Development of an Empowerment Program for Survivors of Sexual Violence

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Community Meeting
(Sanctuary Toolkit)

• Name

• How are you feeling today?

• What is your goal for this workshop?

• Who would you go for support in this room?
Objectives

• **Objective 1**: Briefly Describe Trauma Informed Care and its core principles

• **Objective 2**: Describe elements of an Empowerment Services Program built upon Trauma Informed Care Principles.

• **Objective 3**: Describe the benefits of peer support and empowerment based activities for survivors of sexual violence.

• **Objective 3**: Explain resiliency building and coping that address sensory impact of trauma such as drumming, dance, bodywork, tapping.
EMPOWERING SURVIVORS USING THE TRAUMA INFORMED CARE FRAMEWORK
Understanding Trauma

Trauma is

- pervasive
- very broad and touches many life domains
- often deep and life-shaping
- often self-perpetuating
- repetitive among the more vulnerable among us
- can influence the way people seek and use help
- often occurs when people are trying to help
- impactful to staff members as well as consumers in human service programs

- Recoverable

Trauma Informed vs. Trauma Specific

- **Trauma informed care** is a framework that acknowledges the prevalence and impact of trauma, and the complex paths to healing and recovery in all aspects of organizational culture and operation. These principles and practices seek, “safety first” and commit themselves to “do no harm.”

- **Trauma specific services** are interventions that directly address trauma and its impact and facilitate trauma recovery.

Trauma

Traumatic Events overwhelm a person’s capacity to cope and elicit feelings of terror, powerlessness, and out of control physiological arousal. One experiences immobilization, betrayal and an extreme sense of vulnerability.
“Don't ever take a fence down until you know why it was put up.”

-Robert Frost
Exposure to Trauma

It is an individual’s experience of the event, not necessarily the event itself that is traumatic.
5 Protective Factors for Adults

- Resilience in previous life experiences
- Social connections
- Concrete support in times of need
- Knowledge of when, how & where to seek help
- Competence in one or more life domains
Trauma Informed Care

Don't look where you fall, but where you slipped.
~African Proverb
Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) provides a new paradigm under which the basic premise for organizing services is transformed

From:

“What’s wrong with you?”

To:

“What has happened to you?”
Core Principles of a Trauma-Informed System

Safety: Ensuring physical and emotional safety

Trustworthiness: Maximizing trustworthiness, making tasks clear, and maintaining appropriate boundaries

Choice: Prioritizing consumer choice and control

Collaboration: Maximizing collaboration and sharing of power with consumers

Empowerment: Prioritizing survivor empowerment and skill-building

The Process of Healing: Trauma-Specific Treatment

Safety

Intervention involving Re-Exposure & Processing (Thoughts, Feelings, Behaviors & Sensory) with trusted person

Integration of traumatic experience into life narrative – makes meaning of experience

- Community meeting
- Conditions of Empowerment
- Empowerment Group

- Empowerment Group Meetings
  - Speakers Bureau
  - Somatacognitve Workshops
  - TBTN

- Voices of Strength
- Writing Workshop
- Emotional preparedness
Continuum of Care

Trauma - Victim

Survivor

Empowerment

Sexual Assault Services

Advocacy

Counseling

Groups

Empowerment Group

2-1-1

Take Back The Night

Somatocognitive Body work and Healing Workshops

Retreats

Speakers Bureau

Give Back Awareness

Give Back Awareness
Empowerment Services  The purpose of Empowerment Services is to provide healing experiences and opportunities that support the transformation of survivors of sexual violence, domestic violence, abuse, incest and human trafficking. Empowerment Services provide opportunities for hope and a safe place to heal.
Empower Group

• The Empower Group consists of any person who identifies themselves as a survivor. All survivors of sexual violence, domestic violence, abuse, and human trafficking are welcome to participate. The group meets to discuss empowerment and give feedback as to what they find empowering in their journey of healing. The group offers peer support and follows the philosophy that survivors are the experts of their own recovery and they are resilient. Survivors supporting survivors...
Empowerment Core Values

• Trauma Informed Care
• Survivor Driven
• Survivors supporting survivors
• Focus on help, hope and healing
Guiding Principles

• Recovery is a journey of self-healing.
• Survivors need a place of safety where they can give voice to the violence, humiliation and injustice that they have experienced.
  • We affirm that survivors did nothing, absolutely nothing to deserve the degradation and suffering inflicted upon them
  • We will be a witness to their story
  • We will empower and support them as they repair the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aftermath of their trauma.
• To be a companion for those whose courage and resiliency brings them to our doors is both a privilege and a sacred honor.
What does Resiliency mean to you?

resilience noun \ri-'zil-yən(t)s\:

: the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens

http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resilience
What does Resiliency mean to you?

