



TRAUMATIC STRESS INSTITUTE

How Administrators can Sustain Trauma Informed Care

The following are specific steps that Senior Administrators can take to create and sustain trauma informed care in their agencies.

- Develop a mechanism to learn of moments of success, such as patience and understanding helping a child or family, and praise the staff member personally
- Establish communication forums such as Lunch with the CEO and listen.
- Take clients to lunch. Ask them how you could improve your agency.
- Call families who have been involved with the program a few weeks or a month. Ask them how it is going and how you could improve.
- When you are asked to consult on a case, ask how the staff understands the behavior.
- Develop and sustain employee recognition events and employee and client fun events.
- Establish client councils
- Have a client on your Board.
- When you observe or must respond to a problem situation, praise anyone who did anything caring and collaborative with the client.
- When things go wrong, seek systems solutions. When possible, do not blame individuals. Make sure to maintain a "we are in this together" stance.
- Occasionally join in program fun events.
- Convey hope
- Establish contact with every staff member who is hurt.

- Speak warmly and hopefully of the youth.
- Remind staff about their reason for doing this work, the mission, the importance to the youth.
- Make resources available for change effort.
- Articulate overall program expectations, such as what is meant by imminent danger and when restraint can and cannot be used, or when to call the police.
- Congratulate team members on their stamina in sticking with a certain child, reminding them that it is the most important thing they can do.
- Be clear and specific in your intent to establish trauma informed care.
- When you make a mistake, admit it. Make amends.
- Include descriptions of your success with trauma informed care in all your external communications.
- Learn which staff are good at this and support them. And promote them.
- When making key hires and promotions, consider the person's familiarity with and commitment to trauma informed care.
- Create policy to support this way of working, such as guide to behavior management and treatment philosophy.
- Strongly support training.
- Consider the agency structure and change if necessary to (as much as possible) unified teams with clinical leadership.
- The stories and experiences of these clients, and the pain of the staff, and the complexities of this difficult work we do, will affect you too. Make sure you have someone to talk to about vicarious traumatization, and be alert for its effects on you. Take care of yourself and each other.

