



Character Qualities required for Trauma Informed Care

Most people are attracted to a service provider profession because they want to make a difference. You possess qualities that help you perform the duties related to providing services in a caring occupation whether as a health care professional, a teacher, first responder, clergy and so on. You are compassionate, empathetic, respectful, supportive and self-aware. These attributes are ones required to effectively engage in the trauma informed care approach and build strong relationships with survivors to foster healing and recovery.

Self-Awareness: Engaging with another's traumatic experiences is rewarding but difficult. Research indicates that empathetic engagement with trauma survivors is sustaining for a provider. It is essential that a provider know themselves well, understand their emotions, their own story, beliefs, attitudes, triggers and vulnerabilities.

Attitudes and assumptions come through in our communications with others so it is important to examine just what drives us. In addition exploring our assumptions about trauma experiences, how people are impacted and how people recover will help to set the right tone for engagement.

Compassion is a core way of being in trauma informed care. It can be considered both an emotion and an activity. Identifying with another person is an essential process for human beings. Compassion is a process of connecting. This identification with others through compassion can lead to increased motivation to do something in an effort to relieve the suffering of others. Showing compassion can be as simple as a gentle touch, or a look, something that recognizes the humanity inside a person.

- Understand your own feelings about life and humanity
- Recognize the stories that come with trauma experiences
- Ask yourself: How would I want to be treated?

Empathy is understanding, being aware of and sensitive to the feelings, emotions and experiences of the trauma survivor, their family and their community. Trauma survivors need to be accepted and understood in order to encourage healing. We Providers can demonstrate empathy by communicating an understanding of feeling. To do so we must be willing to connect emotionally with the survivor's story. This type of connection allows survivors to feel accepted and genuinely cared for.

Collaboration: Being collaborative is a process of recognizing your position of power in the interactions with a trauma survivor and choosing to equalize power imbalances. This is done through; open communication, allowing expression of emotions and feelings without fear of judgment, providing choices for treatment and encouraging shared decision making. In doing so we recognize that healing happens in relationships and that learning is a two way process. When we are open to learning from survivors we can strengthen the healing relationship. As providers we are facilitators of hope and recovery.