



Trauma-Informed Approach and Victim/Survivor Protection Protocol for Human Rights Stakeholders in Yemen

May 2024

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Acknowledgements of Consultation and Support:

This protocol was developed by Dr. Amjad Joma, Associate Professor of Psychology and Mental Health, and Psychosocial Support Consultant., alongside Ms. Pintong Lekan, Women's Rights Specialist. We extend our sincere gratitude to Dr. Joma and Ms. Lekan for their dedicated efforts in shaping this protocol. This protocol was made possible through a project implemented by the DT Institute, specifically the Supporting Awareness, Facilitating Enforcement of Children's Rights in the Yemeni Conflict (SAFE) project.

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Section 1: Introduction

The aftermath of conflict and atrocities frequently gives rise to widespread mental health challenges, affecting a significant portion of the population long after the cessation of hostilities. In Yemen, a nation grappling with nearly ten years of persistent conflict, the already fragile healthcare system teeters on the edge of collapse. The resilience of the population has been profoundly strained by a barrage of indiscriminate attacks, airstrikes, torture, food insecurity, unemployment, cholera, and the added burden of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the most recent conflict, the Yemeni government displayed a notable neglect of its legal obligations to uphold, safeguard, and fulfill the right to mental health. The pre-existing issues of corruption, poverty, and apathy have been further intensified and compounded during the ten years of war, and persistent neglect in realizing the right to mental health for the people of Yemen could have detrimental repercussions on the ongoing peace process and the prospective stability of the region (Alhariri, W., et al. 2021). A Trauma-Informed Approach is essential to conducting ethical human rights work into the Yemen context.

It is imperative to adopt a Trauma-Informed Approach within the Yemeni context to address the mental health challenges effectively for the human rights practitioner to use this approach in working with the victim/survivor.

Purpose and Scope of the Policy/Protocol

This protocol is designed to offer guidance to human rights practitioners, journalists, and social workers. The purpose of this protocol is to serve as a tool for these professionals when working with victims and survivors. Following this protocol will help them implement trauma-informed practices in their work and appropriately support their clients and beneficiaries. The Protocol presents fundamental concepts that human rights practitioners can use to:

1. Become trauma aware and knowledgeable about the impact and consequences of traumatic experiences for individuals, families, and communities.
2. Learn the core principles and practices that reflect TIC.
3. Anticipate the need for specific trauma-informed intervention planning strategies that support the individual's recovery.
4. Decrease the inadvertent re-traumatization that can occur from implementing standard organizational policies, procedures, and interventions with individuals, including clients and staff, who have experienced trauma or are exposed to secondary trauma.
5. Evaluate and build a trauma-informed organization and workforce.

Scope: Numerous individuals undergo traumatic experiences over the course of their lives. While many individuals exposed to trauma exhibit minimal or no enduring symptoms, those who have encountered repeated, chronic, or multiple traumas are more prone to displaying prominent symptoms and experiencing consequential outcomes, such as substance abuse, mental health issues, and health-related problems. Consequently, trauma can profoundly influence an individual's engagement in significant life domains as well as their response to intervention.

The Protocol offers evidence-based and best practice guidance for human rights service providers and administrators seeking to enhance their effectiveness with individuals exposed to acute and chronic traumas or at

risk of developing traumatic stress reactions. Utilizing fundamental trauma-informed principles, the protocol covers issues and strategies related to trauma prevention and intervention in human rights context.

The Trauma-Informed Approach Policy/Protocol delineates the scope as follows:

- **Service Delivery:**
Encompasses all aspects of service delivery, from initial contact to ongoing support, ensuring that trauma-informed principles are integrated into every interaction.
- **Training and Education:**
Applies to training programs and educational initiatives for staff and stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive understanding and implementation of trauma-informed practices.
- **Organizational Culture:**
Extends to the overall organizational culture, fostering an environment that values trauma-informed care and practices.
- **Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration:**
Involves collaboration across various disciplines and departments to create a unified and consistent trauma-informed approach.
- **Continuous Improvement:**
Encompasses ongoing efforts to monitor, evaluate, and enhance trauma-informed practices, adapting to emerging research and best practices.
- **Confidentiality and Privacy:**
Addresses the protection of confidentiality and privacy for individuals receiving trauma-informed care, recognizing the sensitive nature of trauma-related information.
- **Community Engagement:**
Involves engagement with the community to ensure that trauma-informed approaches are reflective of the diverse needs and perspectives within the community.
- **Legal and Ethical Compliance:**
Ensures compliance with relevant legal and ethical standards in the provision of trauma-informed care.

By defining the purpose and scope of the Trauma-Informed Approach Policy/Protocol, organizations can establish a foundation for compassionate and effective practices that respond to the unique needs of individuals who have experienced trauma. This approach contributes to the creation of a supportive and healing environment.

Background and Rationale for a Trauma-Informed Approach

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) constitutes both an intervention and organizational strategy, emphasizing the impact of trauma on individuals' lives. While diverse definitions and models exist for the integration of TIC within organizations, a fundamental "trauma-informed approach" encompasses three essential elements:

- (1) Acknowledging the ubiquity of trauma;
- (2) Discerning the impact of trauma on all individuals associated with the program, organization, or system, including its workforce;
- (3) Implementing responsive measures by applying this awareness into practice.

Importance of Victim/Survivor Protection

According to Christine M Njagi¹, Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is defined as a strengths-based framework rooted in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma. It emphasizes ensuring physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors while creating opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. To implement TIC effectively, a victim/survivor-centered approach is essential, emphasizing the prioritization of the rights, wishes, needs, safety, dignity, and well-being of the victim/survivor. This approach should be at the forefront of all preventive and responsive measures within the Yemen contexts.

Alignment with International Standards and Best Practices

Adherence to international standards and best practices is crucial for the successful implementation of a trauma-informed approach. By aligning with established norms and exemplary methodologies, organizations and practitioners can ensure a comprehensive and effective response to individuals impacted by trauma. This alignment involves incorporating principles and strategies that are recognized globally for promoting safety, dignity, and empowerment in trauma-informed care.

International standards typically emphasize the following key aspects of a trauma-informed approach:

- **Human Rights Principles:** Ensuring that the trauma-informed approach respects and upholds fundamental human rights is essential. This includes recognizing the dignity of individuals, promoting non-discrimination, and providing equitable access to services.
- **Cultural Competence:** Acknowledging and respecting diverse cultural backgrounds is a fundamental aspect of Trauma Informed Care. Culturally competent trauma-informed care takes into account the unique needs and perspectives of individuals from different cultural, ethnic, and social groups.
- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Effective trauma-informed care often involves collaboration among various disciplines, such as mental health professionals, medical practitioners, and social workers. Coordination and cooperation enhance the comprehensiveness of care.
- **Informed Consent and Autonomy:** Respecting individuals' autonomy and obtaining informed consent are critical components. Empowering survivors to actively participate in decision-making regarding their care fosters a sense of control and agency.
- **Confidentiality and Privacy:** Ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of individuals receiving trauma-informed care is paramount. Creating safe spaces and maintaining confidentiality contribute to building trust between survivors and service providers.
- **Continuous Training and Education:** Staying abreast of the latest research, developments, and best practices in trauma-informed care is essential. Ongoing training and education for professionals contribute to the improvement and adaptation of services.
- **Evaluation and Quality Improvement:** Regularly assessing the effectiveness of trauma-informed practices and implementing quality improvement measures is key. Continuous evaluation allows for adjustments that align with evolving standards and evidence-based approaches.

By aligning with these international standards and best practices, organizations and practitioners can foster an environment that not only meets the immediate needs of survivors but also contributes to their long-term healing and well-being.

¹ Trauma informed care for women survivors of human trafficking within the Kenyan context.
By Christine Njagi- Principal Magistrate, Kenya Judiciary, 2023

Section 2: Understanding Trauma

What is Trauma

According to SAMHSA and Martin, K., Dobson, M., Fitzgerald, K. *et al*², (2023) the definition of Trauma is "Trauma is a lasting response to a deeply disturbing event or circumstances, series of events, or set of circumstances perceived by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening, leading to enduring adverse effects on their functioning and overall well-being in physical, social, emotional, or spiritual aspects". Regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender, psychosocial background, or geographic region, trauma can impact individuals. It may manifest as a singular event, a series of occurrences, or a chronic condition e.g., childhood neglect, domestic violence. Traumas have far-reaching effects on individuals, families, groups, communities, specific cultures, and even across generations. Typically, trauma overwhelms an individual's or community's coping resources, often triggering the "fight, flight, or freeze" response during the event(s) and generating feelings of fear, vulnerability, and helplessness.

Brain Processes During Trauma

Trauma and the Brain written by Dawn McClelland³ described that the frontal region of our brain, identified as the prefrontal cortex, serves as the rational domain housing consciousness, processing and reasoning functions, and facilitating the interpretation of language. In the event of trauma, individuals often transition into a state of fight, flight, or freeze, causing the prefrontal cortex to deactivate. Consequently, the brain experiences a degree of disorganization and overwhelm due to the trauma, while the body instinctively enters survival mode, leading to the suppression of the higher reasoning and language functions of the brain. This metabolic shutdown culminates in a deeply ingrained stress response.

In the aftermath of a traumatic event, the body undergoes a surge of adrenaline, and the memory of the incident becomes imprinted in the amygdala, a component of the limbic system. The amygdala is responsible for retaining the emotional significance of the event, encompassing the intensity and impulsive nature of the emotions felt.

To illustrate, consider the experience of riding a roller coaster. The sensory information during this activity might be interpreted by the amygdala as a combination of fear, speed, stress, and excitement, yet not as a life-threatening situation. In this scenario, the amygdala registers the emotional import of the event, recognizing it as a thrilling ride that will conclude in a mere three minutes.

Crucially, the amygdala captures trauma memories in a unique manner. Unlike conventional storytelling, these memories are stored as sensory fragments. This means that the recollection of the trauma is not organized in a narrative form but rather in accordance with how the five senses perceived the traumatic event at the time it transpired. Consequently, the memories are stored in fragments of visual images, smells, sounds, tastes, or touch.

