

## Event Brief

### Webinar: Applying Trauma-Informed Approaches in Mental Health Promotion

January 25, 2023

A [recording](#) and [slide deck](#) are available.

### Purpose

This webinar provided a practical and application-based lens to implementing a trauma-informed approach to mental health promotion. With an increased understanding of how trauma can impact the success of community-based mental health promotion programs and population health outcomes, the importance of trauma-informed approaches is apparent. Becoming a trauma-informed organization can help to build trusting relationships with priority populations, reduce the incidence of re-traumatization and provide a safer space for those who require support.

### Participants

The webinar was hosted by the Hub Secretariat and featured Dr. Nancy Poole, Director for the Center of Excellence for Women's Health. This webinar was attended by over 140 participants including *Supporting the Mental Health of Those Most Affected by COVID-19 (MH COVID)* project teams, *Mental Health Promotion Innovation Fund (MHP-IF)* project teams, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the KDE Hub Resource Collaborative.

### What did we learn?

#### Trauma-informed practice (TIP)

- TIP connects knowledge from multiple fields including neurobiology, public health research on the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), wisdom from indigenous scholars and decades of work regarding violence against women.
- Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being.
- There has been a recent paradigm shift to see trauma as central to other concerns (i.e., substance use problems, violence against women, colonization, access to healthcare)
- There are both short (fight/flight/freeze) and long-term responses to trauma (physical/emotional/behavioral/spiritual/cognitive)

### **Trauma-informed practice with service users**

- Trauma-informed practice is a way of working (not a treatment or technique), that integrates an understanding of experiences of violence and trauma into all aspects of service delivery.
- The goal of trauma-informed services and systems is to avoid re-traumatizing individuals and support safety, choice, and control in order to promote health and healing.
- Principles for the application of TIP:
  - Awareness of the prevalence and impacts of trauma, and the adaptations people make to cope.
  - Creating safety and fostering trust
  - Offering choice and control, fostering collaboration
  - Supporting the development of specific skills
- It is important to communicate with service users about being trauma-informed, which can be achieved by visuals/banners/posters etc.

### **Trauma-informed practice at the organization level**

- Trauma-informed organizations infuse knowledge, awareness and skills into organizational cultures, policies, and practices.
- This can take many forms in different organizations including promoting debriefing strategies, workplace supports like wellness initiatives, resilience training, access to counselling, etc.
- Being trauma informed is a core organizational approach that needs to be linked to other core practices including being gender informed, empowering, culturally safe, equity oriented and harm reduction.

[Click here to view a list of resources](#) provided by Dr. Poole.

### **How will learnings from this event be used?**

- A new resource category will be developed on the KDE Hub website for trauma-informed approaches in mental health promotion. It will include resources related to this topic, including those provided by Dr. Poole.
- The Hub will use feedback from participants to inform future webinar topics.

