Developing A Better Understanding

RECOVERY Is Beautiful.™

Ohio Association of
COUNTY
BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH
AUTHORITIES

BUILDING TRAUMA-INFORMED RECOVERY-ORIENTED SYSTEMS OF CARE

As Ohio's local Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Boards continue their work to transition local systems into Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care, there is a simultaneous focus on ensuring that local systems are trauma-informed. The philosophies that underpin Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care and Trauma-Informed Communities are similar in many ways. Both focus on meeting the needs of individuals and families while also ensuring that these groups have significant involvement, voice, and meaningful choice at all levels and in all areas of system, policy, and program development.

In a guidance document for a trauma-informed approach, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shared that trauma is a widespread, harmful, and costly public health problem. It occurs as a result of violence, abuse, neglect, loss, disaster, war, and other emotionally harmful experiences. Trauma has no boundaries with regard to age, gender, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, geography, or sexual orientation. It is an almost universal experience of people with mental and substance use disorders. The need to address trauma is increasingly viewed as an important component of effective behavioral health service delivery. Additionally, it has become evident that addressing trauma requires a multi-pronged, multi-agency public health approach inclusive of public education and awareness, prevention and early identification, and effective trauma-specific assessment and treatment. In order to maximize the impact of these efforts, they need to be provided in an organizational or community context that is trauma-informed, that is, based on the knowledge and understanding of trauma and its far-reaching implications.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's concept of trauma is as follows: Individual trauma results from an **event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful, or life threatening and that has lasting adverse **effects** on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. The three E's identified above represent how trauma can impact each individual differently. A particular event may be experienced as traumatic for one individual and not for another. How the individual labels, assigns meaning to, and is disrupted physically and psychologically by an event will contribute to whether or not it is experienced as traumatic. The adverse effects of trauma may occur immediately or may have a delayed onset. The duration of the effects can be short to long term.

Unaddressed trauma significantly increases the risk of mental and substance use disorders and chronic physical diseases. However, it is important to note that with appropriate supports and intervention, people can overcome traumatic experiences. *Treatment Works and People Recover* has long been a fact known to Ohio's mental health and addiction services community. In today's local mental health and addiction service systems, it is critical that treatment is provided in a trauma-informed community where there is awareness and understanding of the impact of trauma along with professionals who are trained to help the individual overcome their traumatic experiences in order to help them achieve recovery.

> *"A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed **realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; **recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and **responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively **resist re-traumatization**."*

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

Becoming Trauma-Informed and Recovery-Oriented

The Recovery Is Beautiful BluePrint's focus on transitioning Ohio's communities into Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) aligns with the increased focus on the impact of trauma and how service systems may help to resolve or exacerbate trauma-related issues. Communities, systems, and individuals are re-envisioning their local networks of services and supports. The principles or philosophical foundations of trauma-informed approaches and Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care align in ways that will help communities make simultaneous and systematic adjustments to become both trauma-informed and recovery-oriented.

Ten Core Values of a ROSC

- Strength-based approaches that promote hope
- Community inclusion, partnership, and collaboration
- Person- and family-directed approaches
- Family inclusion and leadership
- Peer culture, support, and leadership
- Person-first (culturally competent) approaches
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Holistic approaches toward care
- Care for the needs and safety of children and adolescents
- Partnership and transparency

~ Taken from the Philadelphia DBHIDS

Six Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer Support
- Collaboration and Mutuality
- Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
- Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

Trauma-Informed Care – *protects the individual, the family, and the healing process.*

Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care – *protect recovery and emphasize personal, family, and community wellness.*

Trauma-Informed and Recovery-Oriented Communities

It is critical to promote the linkage to recovery and resilience for those individuals and families impacted by trauma. Services and supports that are trauma-informed in communities that are trauma-aware build on the best evidence available and consumer and family engagement, empowerment, and collaboration. According to the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care, "Trauma-informed organizations, programs, and services are based on an understanding of the vulnerabilities or triggers of trauma survivors that traditional service delivery approaches may exacerbate, so that these services and programs can be more supportive and avoid re-traumatization."

Recovery-Oriented,
Trauma-Informed
care and support

Recovery-Oriented, Trauma-Informed
organizations, institutions, and
coalitions

Recovery-Oriented, Trauma-Informed
systems and communities

Image Source: Great Lakes Addiction Technology Transfer Center