² <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13384-023-00648-2>

³ <https://www.phoenix-society.org/resources/calming-trauma>

Fight, Flight, and Freeze Reactions⁴

The body's stress responses, including fight, flight, freeze, and fawn, are instinctual reactions to danger. The well-known fight or flight response involves hormone release, compelling individuals to confront or escape threats for self-preservation. Freeze renders the body immobile, and fawn aims to please others to prevent conflict. The overarching goal of these responses is to mitigate, resolve, or avoid danger, ultimately restoring a state of calm and relaxation.

Trauma Triggers⁵

Encountering a trigger post-trauma often elicits a powerful emotional and behavioral response, creating a sensation of reliving the traumatic experience. While the term "triggered" is commonly used to describe emotional discomfort, for those who have experienced trauma, triggers can be profoundly distressing, overwhelming, and seemingly unpredictable.

These triggers are highly personal and can encompass anything reminiscent of a past trauma, such as a specific smell, a particular song or sound, or even a piece of clothing. Each individual's triggers are unique and can evoke intense reactions related to their specific traumatic experiences.

Trauma and Memories⁶

Trauma and Memories refer to the detrimental impact that physical or psychological trauma can have on memory functions. In psychological terms, memory is the capacity of an organism to store, retain, and later retrieve information. When an individual undergoes a traumatic event—whether it is physical or psychological in nature—it can influence their memory in various ways. Trauma may affect the recollection of the specific event, memories of preceding or subsequent events, or general cognitive processes. Furthermore, studies have shown that memories of traumatic events tend to be more fragmented and disorganized compared to memories of non-traumatic events.

Disassociation⁷

Dissociation is a mental process where individuals disconnect from their thoughts, feelings, memories, or sense of identity. Dissociative disorders, which encompass conditions like dissociative amnesia, depersonalization disorder, and dissociative identity disorder, may arise from such dissociative experiences.

Individuals who undergo traumatic events often exhibit some degree of dissociation during the event itself or in the subsequent hours, days, or weeks. This may manifest as a sense of unreality or detachment, akin to observing events on television. In most cases, this dissociation resolves without necessitating intervention but when the person feel safe. .

However, for some individuals, dissociative disorders may develop, requiring specific diagnosis, intervention, and support. These conditions are intricate and sometimes controversial, underscoring the importance of seeking professional help if there are concerns about oneself or a loved one potentially experiencing a dissociative disorder.

⁴ <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/what-does-fight-flight-freeze-fawn-mean>

⁵ <https://psychcentral.com/health/trauma-triggers>

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memory_and_trauma

⁷ <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/dissociation-and-dissociative-disorders>

In summary:

- Dissociation involves a mental process wherein an individual disconnects from their thoughts, feelings, memories, or sense of identity.
- Dissociative disorders requiring professional intervention encompass dissociative amnesia, depersonalization disorder, and dissociative identity disorder.
- The prevalent belief among mental health professionals is that chronic childhood trauma is the root cause of dissociative disorders.

What is the trauma response?

According to Herman (1992), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) comprises three stages: "hyperarousal," "intrusion," and "constriction." Hyperarousal signifies a continual anticipation of danger, intrusion denotes the lasting impact of the traumatic incident, and constriction characterizes the numbing response akin to surrender.

Emotional and Psychological Reactions to Trauma

Immediate reactions to trauma may encompass fatigue, confusion, sadness, anxiety, agitation, numbness, dissociation, physical arousal, and blunted affect. These responses are generally considered normal as they are common among survivors, socially acceptable, psychologically effective, and tend to resolve on their own. Indicators of more severe responses involve sustained distress without intervals of relative calm, pronounced dissociation symptoms, and intense intrusive recollections persisting despite being in a safe environment.

Delayed responses to trauma might manifest as enduring fatigue, sleep disturbances, nightmares, fear of recurrence, anxiety focused on flashbacks, depression, and avoidance of emotions, sensations, or activities associated with the trauma, even remotely.⁸

Physical and Behavioral Reactions to Trauma

The response of an individual to trauma is influenced by various factors, including the type and severity of the traumatic event, any prior relevant experience or training, the person's level of activity or helplessness, the availability of support post-incident, concurrent stressors in their life, their personality, inherent resilience levels, and any past traumatic experiences.

Typical reactions encompass:

- Feeling in a state of 'high alert' and vigilance for potential threats.
- Experiencing emotional numbness akin to being in a state of 'shock.'
- Displaying emotional distress.
- Experiencing extreme fatigue and tiredness.
- Feeling significant stress and/or anxiety.
- Exhibiting heightened protectiveness towards family and friends.

⁸

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/#:~:text=Initial%20reactions%20to%20trauma%20can,physical%20arousal%2C%20and%20blunted%20affect.>

- Reluctance to leave a specific location due to apprehension about potential events.
- Oscillating between these reactions.

These responses are considered normal, and in most instances, they gradually subside as part of the body's innate healing and recovery process over the ensuing weeks.

Cognitive responses to trauma encompass:

- Diminished concentration and memory
- Intrusive thoughts revolving around the traumatic event
- Persistent mental replaying of segments of the event
- Feelings of confusion or disorientation

Responses on an emotional level to trauma may involve:

- Fear, anxiety, and panic
- Shock, characterized by a challenge in accepting the reality of what transpired, feeling detached, and experiencing confusion
- Numbness and detachment
- Reluctance to establish connections with others or withdrawing from those in proximity
- Persisting alarm, where the perception of danger lingers or the event seems ongoing
- Let-down phase, marked by exhaustion after the crisis, during which emotional reactions, such as depression, avoidance, guilt, oversensitivity, and withdrawal, become apparent

Physical responses to traumatic experiences may encompass:

- Fatigue or exhaustion
- Disrupted sleep patterns
- Nausea
- vomiting
- dizziness Headaches Excessive sweating Elevated heart rate

Typical behavioral responses to trauma comprise:

- Avoidance of reminders associated with the event
- Persistent focus on the details of what transpired
- Engagement in tasks related to recovery to an excessive extent
- Disconnection from regular daily routines
- Altered appetite, characterized by either increased or decreased food intake
- Reliance on substances like alcohol, cigarettes, and coffee
- Sleep disturbances⁹

⁹ <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/trauma-reaction-and-recovery>

Impact of Trauma on Belief Systems/Cultural Experiences of Trauma

Religious beliefs can serve as the fundamental framework through which individuals shape their understanding of the world. When faced with unexpected traumatic events, individuals aim to reconcile the meaning of these occurrences with their existing belief systems in a manner that preserves their perception of the world as meaningful and predictable. However, not everyone successfully navigates this process of belief reconciliation. We posit that the cognitive processes of schema accommodation, wherein individuals adjust their schemas to align with the meaning of events, and assimilation, wherein individuals adapt the meaning of events to fit existing schemas, play a pivotal role in determining the success of such reconciliations. Through the engagement of these cognitive processes, individuals exposed to trauma activate their religiously relevant schemas, leading them to review, evaluate, modify, and potentially reject these schemas (Leo, D., 2019).

What Promotes Healing from Trauma? ¹⁰

Trauma symptoms typically persist for a few days to a few months, gradually diminishing as a person processes the unsettling event. However, even as they start feeling better, they might be intermittently troubled by painful memories or emotions, particularly triggered by events such as anniversaries or reminders of the trauma.

If their psychological trauma symptoms persist or worsen, and they find themselves unable to move forward from the event over an extended period, they might be dealing with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). While emotional trauma is a normal response to a distressing event, it transforms into PTSD when their nervous system remains in a state of psychological shock, hindering you from making sense of the experience or processing their emotions.

Regardless of whether a traumatic event involves death, as a survivor, they must grapple with the temporary loss of their sense of safety, eliciting a natural response of grief. Similar to individuals who have experienced the loss of a loved one, they need to undergo a grieving process.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Three Elements of PTSD

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an intricate mental health condition with profound effects on daily life. Diagnosis revolves around three interconnected elements:

1. Reliving traumatic memories in various sensory forms, accompanied by extreme physiological and psychological distress;
2. Avoidance behaviors, emotional numbing, and detachment, often intertwined with intrusive recollections;
3. A heightened arousal pattern expressed through hypervigilance, irritability, memory issues, sleep disturbances, and an exaggerated startle response. The diagnosis encapsulates a triad of elements, highlighting the complexity of PTSD and underscoring the necessity for tailored therapeutic approaches to address its multifaceted nature.

¹⁰ <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/coping-with-emotional-and-psychological-trauma.htm#:~:text=Connecting%20to%20others%20face%20to,can%20just%20make%20things%20worse.>

Trauma Continuum

Communities Together for Children explained that the Trauma continuum extends from time of injury, throughout recovery, and to the final outcome. It can be helpful to look at the experience of trauma and the associated impact as being on a continuum.

Traumatic events can take various forms, including single events (e.g., car accidents, surgeries), prolonged family violence (involving physical, sexual, and emotional abuse), colonization/historical trauma (disconnecting cultures from families, cultural practices, e.g., residential schools, Holocaust), and war (exposure to ongoing violence in armed conflicts). The impact of trauma can lead to different levels of stress:

1. **Traumatic Stress:** An initial stress response that the body regulates relatively quickly after the event.
2. **PTSD:** Ongoing symptoms, including reliving memories, avoidance of reminders, increased arousal, and it becomes the organizing principle of the person's life.
3. **Delayed PTSD:** Symptoms manifest sometime after the traumatic event, causing confusion due to the unclear connection between symptoms and the event.
4. **Complex/Developmental PTSD:** The most severe symptoms resulting from early-age trauma, chronic trauma, impacting brain development, attachment, and involving a close relationship with an authority figure. It profoundly disrupts all relationships.

The severity of symptoms varies on a continuum. Those with fewer traumatic experiences and timely intervention tend to be closer to the lower end. As the frequency and duration of trauma increase, so do the negative impacts and symptoms. Complex PTSD, at the far end of the continuum, is characterized by severe, long-term trauma, often involving caregivers with cruel, inconsistent, exploitative, unresponsive, or violent behavior. Individuals with complex PTSD may struggle with chronic self-destructive behaviors.

