





# Trauma-Informed Approach in Adolescent Health


## Six Core Principles Worksheet

Read the descriptions of each core principle below and review the real-world examples. Following the meeting, fill out the far-right column, as you reflect on how your program currently integrates the six core principles in its policies, practices, and through individual behaviors of staff.

Core principles <sup>1</sup>	Real-world examples	How we currently integrate trauma-informed principles
 <p><b>Safety</b></p> <p>All youth, parents/caregivers, community partners, and staff feel physically and psychologically safe.</p> <p>The physical program setting is safe and interpersonal interactions promote a sense of safety.</p> <p>Understanding safety as defined by those served by the program is a high priority.</p>	<p><i>For participants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe and implement a predictable program routine.</li> <li>Use group agreements.</li> <li>Use value-neutral language; avoid shaming language.</li> <li>Educate youth on ways to help themselves, including providing resources related to mental health services.</li> <li>Encourage self-care techniques such as putting their head down, stepping out of the room, and using an established signal if they feel uncomfortable or triggered.</li> </ul> <p><i>For staff/partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities to examine attitudes and values.</li> <li>Encourage and provide resources for self-care.</li> <li>Reach out to a supervisor to discuss challenging situations.</li> <li>Understand mandated reporting.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Trustworthiness and transparency</b></p> <p>Program decisions, implementation, and evaluation are conducted with transparency; the goal is to build and maintain trust with youth, parents/caregivers, community partners, staff, and others involved in the organization or network.</p>	<p><i>For participants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show you care by building rapport, listening, and empathizing.</li> <li>Remind them throughout the program that you are there for them if they ever need to talk.</li> <li>Provide disclaimers about what the program will be talking about.</li> <li>Provide clear information about confidentiality and reporting.</li> <li>If someone discloses abuse and you need to make a report, let the person know, involve them in the process (if appropriate), and explain next steps.</li> </ul> <p><i>For staff/partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show you care by building rapport, listening, and empathizing.</li> <li>Provide ongoing communication about program decisions, implementation, and evaluation data.</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014. Available at [ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA\\_Trauma.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf).

Core principles <sup>1</sup>	Real-world examples	How we currently integrate trauma-informed principles
 <p><b>Peer support</b></p> <p>Peer support is key to establishing safety and hope, building trust, enhancing collaboration, and promoting recovery and healing</p>	<p><i>For participants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage participants during program implementation through role plays.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to answer each other's questions.</li> <li>• Normalize the experience of trauma and responses.</li> <li>• Provide resources for peer support groups.</li> </ul> <p><i>For staff/partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openly talk about feelings of stress or burnout, along with the need for support.</li> <li>• Have an outlet when working with youth who have experienced trauma.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Collaboration and mutuality</b></p> <p>The program recognizes everyone has a role to play in a trauma-informed approach.</p> <p>Relationships, partnerships, and meaningful sharing of power and decision-making are important.</p>	<p><i>For participants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for input through advisory groups, pilots, implementation, and evaluation.</li> <li>• Be responsive to youth and parent/caregiver input and suggestions.</li> <li>• Create space and various ways for participants and parents/caregivers to ask questions and receive answers.</li> </ul> <p><i>For staff/partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach topics related to a trauma-informed approach.</li> <li>• Talk with educators to prepare them for upcoming content and discuss strategies for supporting youth, especially youth who may have known trauma.</li> <li>• Create and maintain multidisciplinary partnerships.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Empowerment, voice and choice</b></p> <p>Youth, parent/caregiver, community partner, and staff strengths, experiences, and resilience are recognized and expanded upon.</p> <p>Program operations, workforce development, and services foster empowerment for all.</p> <p>Youth are supported in shared decision making, choice, self-advocacy, and goal setting.</p> <p>Staff are empowered to do their work well with adequate organizational support.</p>	<p><i>For participants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For people who have experienced trauma, empower them to regain control.</li> <li>• Clearly address and define consent.</li> <li>• Recognize youth as experts on their own lived experiences.</li> <li>• Create opportunities for youth to make decisions throughout the program.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for youth to practice skills.</li> </ul> <p><i>For staff/partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower staff and partners to know that they can make a difference in young people's lives.</li> <li>• Provide ongoing opportunities for workforce development.</li> </ul>	

Core principles <sup>1</sup>	Real-world examples	How we currently integrate trauma-informed principles
<div></div> <div><b>Cultural and historical awareness</b></div> <p>The program actively moves past stereotypes and biases based on race, ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, geography, etc.</p> <p>The program offers access to gender responsive services, leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and is responsive to the racial, ethnic, and cultural needs of youth served.</p> <p>The program recognizes and addresses historical trauma.</p>	<p><i>For participants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognize the conditions in which people live, learn, work, and play as well as the systems that influence these environments.</li><li>• Connect with youth about the issues that are important to them.</li></ul> <p><i>For staff/partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take different perspectives into account.</li><li>• Understand cultural differences when it comes to trauma and talking about trauma.</li><li>• Understand how trauma uniquely impacts different groups.</li><li>• Establish a referral network responsive to the needs of the youth the program serves.</li></ul>	