



## **Five Core Values of Trauma-Informed and -Responsive Services**

### **Safety**

Because trauma inherently involves a physical or emotional threat to one's sense of self, survivors are attuned to signals of possible danger. It is essential for organizations to prioritize safety as a guiding principle and become more hospitable for trauma survivors and avoid inadvertently re-traumatizing people who come for services.

*"How can services be modified to ensure physical and emotional safety more effectively and consistently?"*

### **Trustworthiness**

Survivors of trauma experience a violation of boundaries resulting in a justified inability to trust others; especially those in power and authority. Service providers are often surprised when clients exhibit behavior that indicates they do not trust systems of care.

*"How can services be modified to earn the trust of those seeking services by ensuring task clarity, and consistent staff-client boundaries?"*

### **Choice**

Trauma occurs because actions to prevent or escape the traumatic event are of "no avail." The element of choice has been stripped away from the victim/survivor. Survivors are left with the belief that their choices and preferences are of no importance, particularly to those in power.

*"How can services be modified to ensure that experiences of choice and control are maximized?"*

### **Collaboration**

Collaboration and choice are closely related. However, without collaboration, choice loses its power. Maximizing choice generally means expanding the number and kinds of options available. Collaboration refers to shared decision-making about both the options to be offered and about how to implement plans.

*"How can services be modified to ensure that collaboration and power sharing are maximized?"*

### **Empowerment**

In the context of trauma people often feel powerless, "done to," hidden, invalidated, minimized, and much more. Therefore, services need to find ways to increase and maximize experiences and opportunities for mastery and agency. Trauma creates a sense of powerlessness and the antidote is feeling empowered.

*"How can services be modified to ensure that experiences of empowerment and the development or enhancement of skills are maximized?"*

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