Section 3:

Key principles of the Trauma-Informed Approach¹¹

- I. **Safety and Security:** Ensuring both physical and psychological safety is a priority throughout the organization, fostering an environment where both staff and the individuals they serve feel secure.
- II. **Trustworthiness and Transparency:** The organization conducts its operations and makes decisions with transparency, with the overarching goal of cultivating and sustaining trust among staff and beneficiaries.
- III. **Choice and Empowerment:** The organization seeks to enhance the experiences of choice for staff, beneficiaries and family members, recognizing the uniqueness of each individual's journey. This approach builds on the strengths and offerings of beneficiaries, staff, and communities rather than focusing on perceived deficits.
- IV. **Collaboration and Empathy:** Acknowledging that healing occurs within relationships and through meaningful power-sharing and decision-making, the organization values collaboration and mutuality. It emphasizes that everyone plays a role in a trauma-informed approach.
- V. **Cultural Sensitivity and Responsiveness:** Actively moving beyond cultural stereotypes and biases, the organization provides culturally responsive services, harnesses the healing potential of traditional cultural connections, and acknowledges and addresses historical trauma.
- VI. **Additionally, Peer Support and Mutual Self-Help:** Integral to the organizational and service delivery approach, peer support and mutual self-help are recognized as vital mechanisms for building trust, establishing safety, and fostering empowerment.

Special Considerations for Diverse Victim/Survivor Groups

Principles & Key Actions of a Victim/Survivor Centered Approach from the statement¹²

Safety, Security & Well-Being: Prioritize the safety and security of the victim/survivor, considering their familial, social, and cultural context. Uphold the principles of "Do No Harm" and refrain from actions that could compromise the victim/survivor's safety, security, and emotional well-being. Evaluate potential risks for victims/survivors and deliver all contact, communication, and support in a manner that respects their rights, needs, safety, dignity, and emotional well-being. Protect them from stigmatization, discrimination, retaliation, and re-traumatization.

Confidentiality: Safeguard the identity of those providing information and the information itself. Affirm victims/survivors' right to choose whom they share their story with, while ensuring they are aware of the limits of confidentiality. Clearly communicate the circumstances under which mandatory reporting is required and its implications. Specify the information that may be disclosed, to whom, and for what purpose before the victim/survivor shares personally identifiable information and incident details. Clearly explain any potential impact on the scope and conduct of an investigation if the victim/survivor chooses to keep information confidential. Implement robust data protection measures.

¹¹ <https://traumainformedoregon.org/resources/new-to-trauma-informed-care/trauma-informed-care-principles/>

¹² The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)

Dignity & Respect: Prioritize actions that honor the dignity, choices, wishes, needs, rights, culture, and values of the victim/survivor, making their informed choices a central priority. Interact with the victim/survivor courteously, empathetically, and professionally.

Non-discrimination & Inclusion: Ensure that victims/survivors receive equal and fair treatment, avoiding discrimination based on various factors such as race, color, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, language, religion, belief, political or other opinion, national or social origin, disability, property, birth, or other status. Address intersectional discrimination and be mindful of personal biases.

Ask, Listen, and Engage: Pose questions, engage, and listen to the victim/survivor without bias or judgment, employing a trauma-informed approach. Demonstrate empathy in all interactions, refraining from assigning guilt or responsibility. Empower the victim/survivor to share their experiences, if they wish, and at their own pace. Collaborate with victims/survivors, creating opportunities and channels for active participation in decisions and processes that affect them.

Transparency & Information: Furnish regular, timely information to the victim/survivor in an accessible language and format, enabling them to evaluate and comprehend the consequences, including benefits and risks, of a particular course of action.

Informed Consent/Choice: Base consent on the victim/survivor's clear understanding of the facts, implications, and potential consequences of an action. Actively seek consent regarding the possible use of provided information. Avoid disclosing information to any party without the informed consent of the victim/survivor. Inform victims/survivors about their right to engage or not in a process, recognizing that the practitioners may decide on management action without their consent and participation to prevent further harm. A victim/survivor can withdraw their consent at any time, without impacting their right to assistance.

Support & Assistance: Provide comprehensive assistance and support to all victims/survivors, regardless of their initiation or cooperation with investigations or other accountability or resolution procedures. Facilitate accompaniment for victims/survivors throughout accountability processes, either through a dedicated support person or another suitable method, in alignment with their preferences. Ensure the availability of accessible and high-quality services, encompassing medical, psychological, socio-economic support, and legal services, with ongoing provision as needed and in accordance with relevant inter-agency policies and standards, tailored to their specific circumstances.

Redress: Acknowledge and uphold the rights of victims/survivors to seek remedies from perpetrators through suitable formal and informal processes, including restorative justice. Support victims/survivors in accessing these remedies and, where desired and legally applicable, assist in pursuing paternity and child support claims in collaboration with the relevant State.

Women

1. Gender-sensitive approaches:

Gender sensitivity involves the capacity to recognize diverse perceptions, experiences, and needs associated with individuals identifying as women, men, or those expressing transgender or intersex identities due to their gender or identification. Traditionally, research and literature on gender sensitivity have predominantly concentrated on enhancing sensitivity towards women. While this emphasis on women aligns with acknowledging past oversights and addressing women's needs, such an approach to gender sensitivity exhibits limitations.

As the Victorian Government (2011) addressed, the gender sensitivity is defined as the aptitude to identify distinctions between genders and an awareness of the necessity to address these distinctions in service planning and practice. Additionally, it recognizes varied perceptions, experiences, and interests stemming from the distinct social positions and access to mental health care for women, men, and others. Providing gender-sensitive care for Yemeni contexts and mental health entails the incorporation and execution of quality improvement strategies to cater to the diverse needs of women and men, as well as those not identifying with binary genders. Gender-sensitive practices validate both childhood and adult life experiences, such as interpersonal violence and abuse, along with considering 'day-to-day social, cultural, family, and economic realities'.

Integrating gender-sensitive practices necessitates a shift in focus, involving an examination of existing beliefs and assumptions regarding the provision of mental health care and its recipients. Through reflective processes, service providers can heighten awareness about the changes required to seamlessly incorporate gender-sensitive care into all facets of service provision.

2. Addressing gender-based violence ¹³

The exemplary living practice that developed by the Tusonge Community Development Organization in Tanzania as part of the Advancing Equality through Human Rights Education project can be used as a guideline for Yemeni contexts. Here are some tips for applying a trauma-informed approach throughout human rights education activities that address gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence:

Considerations before the activities:

- 2.1** Conducting a risk assessment to evaluate the potential impact of activities and content in your human rights education work on diverse individuals is crucial. Specifically, a gender risk assessment aids in gaining a comprehensive understanding of how different genders may be influenced by your activities. This involves identifying potential harm to women and non-binary individuals and recognizing the distinct effects on women, men, and non-binary people related to the addressed issue.
- 2.2** When collaborating with other organizations, it is essential to co-construct a plan. Engage in discussions with partners to determine decision-making processes for effectively responding to content that may trigger trauma, leading to disclosures of gender-based violence or other human rights violations during the activities.
- 2.3** Reviewing existing safeguarding policies and guidelines is imperative. Agree upon a reporting process before the activity to address any disclosures of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence, and other human rights violations that may occur during the event. To prepare for the activities, consider the following questions:

¹³ <https://equitas.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/GoodPractices-Tanzania-Integrating.pdf>

- How might our activities impact different genders, particularly women and non-binary individuals?
- In what ways can we address potential harm and tailor our approach to accommodate diverse gender experiences?
- How can we collaboratively plan with partner organizations to ensure a comprehensive response to trauma-triggering content?
- What existing safeguarding policies and guidelines can be utilized to create a reporting process for disclosures of gender-based violence and human rights violations?
- How can we enhance our preparedness to handle and respond effectively to disclosures during human rights education activities?
- Who needs to be aware of the situation? Identify the key individuals or stakeholders who should be informed in the event of a disclosure. This may include organizational leaders, facilitators, support staff, or external partners.
- What the immediate measures can be taken to support the survivor/victim in the case of a disclosure of an incident? Develop a clear plan outlining immediate actions that can be taken to provide support to the survivor or victim. This may involve access to counseling, medical assistance, or other necessary resources.
- What does follow-up look like? Establish a structured follow-up process to ensure ongoing support for the survivor or victim. This may involve continued counseling, access to additional resources, or involvement of relevant authorities.
- How will you ensure confidentiality, non-discrimination, and respect for the survivor/victim throughout the process? Clearly outline procedures to maintain confidentiality, avoid discrimination, and uphold the dignity of the survivor or victim. This includes protecting their identity and ensuring a safe and respectful environment.

2.4 If safeguarding policies and guidelines are not already in place, it is crucial to establish them. These policies/guidelines play a vital role in ensuring that, in the event of trauma and disclosures, such as those from survivors or victims of gender-based violence, appropriate measures and mechanisms are in position to support them. To include the GBV in the TIC, here are key elements to consider:

- **Clearly Communication:** Clearly communicate the goals of the activity, emphasizing its commitment to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all participants.
- **Inclusive Space:** Outline the commitment to creating an inclusive space that respects diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities. Emphasize the importance of mutual respect and understanding among participants.
- **Trigger Warnings:** Incorporate trigger warnings for content that may be sensitive or triggering to some participants. This ensures that individuals are informed about potentially distressing material in advance.
- **Safeguarding Policies/Guidelines:** Share information about safeguarding policies and guidelines that have been established to address any disclosures of gender-based violence or human rights violations. Make participants aware of the support mechanisms and resources available.

- **Mechanism for Support:** Clearly state the mechanisms and measures in place to support survivors or victims of gender-based violence or other human rights violations during the activity. This may include access to support staff, counseling services, or other relevant resources.
- **Reporting Procedures:** Provide information on reporting procedures in case any participant experiences or witnesses behavior that goes against the established guidelines. Encourage open communication and reporting to ensure a swift and appropriate response.
- **Respectful Dialogue:** Encourage respectful dialogue and open discussions while emphasizing the importance of considering diverse perspectives. Foster an environment where participants feel comfortable expressing their views without fear of discrimination or judgment.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Establish feedback mechanisms for participants to express concerns, provide input, or seek clarification about any aspect of the activity. This promotes transparency and continuous improvement.

