



Trauma-Informed Approach

Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by a person as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the person's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being. By understanding trauma, we can better support those we serve and the staff that may experience the vicarious effects of such trauma.

This concept of a trauma-informed approach is based on incorporating six key principles into our daily practices:

- **Safety:** Understand that safety as defined by the person.
- **Trustworthiness and Transparency:** Maintaining transparency in reference to actions, policies, limitations, and decisions help to build trust.
- **Peer Support:** Support of other people who have experienced traumatic events and mutual self-help can assist in and strengthen other principles.
- **Collaboration and Mutuality:** Everyone has a role to play in addressing trauma and by sharing of power and decision-making, "healing can happen".
- **Empowerment, Voice, and Choice:** We all know the statement, "Nothing about us without us". This principle fosters the notion that people should be empowered and included in decision making, choices, and their goals that they set in order to heal and move forward.
- **Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues:** By recognizing that the issues raised by culture, history, and one's gender such as stereotypes or biases and historical trauma we can develop responses to those needs.

Remember, trauma is not always able to be seen and may be experienced in a variety of manners by different people. By incorporating these principles into a daily practice we can improve the outcomes of those we provide service to and prevent re-traumatization of the person and staff.

Examples of Trauma:

- Death of family member, lover, friend, teacher, or pet
- Witnessing a death
- Divorce

- Physical pain or injury
- Serious illness
- War
- Natural disasters
- Moving to a new location
- Parental abandonment
- Rape
- Domestic abuse

Additional Resources:

[SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)

[Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms & Transformational Schools](#)

[Infographic: 6 Guiding Principles To A Trauma-Informed Approach](#)

[How Trauma Affects People with Intellectual Disabilities](#)

Achieva disability advocates provide information, technical assistance and individual advocacy on issues that impact children and adults with intellectual disabilities and autism and their families. We also work with state and federal legislators and policy makers to ensure that the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities are protected and that they are afforded services to assist them to be included in their communities. We will provide guidance, information and technical assistance to the best of our ability. Achieva advocates are available to answer questions specific to your situation. Please contact us at 412.995.5000 x486, 888.272.7229 x 486 (Toll-Free) or log onto www.achieva.info/contact-advocacy.