**A Reflection on Trauma-informed Practices for Postsecondary Education**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2014) has identified specific trauma-informed principles that can be helpful in assessing capacity for trauma-informed practice.

Consider the following excerpt from *Trauma-informed Practices for Post-secondary Education: A Guide* (Davidson, 2017) as an informal reflection on your education system as a whole.

In what ways do system-wide practices reflect a trauma-informed approach? In what ways can practices be strengthened to meet the needs of students, including those affected by trauma?

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| Core values: | Questions to guide reflection on trauma-informed practices: |
| Safety (Physical and Emotional) | 1. How safe is the building or environment? Are sidewalks and parking areas well-lit? Are there easily accessible exits? 2. Are directions clear and readily available? 3. Are security personnel present? 4. Are signs and other visual materials welcoming, clear, and legible? 5. Are restrooms easily accessible (e.g. well-marked and gender neutral?) 6. Are first contacts/introductions welcoming, respectful, and engaging? |
| Trustworthiness | 1. Do students receive clear explanations and information about tasks and procedures? 2. Are specific goals and objectives made clear? 3. How does the program handle challenges between role clarity and personal/professional boundaries? |
| Choice and Control | 1. Is each student informed about available choices and options? 2. Do students get a clear and appropriate message about their rights and responsibilities? Are there negative consequences for making particular choices? Are these necessary or arbitrary consequences? 3. Do students choose how contact is made (e.g., by phone or mail to their home or other address)? |
| Collaboration | 1. Is there a student advisory board, and does it have a significant role in planning and evaluation of services? Are there members who identify as trauma survivors or are from a targeted group (such as veterans, foster youth, etc.)? 2. Is student input and preference given substantial weight in service planning, goal setting, and the development of priorities? 3. Do educators identify tasks on which they and students can work simultaneously (e.g., information gathering and committees)? |
| Empowerment | 1. How are each student’s strengths and skills recognized? 2. Do educators communicate a sense of realistic optimism about students’ capacity to achieve their goals? 3. How can each class, contact, or service be focused on skill development or enhancement? |

*Source: Fallot & Harris, 2009.*

References:

Davidson, S. (2017). *Trauma-informed Practices for Post-secondary Education: A Guide.* Portland, Oregon:Education Northwest.

Fallot, R.D., & Harris, M. (2009). *Creating Cultures of Trauma-Informed Care (CCTIC): A self-assessment and planning protocol.* Washington, DC: Community Connections.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *Trauma-informed care in behavioral health services: Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP 57).*