By clearly communicating these expectations, you contribute to the creation of a safe, inclusive, and respectful space for all participants in your human rights education activity.

- 2.5** Enhance the proficiency of the team by ensuring that members possess the necessary knowledge and skills to implement a trauma-informed approach. It is essential for team members to recognize their limits and acknowledge any knowledge gaps. For instance, when teams lack expertise in addressing gender-based violence and providing support to survivors/victims, it is advisable to redirect survivors/victims to specialized services to prevent potential harm. This proactive measure ensures that individuals receive the most suitable and competent assistance from professionals with the relevant expertise.
- 2.6** Allocate a budget for a dedicated counselor/focal point with expertise in supporting survivors/victims of gender-based violence, especially sexual violence. This professional can offer assistance to both activity organizers and participants during and after the human rights education activity. Additionally, include budget provisions for safe space posters, securing inclusive venues, and acquiring other relevant resources aligned with the activity's goals.
- 2.7** Compile a comprehensive list of crucial service providers, both legal and non-legal, available at the community, regional, and national levels to support survivors/victims of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence. This ensures that survivors/victims have access to appropriate assistance from various sources.

3. Ensuring women's participation and leadership in the Trauma-Informed Approach:

3.1 Inclusive Program Design:

- Develop trauma-informed programs that consider and address the specific needs and experiences of women.
- Ensure that program design reflects an understanding of diverse trauma exposures, including gender-based violence.

3.2 Gender-Responsive Training:

- Provide trauma-informed training programs that are gender-responsive, acknowledging the unique challenges and coping mechanisms of women.
- Include information on the intersectionality of trauma, considering factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and cultural background.

3.3 Women-Centric Support Groups:

- Establish women-centric support groups within trauma-informed programs, offering a safe space for sharing experiences and building connections.
- Focus on creating an environment that fosters trust, empathy, and mutual support among women survivors.

3.4 Leadership Opportunities for Women:

- Actively encourage and promote women's participation in leadership roles within trauma-informed initiatives.
- Provide mentorship programs and skill-building opportunities to empower women to take on leadership positions.

3.5 Cultural Competency Training:

- Ensure that staff involved in trauma-informed programs receive cultural competency training that includes an understanding of gender dynamics and diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Foster a culturally sensitive approach to trauma that respects the experiences of women from various communities.

3.6 Intersectional Approach:

- Recognize and address the intersectionality of trauma by considering how multiple identities, such as gender, race, and sexual orientation, intersect to shape women's experiences.
- Tailor trauma-informed interventions to be inclusive of diverse identities and backgrounds.

3.7 Collaboration with Women's Organizations:

- Collaborate with women's organizations and advocacy groups to leverage their expertise in addressing gender-specific trauma.
- Engage in partnerships that amplify the voices of women and ensure their perspectives are integral to program development.

3.8 Accessible Resources for Women:

- Develop accessible resources and information specifically tailored to women survivors, considering their unique needs and circumstances.
- Ensure that educational materials and support services are linguistically and culturally appropriate.

3.9 Empowering Decision-Making:

- Empower women survivors to actively participate in decision-making processes related to the design and implementation of trauma-informed initiatives.
- Create avenues for feedback and meaningful contributions to shape program policies and practices.

3.10 Advocacy for Gender-Inclusive Policies:

- Advocate for policies that prioritize gender inclusivity and address systemic issues contributing to gender-based trauma.
- Work towards the implementation of policies that protect and support women who have experienced trauma.

By integrating these strategies into trauma-informed approaches, organizations can create more effective and empowering interventions that actively involve and address the needs of women survivors. This ensures a comprehensive and gender-responsive framework for trauma recovery and support.

Children

Childhood trauma is a prevalent experience, and while some children naturally return to normal functioning post a traumatic event, others may exhibit symptoms of posttraumatic stress. Children who display these symptoms are at a higher risk of enduring detrimental long-term consequences, such as severe impacts on mental and physical health. This risk can be mitigated through understanding and employing trauma-appropriate responses from adults.

Trauma-informed care (TIC) encompasses various approaches aimed at addressing the needs of children exposed to traumatic events or conditions. Research indicates that TIC offers significant benefits for both children and their families, leading to reductions in behavior problems and posttraumatic stress among children. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has identified four fundamental assumptions of a trauma-informed approach, emphasizing the importance of:

- Acknowledging the widespread impact of trauma and understanding potential paths to recovery.
- Recognizing the signs and symptoms of trauma.
- Integrating comprehensive knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices.
- Actively resisting re-traumatization.

The following outlines five ways in which TIC contributes to supporting the healthy development of children¹⁴.

1. Trauma-informed care (TIC) is essential for recognizing and addressing the needs of children who have experienced trauma. Children's responses to trauma vary, but many exhibit distress, leading to issues like aggression, social skill deficits, and academic struggles.

¹⁴ <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/5-ways-trauma-informed-care-supports-childrens-development>

2. TIC training equips caregivers and service providers with strategies to help children manage trauma triggers, regulate emotions, and improve behavior.
3. TIC also enhances adults' ability to identify trauma and make referrals for treatment.
4. TIC involves various stakeholders beyond mental health providers, including caregivers, educators, medical staff, and policymakers. Adults involved in a child's life play a critical role in mitigating trauma's effects and preventing its occurrence.
5. TIC also addresses adults' responses to trauma, offering techniques like self-care and psychological support. Policymakers increasingly recognize the importance of TIC, leading to mandates for training and integration into various care systems, including child welfare, education, healthcare, and juvenile justice.

The encounter with trauma and adversity during childhood can have deep and potentially lasting effects on the lives of children. Trauma refers to an overwhelmingly stressful psychological response to significantly adverse events or life circumstances. These events encompass natural disasters (such as floods, bushfires, and earthquakes), human actions in the public sphere (like terrorism, sieges, and mass violence), and private sphere occurrences (including family violence, abuse, neglect, bullying, parental mental illness, substance abuse, and grief). The exposure of a young child to traumatic events can significantly impact their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development, as well as their psychological and physical health throughout their later life (Child Participation Principle from ANU). Children, being vulnerable, require additional care and attention when engaging them in trauma-related activities. Regardless of whether these children have personally experienced trauma, it is crucial to ensure that their participation is trauma-informed.

Safety, Avoidance of Harm, Non-exploitation and Respect: Prioritizing safety, prevention of harm, non-exploitation, and respect are fundamental considerations when involving children in any trauma-related activities. Continuous attention and care are crucial to guarantee that children do not encounter significant distress or discomfort throughout any stages, ensuring their ongoing sense of safety. Supporting children throughout their participation requires an understanding of their perception of safety, what contributes to their feeling of security, and involving them in the development of strategies to ensure their safe engagement.

Children participate most effectively and comfortably when ways of communicating are flexible, safe, chosen by the child, and are appropriate to the child's language capacity and understanding.

Children can participate only when developmentally appropriate ways of communicating are used to ensure they understand the purpose of participating, what the risks and benefits are to them, that their contribution will be treated confidentially, and that they are free to query or discuss issues at any time, or to stop taking part. Part of this understanding will be that children's stories about their own experiences will often be about others also involved in those experiences, such as family members and the broader community. Children who understand all these things can participate only if, with the guidance of their parents or guardians, they freely agree/assent to participate.

Inclusive Participation: The diversity of children's experiences is respected, and the benefits of participation increased, when children from diverse, vulnerable and marginalised populations are invited to participate in childhood trauma research and resource development.

Building the Knowledge-Base and Professional Capacity in Trauma-Informed Child Participation: Quality child participation requires an ongoing commitment to evaluating what works and what does not, and to developing and disseminating research and best-practice in child participation, particularly relating to young children and children who experience trauma and poor mental health.

Trauma-Informed Approach for Children:

1. Child-Friendly Methodologies:

- Creative and Playful Techniques:
 - Implement child-friendly methodologies that leverage creative and playful activities to facilitate communication and expression.
 - Utilize art, music, storytelling, and other interactive approaches to engage children in a non-intrusive and supportive manner.
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices:
 - Tailor methodologies to align with the developmental stages and unique needs of each child.
 - Foster a safe and nurturing environment that promotes exploration, curiosity, and self-expression.
- Incorporating Sensory Activities:
 - Integrate sensory activities that cater to diverse learning styles, considering the sensory preferences of each child.
 - Ensure a variety of tools and materials to accommodate different comfort levels and interests.

2. Protection from Re-Traumatization:

- Creating Safe Spaces:
 - Establish physical and emotional safe spaces that minimize potential triggers and create an atmosphere of security.
 - Prioritize consistency, predictability, and routine to enhance feelings of safety.
- Trauma-Informed Language:
 - Use language that is age-appropriate, clear, and non-threatening, avoiding terms or discussions that may re-trigger traumatic memories.
 - Encourage open communication about preferences, boundaries, and any potential distress during activities.
- Respectful and Empathetic Practices:
 - Train facilitators to recognize signs of distress or discomfort in children and respond with empathy and sensitivity.
 - Foster a trauma-informed culture that emphasizes respect for individual boundaries and the pace at which each child feels comfortable participating.

3. Child Participation and Consent:

- Informed and Voluntary Participation:
 - Prioritize informed and voluntary participation by explaining activities, objectives, and potential emotional responses in an age-appropriate manner.
 - Clearly outline the right of children to choose their level of involvement and ensure their decisions are respected.

- **Affirmative Consent Practices:**
 - Establish affirmative consent practices that involve seeking explicit agreement from children before engaging them in any activity.
 - Provide ongoing opportunities for children to express their preferences, concerns, and desire for continued participation.
- **Including Children in Decision-Making:**
 - Actively involve children in decision-making processes related to the design and implementation of trauma-informed activities.
 - Encourage their input on aspects that directly affect them, fostering a sense of agency and empowerment.

By integrating these trauma-informed principles, the approach ensures that interactions with children are sensitive, respectful, and supportive of their unique needs, promoting a healing environment that prioritizes their well-being.

