

Creating a Team Safety Covenant¹



The foundation of highly effective teams in a trauma-informed, resilience-oriented, and equitable (TIROE) organization is for everyone to feel safe to bring their authentic self to engage in difficult conversations for growth. To achieve this, teams can create a safety covenant that describes expectations for communication and interactions among team members.

Step 1: Determine each team member’s needs

Ask each team member, “What do you need from others on the team to: feel safe; be authentic; and engage honestly in difficult conversations for growth?”

Team member	Safety needs
<i>Example:</i> Outreach worker	<i>I need to understand how management makes decisions.</i>

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Step 2: Reframe these staff needs as behaviors that align with TIROE values

To create safety for all members of this team, we commit to the following:

TIROE value	Commitment	Safety covenant behaviors
Trustworthiness and transparency	We operate in a transparent manner, with the goal of building and maintaining trust.	Example: Leadership describes the problem/situation and solicits strategies and solutions from staff prior to enacting a change.
Safety	Each member of the team feels psychologically, socially, physically, and culturally safe.	
Collaboration and mutuality	We recognize that healing happens in relationship and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making.	
Peer support	We support each other to build trust, establish safety, and empower each other.	
Voice, choice, and empowerment	We uphold and amplify each other's choices and recognize that every person's experience is unique.	
Equity	Our organization is free of racism, bias, and discrimination. Staff have the resources and support to bring their best selves to the team.	

Step 3: Evolve and integrate

As the initial team rolls out TIROE work through the broader agency, consider revisiting and evolving your safety covenant and integrating it into your organizational practice and policy.