



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
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CHRIS CHRISTIE
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LYNN A. KOVICH
Assistant Commissioner

Dear Colleagues:

Ann Jennings, Ph.D, has been involved for over 20 years in raising public awareness and influencing fundamental change in the way public health and mental health systems view and treat people with histories of unaddressed sexual and physical abuse trauma, developing the first state Trauma Informed Care system in the country for Maine's Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services. She consults nationally with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), as well as numerous state health and mental health systems across the country. From Dr. Jennings work, SAMHSA toolkits have been developed for States who are moving toward Trauma Informed Care. In all of the recommendations from SAMHSA and NASMHPD, states are advised to develop Principles for Trauma Informed Care, and disseminate those Principles throughout the system. There are various models for incorporating Trauma Informed Care across organizations and systems, but according to SAMHSA:

“A trauma-informed approach incorporates three (3) key elements:

- 1) realizing the prevalence of trauma;
- 2) recognizing how trauma affects all individuals involved with the program, organization, or system, including its own workforce; and
- 3) responding by putting this knowledge into practice.”

Trauma-Informed services must be based on principles, policies, and procedures that provide safety, voice and choice, and carried out within every part of a system and/or agency, including administration, and management. Our Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Trauma Informed Care Work Group has used the materials recommended by SAMSHA to develop the attached: “*VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A TRAUMA INFORMED SYSTEM OF CARE.*” This document outlines principles for you to use throughout your agency to begin to create a new culture, or continue to grow your existing culture of Trauma Informed Care. I hope this information is helpful to your agency as you consider the steps to begin to move toward implementing principles, policies, and procedures that provide safety, voice and choice.

Accompanying “*VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A TRAUMA INFORMED SYSTEM OF CARE*” is a PowerPoint™ which can be used to introduce culture change to your staff and service recipients as you look toward creating a more trauma sensitive agency. If you have any questions, or would like additional technical assistance, please contact Kathi Bedard at: Kathi.bedard@dhs.state.nj.us. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Lynn A. Kovich
Assistant Commissioner

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