People with Disabilities (PwD)

Using a Trauma-Informed Approach with People with Disabilities (PwD) involves incorporating specific considerations related to accessibility, accommodations, and support for survivors with disabilities. Here are guidelines for both topics:

Accessibility and Accommodations:

Physical Accessibility:

- Ensure that physical spaces and environments are accessible for individuals with various disabilities, considering mobility impairments, sensory impairments, and other accessibility needs.
- Provide ramps, elevators, or other means of access for those with mobility challenges.
- Make sure signage and information are available in accessible formats, such as Braille or large print.

Communication Accessibility:

- Use accessible communication methods, including sign language interpreters, captioning, or assistive communication devices.
- Train staff and practitioners in effective communication strategies, recognizing diverse communication needs.

Cultural Competence:

- Recognize and respect the diversity within the disability community, including different cultural, linguistic, and communication preferences.
- Be aware of potential trauma triggers related to disability and adopt inclusive practices.

Flexible Policies:

- Establish flexible policies and procedures that accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Provide options for individuals to express their preferences for accommodations and accessibility.

Support for Survivors with Disabilities:

Trauma-Informed Training:

- Train staff and practitioners on the intersectionality of trauma and disability to better understand the unique needs of survivors with disabilities.
- Promote a culture of sensitivity and empathy towards survivors with disabilities.

Individualized Support Plans:

- Develop individualized trauma-informed support plans that consider the specific needs and challenges of survivors with disabilities.
- Collaborate with survivors to identify their strengths and preferences in coping strategies.

Accessible Services:

- Ensure that support services, including counseling and therapeutic interventions, are accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Provide information in accessible formats, and use communication methods that align with the survivor's needs.

Collaborate with disability service providers:

- Collaborate with disability service providers and organizations to enhance support networks for survivors.
- Share information and coordinate efforts to address the intersection of trauma and disability.

Empower survivors and Choice:

- Empower survivors with disabilities by involving them in decision-making processes related to their care.
- Recognize and respect their autonomy and choices in the recovery journey.

By incorporating these principles, a Trauma-Informed Approach can better address the needs of individuals with disabilities, promoting an inclusive and supportive environment for survivors.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)

Using a Trauma-Informed Approach with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) involves recognizing and addressing their unique challenges while ensuring access to essential services and support. Here are guidelines for both topics:

Understanding Their Unique Challenges:

Loss and Displacement Trauma:

- Recognize that IDPs may have experienced trauma related to forced displacement, loss of homes, communities, and social networks.
- Understand the emotional and psychological impact of displacement, including feelings of grief, uncertainty, and vulnerability.

Exposure to Multiple Traumas:

- Acknowledge that IDPs may have experienced multiple traumas, including conflict-related violence, loss of family members, or other forms of adversity.
- Consider the cumulative effect of trauma on mental health and well-being.

Cultural Sensitivity:

- Understand and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds of IDPs, considering cultural norms, beliefs, and coping mechanisms.
- Be aware of potential cultural triggers and incorporate cultural competence in trauma-informed care.

Safety Concern:

- Recognize the importance of safety and security for IDPs, addressing concerns related to the risk of further violence, exploitation, or discrimination.
- Create environments that promote a sense of safety, both physically and emotionally.

Community and Social Support:

- Understand the impact of disrupted social structures on IDPs' well-being.
- Promote community-based support systems and facilitate social connections to reduce isolation.

Ensuring Access to Services and Support:

Accessible Mental Health Services:

- Ensure that mental health services are accessible and culturally competent.
- Provide trauma-informed counseling and intervention services that consider the unique needs of IDPs.

Basic Needs and Livelihood Support:

- Address immediate needs, including shelter, food, water, and healthcare, recognizing the connection between basic needs and mental health.
- Implement livelihood support programs to empower IDPs economically.

Community Engagement and Participation:

- Involve IDPs in decision-making processes related to their living conditions, services, and support.
- Facilitate community engagement activities to build a sense of agency and ownership.

Trauma-Informed Training for Service Providers:

- Train service providers, including healthcare professionals, social workers, and community workers, in trauma-informed care principles.
- Enhance their understanding of the specific challenges faced by IDPs.

Collaboration with Humanitarian Organizations:

- Collaborate with humanitarian organizations and agencies to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive response.
- Share information and resources to address the multifaceted needs of IDPs.

Empowerment and Resilience Building:

- Promote empowerment and resilience-building programs that focus on the strengths and capabilities of IDPs.
- Support initiatives that facilitate community-led solutions and self-help strategies.

By integrating these considerations into a Trauma-Informed Approach, service providers and organizations can better address the unique challenges faced by Internally Displaced Persons and ensure that they have access to the necessary support for recovery and resilience.

Other Marginalized Groups

Using a Trauma-Informed Approach with Other Marginalized Groups involves recognizing intersectional vulnerabilities and implementing inclusive, non-discriminatory approaches. Here are guidelines for both topics:

Recognizing Intersectional Vulnerabilities:

Intersectionality Awareness:

- Recognize that individuals within marginalized groups may face intersecting forms of oppression based on factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and socio-economic status.
- Understand the cumulative impact of multiple forms of discrimination and marginalization on trauma experiences.

Cultural Competence:

- Develop cultural competence by understanding the unique challenges faced by individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Consider the intersections of cultural identities and their influence on coping mechanisms and resilience.

Tailored Support for Marginalized Identities:

- Tailor trauma-informed interventions to address the specific needs of individuals with intersecting marginalized identities.
- Consider the historical and systemic factors contributing to trauma within these populations.

Inclusive Language and Representation:

- Use inclusive language that recognizes and respects diverse identities and experiences.
- Ensure that resources, materials, and representations are inclusive and reflect the diversity of the marginalized group.

Collaborative Approaches:

- Collaborate with community leaders, advocates, and organizations representing the marginalized group.
- Involve individuals from the group in the development and implementation of trauma-informed programs and policies.

Inclusive and Non-Discriminatory Approaches:

Accessible Services:

- Ensure that trauma-informed services are accessible to individuals with various needs, including physical disabilities, sensory impairments, and language differences.
- Remove barriers to entry and participation to create an inclusive environment.

Anti-Discrimination Policies:

- Implement and enforce anti-discrimination policies within organizations and service settings.
- Train staff on the importance of non-discriminatory practices and behaviors.

Culturally Responsive Care:

- Provide care that is culturally responsive and considers the unique cultural backgrounds of individuals within marginalized groups.
- Recognize and address cultural stigma associated with seeking help for trauma.

Affirming Environments:

- Create environments that affirm and celebrate diverse identities.
- Foster a sense of belonging and acceptance to counteract the impact of societal discrimination.

Trauma-Informed Education and Training:

- Provide ongoing education and training for staff on the intersectionality of trauma and marginalized identities.
- Equip staff with the skills to provide inclusive and sensitive care.

Empowerment and Advocacy:

- Empower individuals within marginalized groups to advocate for their rights and needs.
- Support community-led initiatives that address systemic issues contributing to trauma.

Continuous Evaluation and Improvement:

- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of trauma-informed approaches in meeting the needs of marginalized groups.
- Seek feedback from individuals within the group to inform continuous improvement.

By integrating these considerations into a Trauma-Informed Approach, organizations and service providers can create more inclusive and responsive interventions that recognize and address the unique vulnerabilities of marginalized groups.

Section 4:

Human Rights Violations Documentation Process

In a Trauma-Informed approach, the documentation process of human rights violations involves careful preparation for fieldwork.

Preparing for Fieldwork in Human Rights Documentation

Effective preparation is essential for conducting fieldwork in human rights documentation. Key considerations during the pre-fieldwork phase include training and capacity building, developing cultural awareness, and ensuring team diversity and representation.

Training and Capacity Building:

Conduct purposeful training programs focused on trauma-informed methodologies for documenting human rights violations. Training should cover understanding the psychological impact of trauma, ethical considerations, and effective interviewing techniques. Ensure inclusivity in training, addressing diverse needs, and provide resources for ongoing learning and skill development. Collaborate with professionals from various disciplines, such as psychologists and legal experts, to create a comprehensive training approach.

Developing Cultural Awareness:

Offer cultural competence training sessions to enhance awareness among team members. This includes understanding cultural nuances, norms, and potential sensitivities related to trauma. Language competency is crucial; ensure team members are proficient in languages spoken by affected communities to facilitate effective communication and documentation.

Ensuring Team Diversity and Representation:

Form a diverse team that reflects the cultural, ethnic, and demographic composition of the communities being served. Diverse perspectives enhance understanding and responsiveness to varied experiences. Include team members with local knowledge and connections to the community to foster trust and navigate cultural complexities effectively. Gender diversity within the team is essential to address the specific needs and concerns of different genders affected by human rights violations.

By addressing these considerations during the pre-fieldwork phase, practitioners can enhance the effectiveness, sensitivity, and ethical integrity of human rights documentation efforts. A well-prepared and diverse team, equipped with trauma-informed methodologies and cultural competence, is better positioned to respectfully and effectively document human rights violations and advocate for justice and accountability.

Fieldwork Protocol in Human Rights Documentation

Effective fieldwork in human rights documentation requires a comprehensive approach that prioritizes building trust, conducting trauma-informed interviews, practicing cultural sensitivity, and ensuring safety measures for both survivors and documentation team members.

Establishing Rapport: Building trust is paramount in facilitating the sharing of experiences by individuals involved. Clear communication about the purpose of the documentation process and how the information will be utilized helps

establish transparency and credibility. Empowering survivors by involving them in the documentation process, explaining their rights, and obtaining informed consent fosters a sense of ownership and agency.

Trauma-Informed Interviewing: Creating a safe and comfortable environment for interviews is essential for survivors to feel secure and respected. Understanding potential triggers and sensitivities related to trauma allows for the creation of a supportive space. Adopting an empathetic and non-judgmental approach during interviews encourages survivors to share their experiences at their own pace, promoting a sense of control and validation.

Cultural Sensitivity: Respecting cultural practices and traditions is vital in ensuring that the documentation process is culturally competent and respectful. Methodologies should be adapted to align with cultural preferences, and information should be accessible in languages spoken by the community. Utilizing interpreters when necessary enhances communication and ensures inclusivity.

Safety Measures: Prioritizing the safety of both survivors and documentation team members is imperative throughout the fieldwork process. Establishing safety protocols in case of unexpected challenges or security risks helps mitigate potential harm. Emphasizing confidentiality and implementing measures to protect the identity and privacy of survivors builds trust and safeguards their well-being.

