

Healthcare Provider's Guide to Trauma-informed Care

Trauma-informed care is a framework in which any healthcare provider can engage. It requires providers to recognize and maintain a basic understanding of trauma, while responding in an empathic manner. The goal is to acknowledge the vast impacts of trauma and avoid re-traumatization.

Most people have experienced at least one traumatic event in their lives. Some people may not require treatment while others may develop troublesome symptoms that lead to a PTSD diagnosis. There are many ways to treat trauma. Here is a snapshot of trauma-informed care.

4 R's of Trauma-informed Care

Realize the prevalence	**Recognize** the impact
Respond appropriately	**Resilience** through skill-building

Core Principles

A trauma-informed approach focuses on core principles rather than a prescribed set of behaviors. Below are six principles to help reduce the likelihood of re-traumatization:



Safety
Establish an environment where all members feel physically, psychologically and emotionally safe.



Peer support and mutual self-help
Seek and provide support. Patients are encouraged to connect with trauma-informed peer programs or a psychotherapy support group.



Collaboration and mutuality
Share decision-making in order to minimize power differences.



Trustworthiness and transparency
Be clear, consistent, and honest. Openly discuss treatment plans and establish reasonable expectations and boundaries.



Empowerment, voice, and choice
Recognize that every member's experience is unique and build on their strengths to develop new skills and coping strategies.



Cultural Competence
Acknowledge and respect the wide range of perspectives we each have based on our experiences.

Trauma-informed Practices

Below are a few suggestions to implement the trauma-informed core principles:

- Discuss the components of their appointment. Do not assume all patients understand the purpose of assessments, treatment planning, and interventions.
- Share feedback about your trauma assessment and clinical observations and encourage patients to ask questions.
- Explain the many symptoms of trauma and provide examples.
- Collaborate to establish goals, explore expectations, and maintain comfortable boundaries.
- Shift from "Provider knows best" to "Together, we can find solutions."
- Discuss how treatment and wellness activities contribute to improved health and well-being.
- Emphasize the patient's strengths and resilience while encouraging the development of new coping skills.
- Service members and veterans who experience delayed trauma responses may benefit from the following strategies:
  - Create an environment that acknowledges the traumatic event(s)
  - Draw a connection between the traumatic event and trauma-related symptoms that may present
  - Explain trauma triggers and help identify them
  - Work together to develop coping strategies to navigate and manage symptoms

Trauma-focused Psychotherapy

Trauma-focused psychotherapy is defined as therapy that uses cognitive, emotional, or behavioral techniques to facilitate processing a traumatic experience and in which the trauma focus is a central component of the therapeutic process.

The following are evidence-based individual manualized trauma-focused psychotherapies:

- Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)
- Prolonged Exposure (PE)
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

Alternative psychotherapies:

- Cognitive Therapy for PTSD (CT-PTSD)
- Present Centered Therapy
- Written Exposure Therapy



Sample Questions that Reflect Trauma-informed Care

What information would be helpful for me to know about what happened to you?

What would you say your strengths are?

What do you need to feel safe right now?

How can I best support you today?

Is it okay if we talk about [topic]?

How is our pace for you? Would you like a break?

What are your goals?

What are some things that helped you cope in the past?

Resources

Military OneSource
Provides 24/7 support and information on housing, financial, legal, medical and psychological services.
Stateside: 800-342-9647
Overseas: militaryonesource.mil/resources/tools/international-calling-options/militaryonesource.mil

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the associated **Military/Veterans Crisis Line** provides free and confidential support for individuals in crisis. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, call or text 988 or 988lifeline.org; you can also press 1 or text 838255 to chat live with a counselor focused on military and veteran callers. For OCONUS calling options and online chat accessible from anywhere in the world, visit militarycrisisline.net

National Center for PTSD
Provides education on trauma and PTSD and where to get help.
ptsd.va.gov

PTSD Treatment Decision Aid
An online decision tool featuring current evidence based PTSD treatment options to help patient and clinician arrive at a personalized treatment plan.
ptsd.va.gov/apps/decisionaid/for-clinicians/

Real Warriors
Provides information and testimonies of personal experiences which encourage service members and veterans to seek professional help.
health.mil/RealWarriors

Psychological Health Center of Excellence
Provides policies and evidence-based information and resources on psychological health.
health.mil/PHCoE

Chaplain Corps
Provide confidential support all over the world.
militaryonesource.mil/benefits/unit-chaplain-roles-and-responsibilities/

Department of War Sexual Assault and Prevention Office (SAPRO)
Provides policies, information, resources and reports on sexual assault in the military.
sapr.mil

At your installation: **Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) and/or your unit Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Victim Advocate (VA)**

Mobile Apps



Several apps endorsed by VA for PTSD:

Self Help:
- PTSD Coach
- Beyond MST
- Mindfulness Coach
- AIMS for Anger Management

Treatment Companion:
- CPT Coach
- PE Coach
- BT-I Coach
- Strength at Home
- ACT Coach

Additional Apps:
- Breathe2Relax
- Tactical Breather
- Safety Plan
- Pain Coach and Insomnia Coach

Learn more: ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/

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