: the ability of something to return to its original shape after it has been pulled, stretched, pressed, bent, etc.

http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resilience
Empowerment Benefits

• There are many benefits to Empowerment Services, here are a few:
  – Increasing Positive coping skills
  – Building resiliency
  – Giving Voice to survivorship
  – Providing tools for body regulation and de-escalation
  – Promoting healthy thinking and self-care implementation
Further Benefits

• Opportunities for creative expression which gives voice to healing
• Increased understanding to trauma and effects of trauma
• Informing, engaging and supporting secondary survivors to address their own healing and also support the primary survivor
• Helps with Reintegration
• Provides message of hope
Empowerment Services offered include

• Monthly Empower Group Meeting
• Monthly workshops, One-on-One Peer Support- Increase coping skills (Play Drumming Video)
• Somatocognitive Recovery- Body work helps remove trauma from body and help self-regulation
• Survivors Supporting Survivors- Peer support opportunities
• Survivor Speakers Bureau
• Volunteer Opportunities- Giving back
• Empowerment Events
Conditions of Empowerment

• In order to aid in empowerment and stay Trauma Informed, conditions of empowerment are developed by empowerment group members at the beginning of each group meeting and workshop. This development creates and harnesses Safety, Trust, Choice, Collaboration and empowerment.
Giving Voice

• Developing Survivor Voice, Choice, Decision-making & Opportunities
• Poetry
• Song
• Artwork and crafts
• Voices of Strength
• TBTN
Strategic Steps for Organizing an Empowerment Activity

• **Step One:** Clearly define goals and objectives for the event, workshop or activity.

• **Step Two:** Collaborate with community partners and survivor empowerment group.

• **Step Three:** Create strategic steps for organizing the event, workshop or activity.

• **Step Four:** Create a timeline or implementation plan.

• **Step Five:** Work the PLAN but be flexible.
Speakers Bureau Development

• The Speaker Bureau was developed by members. Thus it is a peer developed and supported volunteer program within the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay. The framework of the program, requirements, and application process and program specifics were all developed by members themselves.
Speakers Bureau Mission

• The mission of the Empower Speakers Bureau is to create a supportive and encouraging community of people who have survived sexual violence or related traumas and are working together to honor their journeys, strengthen their voices, and take the initiative to raise awareness and educate the community.
Speakers Bureau Objective

• The Empower Speakers Bureau is developed as a request from participants of Empowerment Services as an additional empowerment opportunity. The development of this bureau is also in response to supporting the work of community advocates by providing them with training, resources, referral sources and support.
Speakers Bureau Overview

• The Empower Speakers Bureau will consist of trained speakers who can present information to the community regarding sexual violence and related traumas. Every group member will be trained and thoroughly rehearsed on sexual violence presentations. Group members will then work in coordination with the Training and Outreach Department of the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay for opportunities to speak and outreach activities. In addition, media opportunities will be coordinated with the Marketing Department. Members will be given opportunities to present to community organizations, business and corporations and educational institutions.
Types of Participation

• Members will receive requests to speak, present, attend or provide information at the following activities:
  • Community based events
  • Crisis Center events
  • Resource fairs
  • Trainings and presentations
  • Lunch and Learns
  • Testimonies
  • Media: Radio, TV, and Newsprint
Survivor quotes

There is that point I think at which we all have the potential to cross over (or do, or need to for survival’s sake) into that impediment to healing—in the deep desire of avoidance, of slipping into the pain we face or being caught up in the evil we survived, we can become instead unfeeling, cold, hard, numb, shut down, or worse. I’m not sure how far I crossed over before I found my way back, aside from not inflicting pain or harm to anyone else. I certainly closed off for a long time…..but I found people, the Crisis Center, this community of supporters… before I turned to stone.

What was most valuable was drumming and how I feel when I do it or dance, it let out all of what I felt and I learned a positive coping skill, I got your back.
Survivor Quote

• Tonight I was overwhelmed with feelings of strength, gratitude, and love. Take Back the Night was truly amazing, and I feel blessed and honored to have been a part of it.
Contact Information

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