By adhering to these principles during fieldwork, practitioners can create an environment that promotes trust, respect, and safety for survivors while conducting ethical and effective human rights documentation. Through careful attention to rapport-building, trauma-informed interviewing, cultural sensitivity, and safety measures, practitioners uphold the dignity and rights of those sharing their experiences and contribute to meaningful advocacy efforts on their behalf.

Post-Fieldwork Considerations in Human Rights Documentation

Following fieldwork in human rights documentation, several critical steps must be taken to ensure the well-being of team members, ethical data analysis, and continuous improvement in practices. These post-fieldwork considerations are essential for maintaining the integrity of the documentation process and upholding the dignity of survivors.

Debriefing and Emotional Support:

Debriefing sessions are crucial for the documentation team to address any emotional challenges they encountered during fieldwork. These sessions provide a safe space for team members to share their experiences, process difficult emotions, and seek support from colleagues. Additionally, ensuring access to mental health and support services is imperative for team members who may require further assistance in coping with their emotional responses.

Data Analysis and Reporting:

When analyzing collected data, it is essential to apply trauma-informed principles to avoid re-traumatization of survivors. This involves carefully considering the potential impact of sharing findings on survivors and the community at large. Ethical reporting practices must prioritize the dignity and well-being of survivors, refraining from sensationalism or stigmatization in reporting.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement:

Establishing mechanisms for collecting feedback from survivors on the documentation process is crucial for ensuring their voices are heard and respected. This feedback should be used to inform and improve future documentation practices, fostering a culture of responsiveness and accountability within the documentation team.

Continuous learning is essential for the team to stay updated on best practices and incorporate trauma-informed approaches into their work.

By incorporating these considerations into the documentation process, practitioners can ensure that human rights violations are documented in a trauma-informed manner. This approach not only respects the dignity and well-being of survivors but also contributes to ethical and effective advocacy efforts on their behalf. Through ongoing reflection, support, and improvement, the documentation team can fulfill its commitment to upholding human rights and promoting justice for those impacted by violations.

Engagement with Victims/Survivors

Engaging with victims/survivors in a trauma-informed manner is a critical aspect of respecting their well-being and dignity. This protocol explores key principles that guide practitioners in fostering a supportive environment while engaging with victims/survivors.

- **Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation:** Transparent communication is essential, ensuring victims/survivors understand the purpose and potential impact of engagement. Emphasizing voluntary participation and implementing a robust informed consent process reaffirms their autonomy and right to withdraw without consequences.
- **Assessing Trauma and Mental Health Needs:** Sensitive screenings allow practitioners to understand trauma history and mental health needs. Tailoring engagement strategies to individual preferences and considering cultural factors during assessment ensures a personalized and respectful approach.
- **Ensuring Confidentiality and Privacy:** Clear communication of privacy policies and adherence to confidentiality standards are paramount. Explaining legal or ethical limits to confidentiality and implementing secure data handling practices maintain trust and privacy.
- **Trauma-Informed Communication:** Using language and communication styles that prioritize sensitivity and empathy fosters a supportive environment. Practitioners should be mindful of non-verbal cues and body language, acknowledging the deeper layers of communication.
- **Empowerment and Autonomy:** Involving victims/survivors in decision-making processes and respecting their autonomy empowers them in their recovery journey. Recognizing their agency allows for meaningful participation and choice.
- **Crisis Intervention Planning:** Developing a crisis intervention plan prepares practitioners to provide immediate support in case of emotional distress. Having mechanisms in place ensures timely intervention and follow-up care.
- **Cultural Competence:** Cultivating cultural competence among engagement staff acknowledges the diversity of experiences and perspectives. Respect for cultural norms and practices enhances understanding and promotes inclusivity.

By adhering to these principles, practitioners create an environment that prioritizes the autonomy and well-being of victims/survivors. A trauma-informed approach to engagement fosters trust, respect, and empowerment, facilitating a collaborative and supportive journey towards healing and recovery. Through sensitivity, empathy, and cultural competence, practitioners uphold the dignity of victims/survivors while promoting a safe and inclusive space for engagement.

Collecting Testimonies and Evidence

Collecting testimonies and evidence within a trauma-informed approach is a fundamental aspect of preserving the integrity of the process while safeguarding the well-being of victims/survivors. This protocol delves into key considerations crucial for this stage, emphasizing empathy, ethical standards, and trauma sensitivity.

- **Interview Techniques and Trauma-Informed Questioning:** Initiating interviews with empathy sets the tone for a trauma-informed approach, recognizing the sensitive nature of the topics to be discussed. Establishing trust with victims/survivors before delving into sensitive details is paramount, using language that reassures them about confidentiality and purpose. Employing trauma-informed questioning techniques involves using open-ended questions and respecting the survivor's pace, allowing breaks and pauses as needed.
- **Ethical Considerations and Avoiding Re-victimization:** Continuing informed consent throughout the evidence collection process reinforces ethical standards, ensuring victims/survivors understand the implications of their testimonies. Minimizing re-victimization involves avoiding aggressive questioning and creating a trauma-informed environment during evidence collection. Providing immediate support and referrals to mental health services underscores the commitment to survivor well-being.
- **Forensic Examinations and Evidence Preservation:** Incorporating trauma-informed practices into forensic examinations prioritizes survivors' comfort, autonomy, and choice. Obtaining informed consent before procedures and implementing secure protocols for evidence collection and preservation maintain the integrity of the process. Trauma-informed analysis techniques acknowledge the impact of trauma on recall and consistency, exercising sensitivity and empathy during assessment.
- **Additional Considerations:** Collaborating with victims/survivors throughout the verification process ensures their perspectives are respected and considered. Upholding ethical standards in handling information protects the confidentiality and privacy of victims/survivors. Continuous training for analysts and verification teams ensures alignment with best practices and emerging methodologies. Adhering to legal and ethical compliance standards fosters credibility and reliability in human rights documentation efforts.

By integrating these considerations, the analysis and verification of information can be conducted in a thorough, ethical, and trauma-informed manner, reaffirming the commitment to prioritize well-being and integrity in human rights documentation. Empathy, ethical standards, and trauma sensitivity serve as guiding principles, empowering survivors and fostering credibility in the pursuit of justice and accountability.

Documentation and Reporting

Documentation and reporting serve as vital pillars in upholding human rights and fostering accountability, particularly within a trauma-informed framework. This protocol explores the critical considerations involved in the documentation and reporting stage, emphasizing the importance of clarity, stakeholder engagement, advocacy strategies, and trauma sensitivity.

- **Creating Comprehensive and Accessible Reports:** Comprehensive and accessible reports are essential for effectively communicating human rights violations. Using clear and concise language ensures that the reports are understandable to a wide audience, avoiding unnecessary jargon. Visual aids, such as charts and graphs, enhance comprehension and engagement, making the information more accessible. Employing trauma-informed language acknowledges the emotional impact of the documented violations, reflecting a deeper understanding of survivors' experiences.

- **Sharing Findings with Relevant Stakeholders:** Engaging relevant stakeholders is paramount in ensuring the impact of documented evidence. Prioritizing the engagement of victims/survivors not only validates their experiences but also ensures their voices are represented authentically. Sharing reports with government agencies, authorities, and NGOs facilitates collaboration and mobilizes support for addressing human rights issues. Collaborating with advocacy groups amplifies the dissemination of findings and strengthens advocacy efforts.
- **Advocacy Strategies Based on Documented Evidence:** Strategic advocacy strategies grounded in documented evidence are instrumental in effecting meaningful change. Crafting strategic messaging based on the evidence raises awareness and garners public support for human rights causes. Media engagement broadens the reach of documented evidence, elevating its impact and fostering public discourse. Additionally, advocating for policy changes and legal reforms addresses systemic issues, catalyzing systemic change.

Additional Considerations: Trauma-informed dissemination approaches prioritize the well-being of victims/survivors, minimizing the risk of re-traumatization and providing support mechanisms for those affected. Grounding documentation within the framework of international human rights standards underscores the severity of violations and emphasizes the need for accountability. Ensuring secure storage and backup of documentation safeguards against loss or tampering, preserving the integrity of the evidence. Establishing feedback mechanisms allows stakeholders to contribute insights and rectify inaccuracies, enhancing the credibility and accuracy of the documentation. Capacity building within local communities empowers them to engage with and utilize documented evidence effectively, fostering grassroots advocacy and community-driven change.

Incorporating these considerations into the documentation and reporting process transforms it into a powerful tool for advocating human rights, fostering accountability, and catalyzing positive social change. By centering survivor voices, engaging stakeholders, and leveraging evidence-based advocacy strategies, we strengthen our collective commitment to upholding human rights and creating a more just and equitable world.

Victim/Survivor Protection and Support

When addressing victim/survivor protection and support within a trauma-informed framework, immediate measures are crucial for ensuring safety, providing essential services, and empowering individuals to navigate the aftermath of trauma. This protocol delves into the key measures for immediate protection and support, emphasizing the importance of a trauma-informed approach in safeguarding the well-being of victims/survivors.

Immediate Protection Measures:

- **Emergency Referrals and Support Systems:** Establishing robust emergency referral systems is paramount to providing timely assistance to victims/survivors. This includes the establishment of hotlines and helplines that offer immediate access to support and resources. Crisis intervention teams, trained to provide on-the-spot assistance and referrals, play a vital role in addressing urgent needs. Additionally, facilitating access to medical assistance and healthcare services ensures that victims/survivors receive the necessary care during critical moments.
- **Shelter and Safety Planning:** Creating a safe and secure environment is essential for victims/survivors to rebuild their lives. Temporary shelter options offer refuge and confidentiality, providing individuals with a sense of security during tumultuous times. Collaborative safety planning enables victims/survivors to identify potential risks and develop personalized strategies to mitigate them. Moreover, arranging transportation to shelters or secure locations ensures that individuals can access these essential resources without compromising their safety.

- **Legal Assistance and Protection Orders:** Access to legal aid services is fundamental in empowering victims/survivors to understand their rights and pursue legal remedies. Providing guidance and support in obtaining protection orders and restraining orders enhances the safety and security of individuals facing threats or violence. Advocacy support throughout legal processes ensures that victims/survivors are informed, supported, and equipped to navigate complex legal proceedings.

