Step by Step Supervisor Guide
for Trauma Informed Care Workplace Discussion

The purpose of this guide is to provide supervisors specific talking points across five crucial areas found to ensure that a Trauma Informed Care (TIC) environment is established and maintained in the workplace. The *Join the Conversation: Creating a Trauma Informed Workplace* survey is to be facilitated by a supervisor level staff member (e.g., Service Chief, Clinical Supervisor, and Office Supervisor) or the site-based Workplace Wellness Advocate.

Step 1: _Supervisor introduces "Join the Conversation: Creating a Trauma Informed Workplace" survey._

"This survey identifies five domains crucial to creating and maintaining a Trauma Informed Care environment in the workplace. I will review each area, to give you a better understanding of the question. Feel free to take notes directly on the form. As I go over each question, you can fill in your answer now or later. You can write your name on the form, or not. There is no right or wrong answer. The purpose of this survey is to make sure I, as your supervisor, have a good understanding of what the team needs in order to be more trauma informed. I will collect the completed forms later. I plan to review the responses and at another meeting bring back the feedback to the group for a larger discussion. My hope is with your feedback I will have a better understanding of the priorities for our team"

TIP: Each (5) domain provides a brief explanation. The explanation is to help you, the supervisor, in clarifying the questions on the "**Join the Conversation: Creating a Trauma Informed Workplace**".

TIP: It's important to emphasize the information collected will be kept confidential. That means when you review the information and circle back to the team you will not be saying **"So employee A shared that she felt unsafe, lets talk about that…".**

TIP: It' important to explain that the intention of this survey is to highlight areas that are working well and not working well so that the supervisor can support the team in coming up with potential solutions. This is a team effort!

Domain 1: **Safety**

Question: Do you feel physically and/or emotionally safe in the workplace?

This question is asking about physical and emotional sense of safety in the workplace. For example, are there enough accessible exits, readily contacted assistance if it is needed; is there enough space for people to be comfortable, and adequate privacy? Do team members feel comfortable bringing their work or personal concerns to supervisor?

Domain 2: **Trustworthiness**

Question: Do you feel you work in an environment that values honesty and transparency? What does honesty and transparency look like to you? Any suggestions?

This question is asking if individuals feel they can trust those they work with. This includes program directors and supervisors, do team members believe administrators have an understanding of the work they perform. Do team members feel the program provides clear information about what will be done, by whom, when, why, under what circumstances, at what cost, with what goals? Do team members really believe self-care is encouraged, is it supported by program policies and procedures, including leadership?

Domain 3: **Choice**

Question: Do you feel you have the ability to control how you meet work expectations? What would you like to see differently, if anything?

This question is asking if team members have a sense of control over the way they can perform their job function. Different from control over work duties, do they have a sense they have choice on how to perform their required work duties to accomplish the program goals. When answering the next question, ask team member to consider what choices they have in meeting workplace expectations. Ask if they feel they can be creative in their respective roles and if they feel they can offer suggestions to leadership in ways to improve or modify current assigned responsibilities.

Domain 4: **Collaboration**

Question: Do you feel respected and heard when having a team discussion? What do you need to feel valued?   What would you like to see differently, if anything?

This question is asking if team members feel part of a team. When answering this question, team member should consider if the program allows for team input and communicates to all staff when changes are happening across different levels of team members (from Office Support to Clinicians)? Do team members communicate respectfully?

Domain 5: **Empowerment**

Question: Do you feel respected and heard when having a team discussion? What do you need to feel valued?   What would you like to see differently, if anything?

This question is regarding team members feeling that the work environment promotes individual and team empowerment and professional development. Does the program communicate a sense of realistic optimism about the capacity of team members contributing to the program goals? Does the team member feel the program emphasizes staff growth more than maintenance or stability? Does staff member feel validated and affirmed in the workplace setting?

Step 2: _Supervisors to collect & review information collected from the group_

Once feedback is collected, supervisor should organize information in common themes and identify statements that require further exploration for clarity. Supervisor should organize all input (positive or negative) and be prepared to provide feedback to the group. As needed, supervisor should seek support from Program Manager on navigating challenging or unexpected feedback.

TIP: Keep an open mind to the feedback received. If team members begin to verbally share feedback, do not rush to problem solve or correct team members' perceived misperceptions. It's okay to say **"this is good feedback. Let me sit with this for a bit to organize all the information so we can strategize how to address each item** <u>together</u>**."**

TIP: The supervisor is NOT responsible for "fixing" identified issues. The supervisor <u>is</u> responsible for facilitating team conversation on ways to resolve team concerns.

TIP: Not everyone will participate and that's okay. This is an opportunity for the supervisor to remind the team the intention of the survey to identify strategies to increase employee sense of job satisfaction and safety (physical and emotional) in the workplace. Remind the team, without their input, the supervisor cannot properly advocate for the teams specific needs.

Step 3: <u>*Supervisors Schedule Follow Up Group Discussion*</u>

It is important for the supervisor to acknowledge the teams participation in completing the survey. Although the feedback might have been obtained anonymously, at this point, it is important for the team to have an open conversation in order to identify strategies that would work towards supporting a trauma informed care workplace. *"Thank you for sharing your feedback. This process has helped me have a better understand of what is working or not working in our setting. I would like to share general feedback and get additional clarification on a few areas mentioned. Please feel free to make suggestions on how we can make positive changes onsite."*

TIP: It is vital that the supervisor schedules a <u>timely</u> follow up meeting to review information with the team. If the supervisor fails to "close the loop" on this discussion, it sends a negative message that this activity was not really that important.

Step 4: <u>*Supervisors set priorities for Trauma Informed Care Workplace*</u>

At this point, the supervisor is to collaboratively identify concrete implementation strategies for addressing gaps as identified by the team. Again, think carefully about your program and identify the most appropriate method for doing so. Refer to Appendix A for staff wellness and safety ideas.

TIP: The Supervisor to have a copy of Staff Wellness and Safety Ideas handout (Appendix A)

Reference

Harris, M., & Fallot, R. (Eds.) (2001). *Using Trauma Theory to Design Service Systems*. New Directions for Mental Health Services. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.