evidence based trauma-informed principles and approaches that address the effects associated with trauma;
- to develop a common language and framework for dialogue and discussion to enhance communication and progress;
- to assess the implementation of basic principles of trauma-informed approaches in various settings;
- to increase the effectiveness of all services and assistance; and
- to ensure that the educational community does no harm.

Application: Trauma-informed care applies to all settings where people come together to provide or receive needed services and support, or to discuss and tackle common interests or concerns. This framework can be used:

- to provide information and guidance around the process of becoming trauma-informed;
- to provide a tool to help groups or organizations identify where they are or want to be on the trauma-informed continuum based on their needs and setting;
- to provide resources to assist organizations in moving toward a more trauma-informed organization;
- not for formal evaluation or certification, but for informational purposes.

## Trauma-Informed Care Continuum of Implementation

- Trauma-Aware
- Trauma-Sensitive
- Trauma-Responsive
- Trauma-Informed

# Delaware Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed Care: Level 1

| DEFINITION  | PROCESSES  | INDICATORS   |
|---|--|--|
| <p><i>Key Task: Knowledge and Attitudes</i></p> <p><b>Trauma-Aware</b></p> <p>Organizations understand how trauma impacts their clientele and their staff. All staff are trained in the basics of trauma and are familiar with the values and terminology of trauma-informed care. Leadership recognizes that understanding and responding to trauma is essential to fulfilling the organization's mission and institutes a change process.</p> | <p>Leadership understands that knowledge about trauma may enhance the organization's ability to fulfill its mission and seeks additional information on the prevalence of trauma for the population served.</p> <p>Awareness training (including definitions, causes, prevalence, impact, values and terminology of trauma-informed care, etc.) is offered for employees and volunteers.</p> <p>Employees and volunteers are informed about additional trauma resources and encouraged to continue their professional development or other learning.</p> <p>Opportunities are created within the organization to explore trauma, contemplate what next steps may need to be taken, and if pursued, contemplate what this means for the staff and individuals they serve.</p> | <p>Most Staff:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learn the definition of trauma and its impact on people;</li> <li>2. Begin the internal process of becoming aware of their own adversity and trauma;</li> <li>3. Begin to recognize their own attitudes and perceptions that may be influenced by trauma;</li> <li>4. Become aware that knowledge about the impact of trauma can change the way they see and interact with others.</li> </ol> |

# Delaware Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed Care: Level 2

| DEFINITION  | PROCESSES   | INDICATORS  |
|---|---|---|
| <p><i>Key Task: Application and Skill Development</i></p> <p><b>Trauma-Sensitive</b></p> <p>Organizations begin to apply the concepts and values of trauma-informed care to their environment and to daily work. Self-care becomes a priority. The organization finds ways to hire people with trauma expertise and to support ongoing learning. Environments are modified. Staff begin to see the individuals they work with through a trauma lens and seek out opportunities to learn new trauma skills. Trauma-specific interventions are available for those who need them.</p> | <p>The values of a trauma-informed approach are examined and considered with all levels of staff.</p> <p>The organization conducts a self-assessment to identify existing strengths, resources and barriers to change, as well as practice that is consistent or inconsistent with trauma-informed care.</p> <p>Leadership prepares the organization for change and assures there is a process for reflection to determine readiness for change.</p> <p>The organization begins to identify internal trauma champions and finds ways to hire people who reflect in their attitudes and behavior alignment with the trauma-informed principles.</p> <p>The organization begins to identify potential resources for trauma-specific intervention.</p> | <p>The organization values and prioritizes the trauma lens and begins to apply it.</p> <p>Trauma is identified in the mission statement or other policy documents.</p> <p>Trauma training for all staff, including new staff orientation, is institutionalized.</p> <p>Basic information on trauma is available and visible to both families and staff, through posters, flyers, handouts, web sites, etc.</p> <p>Employees and volunteers begin to seek out opportunities to learn new trauma skills.</p> <p>Leadership recognizes and responds to compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma in staff.</p> |