Conclusion: In conclusion, immediate protection and support measures are pivotal components of a trauma-informed approach to victim/survivor protection. By prioritizing emergency referrals, shelter, legal assistance, and advocacy support, we create a supportive ecosystem that empowers individuals to reclaim agency, rebuild their lives, and embark on the journey towards healing and recovery. Upholding the principles of safety, dignity, and empowerment, we reaffirm our commitment to fostering environments that safeguard the well-being of victims/survivors and promote resilience in the face of adversity.

Psychosocial Support

Psychosocial support is pivotal in fostering resilience and facilitating healing among individuals impacted by trauma. When operating within a trauma-informed approach, several key strategies can optimize the effectiveness and inclusivity of psychosocial support services.

- **Trauma Counseling and Mental Health Services:** Trauma-informed counseling services must be tailored to accommodate the diverse needs and experiences of each individual. By employing evidence-based therapeutic approaches, mental health professionals can address the complex psychological impacts of trauma effectively. Accessibility to mental health services is paramount, necessitating timely assessments and collaborative efforts with specialists in trauma-focused interventions. Furthermore, adopting a holistic approach to mental health ensures that trauma symptoms are addressed comprehensively, while mindfulness and relaxation techniques promote emotional regulation and overall well-being.
- **Support Groups and Community-Based Interventions:** Peer support groups provide invaluable opportunities for individuals to connect, share experiences, and foster mutual support. By integrating trauma-informed principles into group settings, these spaces become safe havens that validate survivors' experiences and promote healing. Community-based interventions, including workshops and awareness campaigns, serve to combat the isolation often experienced by trauma survivors and cultivate a sense of community and belonging. Cultural competence is essential in these endeavors, as it ensures that interventions are sensitive to diverse backgrounds and belief systems, fostering relevance and effectiveness.
- **Additional Considerations:** Continuity of care is fundamental in sustaining psychosocial support, recognizing that healing is an ongoing and often nonlinear process. By establishing mechanisms for ongoing support and conducting follow-up sessions, service providers can monitor progress and address emerging needs proactively. Adopting a strengths-based approach empowers individuals by recognizing their resilience and capacity for growth, thereby promoting self-efficacy in the recovery process. Trauma-informed training for professionals in the field enhances their understanding of trauma's impact and underscores the importance of creating safe and supportive environments for survivors.

In addition to psychosocial support, advocacy services play a vital role in supporting survivors throughout medical processes, providing emotional support and facilitating communication with healthcare professionals. Emphasizing confidentiality and privacy safeguards survivors' rights and fosters trust in medical interactions. Establishing a continuum of care ensures that survivors receive ongoing medical support and follow-up care, addressing long-term health needs and promoting holistic well-being. Education and awareness initiatives raise consciousness about the intersection of trauma and physical health, fostering informed approaches to healthcare delivery.

Legal Assistance and Justice Services

In the realm of legal assistance and justice services, the integration of trauma-informed approaches is paramount, particularly concerning aspects such as legal representation, access to justice, witness protection, and confidentiality. This essay elucidates the critical guidelines and considerations necessary for embedding trauma-informed practices in legal assistance and justice services.

- **Legal Representation and Access to Justice:** Trauma-informed legal professionals play a pivotal role in ensuring that survivors receive sensitive, empathetic, and responsive legal representation. By equipping legal professionals with comprehensive training on understanding the impact of trauma on survivors, organizations can prioritize the well-being and needs of those they serve. Accessible legal information is equally vital; survivors must have clear and understandable details about legal processes, their rights, and available services to make informed decisions about their legal options. Empowerment and choice are central tenets; survivors should be actively involved in decision-making processes related to legal actions, and their autonomy should be respected and prioritized.
- **Witness Protection and Confidentiality:** Establishing comprehensive witness protection programs is imperative to prioritize the safety and well-being of survivors. Collaborating with law enforcement and relevant agencies ensures the implementation of effective witness protection measures. Additionally, strict confidentiality protocols must be in place to safeguard survivors' identities and information. Clear communication of confidentiality measures provides reassurance to survivors regarding their privacy rights. Legal proceedings should be structured with a trauma-informed lens, minimizing re-traumatization during testimonies, and providing survivors with flexibility and support during court appearances to mitigate potential impacts on their mental health.
- **Additional Considerations:** Collaboration with support services is essential to provide holistic assistance to survivors. By fostering partnerships between legal professionals and support services such as counselors and advocates, a coordinated approach can address both legal and emotional needs. Cultural sensitivity must be promoted within legal proceedings to recognize and respect diverse backgrounds, with provision for interpreters and culturally competent legal assistance to enhance accessibility. Education on legal rights is crucial; outreach and education programs can inform survivors about their legal rights and options while addressing barriers to accessing justice such as language, literacy, or cultural differences. Continuous communication between legal representatives and survivors ensures transparency and keeps survivors informed about the progress of legal proceedings.

Incorporating trauma-informed principles into legal assistance and justice services contributes to a legal system that respects survivors' experiences, prioritizes their well-being, and facilitates their pursuit of justice. By adhering to these guidelines, legal professionals and organizations play a pivotal role in fostering a legal environment that is sensitive, supportive, and empowering for survivors navigating the complexities of the legal system.

Section 5:

Monitoring and Evaluation

Measuring the effectiveness of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) mainstreaming in activity implementations requires selecting indicators that reflect the core principles and goals of TIC while also capturing changes in organizational culture, staff practices, and client outcomes. Here are several indicators to consider:

1. Beneficiary Satisfaction Surveys:

- Develop surveys to gather feedback from clients about their experiences with services and interactions.
- Include questions about feeling safe, respected, and empowered during their interactions with staff.
- Measure changes in overall satisfaction over time.

2. Staff Training Participation Rates:

- Track the percentage of staff who participate in TIC training sessions and workshops.
- Monitor the frequency and level of engagement in ongoing training opportunities related to trauma-informed practices.

3. Incident Reports Related to Re-traumatization:

- Record the number and nature of incidents reported by clients or staff that may indicate re-traumatization.
- Analyze trends to identify areas for improvement in staff practices or organizational policies.

4. Staff Knowledge and Competency Assessments:

- Conduct pre- and post-training assessments to measure changes in staff knowledge and competency related to trauma-informed practices.
- Use standardized tools or surveys to assess staff understanding of TIC principles and their ability to apply them in their work.

5. Adherence to TIC Principles in Policies and Procedures:

- Review organizational policies and procedures to assess the extent to which they reflect trauma-informed principles.
- Track the development and implementation of new policies or revisions that align with TIC approaches.

6. Staff Burnout and Turnover Rates:

- Track staff burnout and turnover rates as indicators of organizational stress and staff well-being.
- Aim to reduce burnout and turnover by promoting a supportive work environment and prioritizing staff self-care.

7. Feedback from Stakeholders:

- Solicit feedback from clients, staff, and other stakeholders about their perceptions of the organization's commitment to trauma-informed care.
- Use focus groups, surveys, and open-ended questions to gather qualitative data about the impact of TIC mainstreaming on organizational culture and practices.

By tracking these indicators over time and analyzing trends, organizations can assess the effectiveness of TIC mainstreaming in their activities and identify areas for further improvement.

Section 6: Conclusion

Reaffirming Commitment to a Trauma-Informed Approach:

In concluding the policy or protocol, it is imperative to reaffirm the unwavering commitment to a trauma-informed approach. This commitment signifies an acknowledgment of the profound impact of trauma on individuals and underscores the dedication to cultivating a culture characterized by empathy, understanding, and empowerment.

- **Communication and Training:**
 - Stress the importance of ongoing communication and training to ensure that all stakeholders remain informed and proficient in trauma-informed practices.
 - Encourage a shared commitment to creating environments that prioritize safety, dignity, and respect for all individuals.
- **Organizational Culture:**
 - Embed trauma-informed principles into the organizational culture, emphasizing their integration into daily practices, decision-making processes, and interactions.
- **Holistic Protection Measures:**
 - Reiterate the significance of immediate protection measures, including emergency referrals, shelter, and legal assistance, to ensure the safety and well-being of victims/survivors.
 - Highlight the importance of psychosocial support, medical assistance, and legal representation as integral components of victim/survivor protection.
- **Empowerment and Agency:**
 - Emphasize the commitment to empowering victims/survivors by respecting their agency and involving them in decision-making processes related to their protection and support.

Continual Review and Updates of the Policy/Protocol:

- **Dynamic and Responsive:**
 - Stress the dynamic nature of trauma-informed practices and the need for continual review to adapt to emerging knowledge, best practices, and evolving community needs.
 - Encourage a culture of openness to feedback, ensuring that the policy/protocol remains responsive and effective over time.
- **Incorporating Lessons Learned:**
 - Emphasize the value of incorporating lessons learned from implementation, research, and feedback loops into subsequent iterations of the policy/protocol.

- Establish a regular schedule for review, involving key stakeholders and experts to contribute to the refinement process.

- **Accessibility and Transparency:**

- Commit to maintaining transparency in the review process, making information accessible to all stakeholders.
- Ensure that any updates or revisions are communicated clearly to promote understanding and adherence.

In conclusion, the commitment to a trauma-informed approach is dynamic and requires continual dedication, vigilance, and a commitment to learning and improvement. By prioritizing victim/survivor protection and embracing adaptability, the policy/protocol serves as a living document that reflects the organization's steadfast commitment to fostering healing, resilience, and empowerment in the face of trauma.

Appendix 1:

Trauma-Informed Approach Quick Reference Card

1. Safety First:

- Create physically and emotionally safe environments.
- Foster trust and predictability in interactions.

2. Understanding Trauma:

- Recognize the prevalence and impact of trauma.
- Understand trauma's effects on behavior and coping mechanisms.

3. Avoid Re-traumatization:

- Be mindful of language and tone.
- Respect boundaries and personal space.

4. Empowerment and Choice:

- Offer choices whenever possible.
- Validate individuals' strengths and autonomy.

5. Cultural Sensitivity:

- Respect cultural differences and backgrounds.
- Adapt approaches to be inclusive and sensitive.

