



Video Transcript: Building and Sustaining a TIROE Workforce

Speaker 1 (00:02): Welcome to Building and Sustaining a Trauma-Informed, Resilience-Oriented, and Equitable Workforce. To build a trauma-informed workforce, all of these components are necessary; recruiting, hiring, and retaining trauma-informed staff. It's important that there is organization-wide support and active involvement in workforce recruitment, hiring, and retention. The work environment itself in many settings can be toxic to the workforce and may hinder the delivery of individualized, respectful, collaborative, and client-centered care to service recipients.

(00:38): Training staff on the principles of, and evidence-based and emerging best practices relevant to, trauma-informed care (TIC). Training for all staff members is essential in creating a trauma-informed organization. It may seem that training should simply focus on new staff or on enhancing the skill level of those who have no prior experience in working with trauma. But training should in fact be more systematic across the organization to develop fully sustainable trauma-informed services. All employees, including administrative staff members, should receive an orientation and basic education about the prevalence of trauma and its impact on the organization's clients.

(01:24): This recorded webinar is going to focus on these first two components. Other components of developing a trauma-informed workforce include developing and promoting a set of competencies specific to TIC, delineating the responsibilities of counselors and addressing ethical considerations specifically relevant to promoting TIC, providing trauma-informed supervision, and committing to prevention and treatment of secondary trauma of professionals within the organization.

(01:56): Research at the Kirwan institute suggests that implicit bias is one of the two principal forces that energize widespread inequality in our society. The other is structural racialization. Let's learn a little more about some of these real world implications. If you haven't already, please review Meeting Package One: Helping Staff and Clients Feel Safe to review about bias. 20 years ago, Kalisha White, a graduate of Marquette University who is Black, suspected that her application for a job as executive team leader at a Target was being ignored because of her race.

(02:36): So, she sent in another one with the name Sara Brooker to make the candidate appear white. The fake applicant who had less experience was invited to an interview. Target paid over half a million dollars to settle a class action lawsuit brought by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on behalf of Ms. White and several other Black job applicants. In 2019, a similar study conducted by the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Chicago sent 83,000 fake job applications for entry level positions at 108 corporations and companies.

(03:15): They submitted applications in pairs, making sure both pairs of applications were presented to have similar backgrounds, yet only their names were selected to be more distinctively white, like Cindy Smith, for example, and more distinctively black, like Deshawn or Imani. Similarly, to 20 years ago, this study found a huge used discrimination audit of some of the largest U.S. companies.

(03:41): On average, applications for candidates with a black name got fewer callbacks than similar applications with a white name. This provides a closer representation of racial discrimination in the workforce than studies that seek to show a relationship between employment and wage gaps to other characteristics like educational attainment and skill, and treat discrimination as a residual, or what's left after other differences are accounted for.

(04:10): If your team has time, please watch the TED Talk on stereotypical hiring processes on the activity page in the meeting package. No matter how much you educate someone about bias, they will not likely be able to notice their own bias in the moment. It is not for lack of awareness or motivation to do so, it's just the way the brain works. You also can't hear above a certain frequency, you also can't run 100 miles an hour; bias is rooted in the brain. Scientists have determined that bias is found in the same region of the brain, the amygdala, associated with fear and threat.

(04:53): It can also be found in other areas of the brain, for instance, stereotyping, a form of bias, is associated with the temporal and frontal lobes. The left temporal lobe of the brain stores general information about people and objects and is the storage place for social stereotypes. The frontal cortex is associated with forming impressions of others empathy and reasoning. It's a cognitive bottleneck only around 20% of the time, with sustained effort, can someone actually recognize it in the moment? It is next to impossible to make individuals less biased in the moment. What we actually want to do is make teams less biased. How then can the negative effects of bias be overcome? Collectively.

(05:41): Reproductive health services, organizations, and teams can become aware of biases in ways that individuals cannot. Team-based practices can be redesigned to help identify biases as they emerge and counteract them on the fly, thus mitigating their effect. So, what works? Removing the bias from the processes, not the people. If we can create a trauma-informed, resilience-oriented, and equitable process, we can build and sustain a trauma-informed, resilience-oriented, and equitable workforce.

(06:17): Let's start by looking at the hiring processes. There are three steps to mitigate bias in the hiring process. First, create and build if-then plans. We need to shift habits to make the unbiased choice in everyday decisions. An example would be to create communication cues in advance of the interview process. Next, consider creating decision guides. We need to develop step-by-step protocols for mitigating bias so our brain cannot go rogue.

(06:35): An example would be standardized interviewing questions to include behavioral, emotional intelligence, and experience questions. Another example would be clear criteria for moving individuals to the next phase of your interview process. Finally, design preventative measures. We need to remove triggers to keep bias from being activated. One example is to remove all identifying factors from resumes so that you're not distracted by the info that's not pertaining to the content of the job.

(07:26): Another would be to ensure that there is more than one person interviewing and providing equitable input into the process. Let's talk about how to create an equitable hiring process. First, recruitment directly relates to retention. If you spend the time preparing and hiring the person who is the right fit, who can come in with eyes wide open, there is a greater opportunity to retain that person in the reproductive health field.

(07:56): Make sure the job posting has clear expectations of the position. Include language requirements needed. If you're in a rural setting, is there hope to share a position over several sites. Include credentials or training levels needed, include coverage hours or days needed. Is it evenings? Is it weekends? Think about how and where you recruit, especially if there are staffing shortages. Will you share a position with the partner or the organization? Have someone work remotely? Close to schools? Think about homegrown through internships. When preparing for the interview, we need to develop a consistent interview process to make it easier to compare applicants. The interview process should have more than one person assessing and asking similar questions or sharing information so that bias is removed.