# Delaware Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed Care: Level 3

| DEFINITION  | PROCESSES  | INDICATORS   |
|---|--|--|
| <p><i>Key Task: Integration</i></p> <p><b>Trauma-Responsive</b></p> <p>Organizations shift the language used throughout the organization to highlight the role of trauma. At all levels of the organization, staff take the initiative to begin re-thinking the routines and infrastructure of the organization. Trauma-informed models of supervision are introduced; measures of trauma and recovery are incorporated in data systems; record-keeping is revised; and policies and procedures are re-examined. The organization incorporates self-care and peer advocacy, and hires people with lived experience to play meaningful roles throughout the education entity. People outside of the organization understand the organization's mission to be trauma-related.</p> | <p>Continued planning and action.</p> <p>Integration of trauma principles into staff behaviors and practices including:</p> <p>Staff supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing staff trauma</li> <li>• Self-care</li> <li>• Models for supportive supervision</li> <li>• Staff development</li> <li>• Staff performance evaluation</li> </ul> <p>Organizational structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental review</li> <li>• Record-keeping systems revisions</li> <li>• Operational and personnel policies and procedures examined</li> <li>• Self-help and peer advocacy incorporated into the workplace</li> </ul> | <p>Staff applies new trauma knowledge to their specific work and an observable shift in perspective occurs.</p> <p>Language is introduced throughout the organization that supports safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment.</p> <p>The organization has policies that support addressing staff's initial and secondary trauma.</p> <p>The organization's personnel policies recognize and support staff by addressing initial and secondary trauma.</p> <p>The organization presumes that all have experienced trauma and services include a trauma screening (i.e., universal precautions approach.)</p> <p>Organization policies and position descriptions allow people (employees, board members, volunteers, etc.) with lived experience to serve in meaningful roles throughout the organization.</p> <p>Changes are made to ensure the physical environment is welcoming, accommodating and safe. Trauma assessment and interventions are available for those who need them (either directly or through a referral process.)</p> <p>The organization has a ready response for crisis management that reflects trauma-informed values.</p> <p>Staff at all levels accept the new direction of the organization and actively participate in implementing trauma-informed care.</p> |

# Delaware Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed Care: Level 4

| DEFINITION   | PROCESSES   | INDICATORS   |
|--|---|--|
| <p><i>Key Task: Leadership</i></p> <p><b>Trauma-Informed</b></p> <p>Organizations have made trauma-responsive practices the organizational norm. All aspects of the organization have been reviewed and revised to reflect a trauma approach. All staff are skilled in using trauma-informed practices. The trauma model has become so accepted and so thoroughly embedded that it no longer depends on a few leaders. People from other organizations and from the community routinely turn to the organization for expertise and leadership in trauma-informed care.</p> | <p>The entire organization has been reviewed and revised to reflect a trauma approach.</p> <p>Systems are created and implemented to measure program progress and outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on clientele, public, and staff satisfaction</li> <li>• Fidelity to a trauma-informed model</li> <li>• Staff retention</li> </ul> <p>Policies and procedures are revised to contain trauma-informed language, values and processes.</p> <p>Personnel policies are revised to address the potential impact of secondary trauma and recommend interventions that support staff.</p> <p>Human resources adapt processes that support hiring staff with knowledge of and expertise or lived experience with trauma.</p> <p>All staff are skilled in using trauma-informed practices. Stigma related to the effects of trauma and accepting help is reduced.</p> <p>People outside the organization (from the Board to the community) understand the organization's mission to be trauma-informed.</p> <p>The organization and staff become advocates and champions of trauma-informed decision-making at all levels.</p> <p>The organization publicly advocates for recognition of trauma-informed care as an evidence-based approach that is required by policy and eligible for financial support/reimbursement for trauma-informed services.</p> | <p>Staff applies new trauma knowledge to their specific work and an observable shift in perspective occurs.</p> <p>Language is introduced throughout the organization that supports safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment.</p> <p>The organization has policies that support addressing staff's initial and secondary trauma.</p> <p>The organization's personnel policies recognize and support staff by addressing initial and secondary trauma.</p> <p>The organization presumes that all have experienced trauma and services include a trauma screening (i.e., universal precautions approach.)</p> <p>Organization policies and position descriptions allow people (employees, board members, volunteers, etc.) with lived experience to serve in meaningful roles throughout the organization.</p> <p>Changes are made to ensure the physical environment is welcoming, accommodating and safe. Trauma assessment and interventions are available for those who need them (either directly or through a referral process).</p> <p>The organization has a ready response for crisis management that reflects trauma-informed values.</p> <p>Staff at all levels accept the new direction of the organization and actively participate in implementing trauma-informed care.</p> |