6. Collaboration and Support:

- Foster collaboration among team members.
- Provide resources and referrals for additional support.

7. Self-Care:

- Prioritize self-care for both individuals and staff.
- Encourage regular debriefing and reflection.

8. Continuous Learning:

- Stay updated on trauma research and best practices.
- Participate in training and education opportunities.

9. Trauma-Informed Language:

- Use person-first language.
- Avoid labeling and stigmatizing language.

10. Community Engagement:

- Engage with community partners and resources.
- Advocate for trauma-informed policies and practices.

For more detailed guidance and resources, consult trauma-informed training materials and professional literature.

Appendix 2:

Checklist

1. Understanding Trauma:

- Have staff been trained on the prevalence and impact of trauma?
- Do staff understand the connection between trauma and behavior?
- Are resources available to educate staff and beneficiaries about trauma?

2. Safety and Trust:

- Have physical and emotional safety measures been established in the environment?
- Is there a protocol in place to address safety concerns and triggers?
- Are staff trained to foster trust and predictability in interactions?

3. Empowerment and Choice:

- Do beneficiaries have opportunities to make choices about their treatment and environment?
- Are individuals encouraged to voice their preferences and concerns?
- Is autonomy respected in decision-making processes?

4. Cultural Sensitivity:

- Are staff trained to recognize and respect cultural differences and backgrounds?
- Are services and materials provided in languages accessible to diverse populations?
- Is the organization committed to cultural humility and ongoing learning?

5. Avoiding Re-traumatization:

- Is trauma-informed language used in all communications and interactions?
- Are boundaries and personal space respected at all times?
- Is staff aware of potential triggers and equipped to respond appropriately?

6. Collaboration and Support:

- Is there collaboration among staff members and with external partners?
- Are resources and referrals readily available for additional support services?
- Does the organization foster a sense of community and belonging?

7. Self-Care and Resilience:

- Are staff encouraged to prioritize self-care and well-being?
- Is there a system in place for regular debriefing and reflection?
- Does the organization promote resilience-building activities and practices?

8. Continuous Learning and Improvement:

- Is there a commitment to ongoing training and education on trauma-informed practices?
- Are staff encouraged to stay updated on trauma research and best practices?

- Is there a process for soliciting feedback and incorporating lessons learned?

9. Community Engagement and Advocacy:

- Does the organization engage with community partners and resources?
- Is there advocacy for trauma-informed policies and practices at the organizational and systemic levels?
- Are efforts made to raise awareness about trauma and its impacts in the community?

This checklist can be customized and expanded based on the specific needs and context of the organization or setting implementing trauma-informed practices. It serves as a tool for self-assessment, ongoing monitoring, and continuous improvement in trauma-informed care.

Appendix 3:

Supportive language

Supportive language for Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is crucial for creating a safe and validating environment for individuals who have experienced trauma. Here are some examples of supportive language for TIC:

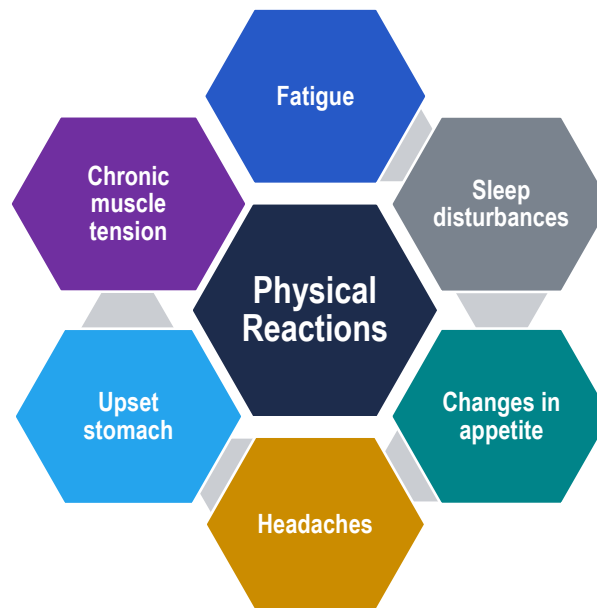
1. **Empowerment:** Encourage individuals to make choices and decisions about their care and intervention. Use phrases like "You have the right to..." and "Your voice matters in this process."
2. **Respect for Autonomy:** Acknowledge the individual's right to control their own intervention and recovery journey. Respect their decisions even if they differ from your recommendations.
3. **Validation:** Acknowledge the individual's feelings and experiences without judgment. Use phrases like "It's understandable that you feel that way" and "Your feelings are valid."
4. **Safety and Comfort:** Create a physically and emotionally safe environment for individuals to express themselves. Use phrases like "You are safe here" and "I'm here to support you through this."
5. **Trauma-Informed Communication:** Use language that is non-threatening, non-blaming, and non-judgmental. Avoid triggering language and be mindful of tone and body language.
6. **Empathy:** Show empathy and compassion towards the individual's experiences. Use phrases like "I can imagine that was really difficult for you" and "I'm here to listen and support you."
7. **Collaboration:** Involve the individual in decision-making about their care and treatment. Use phrases like "Let's work together to find the best approach for you" and "Your input is important in this process."
8. **Normalization:** Normalize the individual's responses to trauma by explaining that their reactions are common and understandable given their experiences.
9. **Strengths-Based Approach:** Focus on the individual's strengths and resilience rather than solely on their vulnerabilities. Use phrases like "You have shown incredible strength in facing these challenges" and "You have the skills to overcome this."
10. **Encouragement:** Offer words of encouragement and support throughout the recovery process. Use phrases like "I believe in your ability to heal and grow" and "You're not alone in this journey."

By incorporating supportive language into Trauma-Informed Care practices, professionals can create an atmosphere of trust, validation, and empowerment that promotes healing and resilience in individuals who have experienced trauma.

Appendix 4: Preventing secondary traumatic stress for human right practitioner: **RED FLAGS**¹⁵

Be on the alert for these immediate stress responses and/or long-term effects:

Physical Reactions

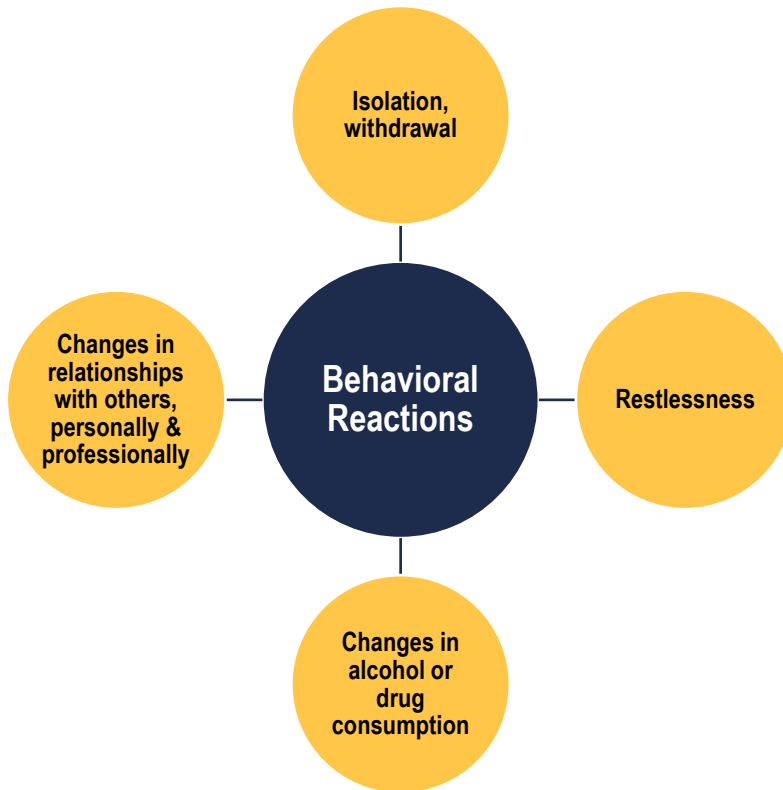


Emotional Reactions

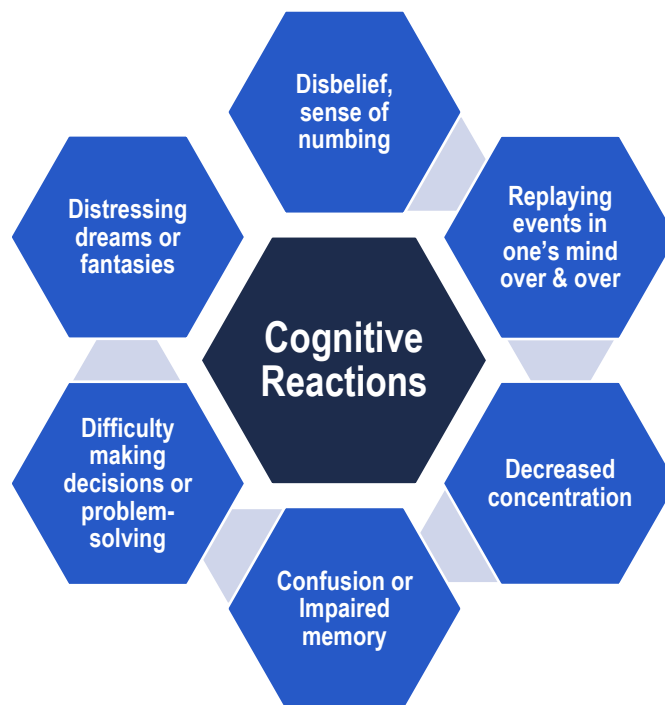


¹⁵ <https://www.healthcaretoolbox.org/selfcare-tips-prevent-secondary-stress>

Behavioral Reactions



Cognitive Reactions



Tools and resources

- [International Trauma Questionnaire – Child and Adolescent Version \(ITQ-CA\)](#)
- [PTSD Checklist 5 \(PCL-5\)](#)
- [Perceived Stress Scale \(PSS-10\)](#)
- [Satisfaction with Life Scale \(SWLS\)](#)
- [Personal Wellbeing Index – Adult – 5 \(PWI-A\)](#)
- [Scale of Positive and Negative Experience \(SPANE\)](#)

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