(08:49): One thing to include in the interview process if there's more than one interview in the room, have agreed upon signs or special questions that, when given or asked, indicate to your teammates that you are done interviewing the applicant. This will help avoid continuing with an applicant longer than necessary. For example, if I asked a question about self-care, my partner knows I'm ready to finish. So, try to have multiple people interview the applicant either together or separately. There are additional considerations that we should bring into the interview process. There should be intentional considerations regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion.

(09:35): Take into consideration if the candidate is representative of the client population. Few managers want to actively discriminate against well-qualified candidates. However, this still can happen. Watch out for inadvertent sources of discrimination. Unconscious bias and the need to find a fit can keep an organization from hiring the best candidates. Unfortunately, looking for the wrong kind of cultural fit can lead to discrimination. Cultural fit doesn't mean that a candidate shares a personal culture with your team, but instead that they fit the values of the workplace culture.

(10:13): To avoid this, you standardized questions, take performance based notes and standard evaluation criteria. Consider your current team makeup. How can you bring in more diversity but match culture? A candidate who works well with your team and adds value to the company culture is great. Identify the most important qualities of your team are aspects of organizational culture, like hard-working, problem-solver, attention to detail and ask how a candidate has demonstrated those traits in their past.

(10:51): Consciously avoid basing fit on whether the candidate acts, looks, or speaks similarly to your existing employees. Take the time to review and understand the role and responsibilities in advance of the interview. Make sure to review the job description and be transparent and clear around expectations and requirements of the position. Good staff interview questions assess the qualities you want or don't want.

(11:23): Interview processes should balance the types of questions such as behavioral questions, experience verification questions, opinion questions, competency questions, emotional intelligence questions. Asking behavioral and competency questions overall, should be used to see how the applicant applies skills and shows how past behavior could predict future behavior when asking questions because neutral and is not leading as possible. So that an applicant gives you an unbiased answer and not based on what they perceive to be the right answer.

(11:59): Lastly, it's important to highlight support, professional development, advancement, and non-financial benefits. The culture of an organization supported offers to its employees and team dynamics is important to any candidate, as belonging is a huge part of engagement, satisfaction, and retention. Post-interview, there should be a time to reflect within the team. Reflect on the applicant's ease of answering, the applicant's preparedness, their presentation, etc. Did they have thoughtful questions about the position? Was their resumé without typos? Did they come prepared with references, questions to ask, etc.?

(12:46): Keep interview notes in a routine and objective way to help compare applicants and to substantiate hiring or not hiring an individual. All notes, including comments written on a resume or a CV, are a part of the applicant's job application and could be subject to review. If any unusual disagreements come up, confirm discussion points and agreements in an email.

(13:17): Now what about performance reviews? Once someone is hired, what are the first steps that can be taken to ensure retention is to initiate the performance review process. Establishing goals, cadence of review, and training that may be needed are all components that are important to the performance review process. This, however, is another place that bias tends to show up.

(13:43): The traditional performance review is a confidential, closed-door meeting between no more than two people, a person and their supervisor. This allows for an individual's bias to creep in. Though we may think we're making accurate, objective assessments during a performance review, the social and brain sciences have shown that bias is still rooted in the brain. Assessment is a human process and is therefore highly subjective and vulnerable to bias.

(14:13): This process, too, should be team based. Let's take a look at what an equitable review process should include. To make more informed and valid evaluations. Consider the following steps for an equitable performance review process for your agency. Gather most important data. Identify the key performance indicators over time. Be sure that you can define those and have the sources of data that you will need to assess them.

(14:45): Collect this data frequently. Typically, we review only once a year, but the data collection component should be done more often. Check your thinking by getting feedback from others. Managers think the way they view the world is accurate. Managers don't see everything that their staff do, so step outside yourself and ask for feedback. And then communicate to motivate, make the time useful. What makes performance conversations inherently challenging for a team member? Make it useful and not fearful.

(15:20): If managers have a growth mindset, they are able to see the potential and challenge their own biases in a better way that shows in the data. So what can we do? Ensure managers mind their blind spots. Trick their mind to look at the present, limit assessments to a time frame. When assessing team members, try to be accurate when collecting holistic information about the staff. Spending half an hour a month with each employee may be hard, but they really need to collect this data. It takes time and commitment.

(15:57): To mitigate bias, here are some takeaways. Bias is universal. There's a general human predisposition to make fast and efficient judgments. And you are just as susceptible to this as anyone else. If you believe you are less biased than other people, that's probably a sign that you're more biased than you realize. It is difficult to manage bias in the moment when you're making a decision. You need to practice and design practices and processes for mitigating bias. In advance, including consistent interview processes and gathering more than just your thoughts in the performance appraisal process.

(16:41): Consciously identify situations in which more deliberate thought and strategies would be helpful. And then set up the necessary conversations and other mechanisms for mitigating bias such as reflection after the interview. And in designing bias, countering processes and practices, focus on the cognitive strategies over intuition or gut instinct. Lastly, individual cognitive effort is not enough. Make those cognitive strategies team-based. Create a culture where pausing and checking for bias is the norm. You have to cultivate an organization-wide culture in which people continually remind one another that their brain's default setting is egocentric, that they will sometimes get stuck in a belief that their experience and perception of reality is the only objective truth, and that better decisions will come from stepping back to seek out a variety of perspectives and views. Thank you.