

The Five Principles of TIP

Safety

- Children who have been victimized must have a sense of physical and emotional safety.
- In order to build trust between children/youth and service providers, acceptance is crucial to building trust with the child/youth.

Trustworthiness

- In order to develop trust, emotional limits need to be respected.
- Task clarity, consistency, and respecting interpersonal boundaries are crucial to developing a relationship based on trust.
- Respectful and professional boundaries are maintained.

Choice

- Children/youth need to exercise some choice in their treatment and how services are delivered to them.
- Children/youth's rights and responsibilities must be respected at all times.
- Must have control over themselves and the treatment process as well.

Collaboration

- Children/youth must be included in the decision-making process (as long as it is in their best interests).
- Children/youth should be treated as experts on their own life and service providers should take this notion seriously.
- Children/youth should be provided a significant role in planning and evaluating services.

Empowerment

- Emphasis should be placed on children/youth's strengths and resilience.
- Exploration of coping strategies and sources of personal strength to reinforce children/youth.
- Provide an atmosphere that allows individuals to feel validated and affirmed with each and every contact and agency/person.

References

- Butler, L. D., Critelli, F. M., & Rinfrette, E. S. (2011). Trauma-Informed Care and Mental Health. *Directions in Psychiatry*, 31(3), 197-212.
- Kids Health (2018). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Taken from: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/ptsd.html>

Trauma-Informed Practice: A Quick Guide for All



Windsor Essex
Child/Youth
Advocacy Centre

The Windsor Essex Child/Youth Advocacy Centre's belief is that children/youth who have been victims of physical/sexual abuse should only have to tell their story once. Using a joint investigative model, victims of abuse meet with child protection workers and police services to provide their statement about the incident(s). And given this collaborative approach, children/youth only have to tell their story once while being documented in video and audio formats. From there, children/youth who have been victimized can focus on healing through the advocacy and referral services provided by the the Centre.

This brief guide aims to provide anyone working with children/youth that have experienced a traumatizing event with the necessary understanding of Trauma-Informed Practices. Particularly in the context of physical and sexual abuse. When children/youth have endured such events, the adults in their lives need to be aware that there are a number of things happening in children/youth's minds and bodies. Therefore, it is important that our interactions with children/youth who have been victimized are taken with great care and compassion.

What is Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP)?

In a nut shell, Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) stresses the importance of focusing on the aftermath effects of trauma. Not the trauma itself. For TIP, discussing or digging deep into the traumatizing events is not necessary. Rather, what is important is how we interact with children/youth after traumatic events.

Although TIP is normally discussed in the context of counselling and service provision for victims of trauma, the principles discussed here are important for anyone (i.e. parents/guardians, other family members, teachers, service providers, etc.). In this context, TIP can be used as a method of guiding how we interact with children/youth after experiencing victimization.

Indicators of Trauma

Children/youth who have experienced victimization may experience symptoms/indicators of trauma. Some may even fit the criteria of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Before discussing the guiding principles of TIP and how we can use these to better serve children/youth, we will first highlight some key indicators of trauma and symptoms of PTSD.

Avoidance of Reminders of the Event

- Actively avoiding, talking, or thinking about the event(s).
- Avoid activities, places, or people that can remind the victim of the event(s).
- Unable to remember certain details of the event(s).

Intrusive Thoughts/Memories of the Event

- Unwanted and automatic memories of the event(s).
- Nightmares, night terrors, disturbing dreams.
- Flashbacks--reliving the event(s).
- Heartache and fear when remembering the event(s).
- Easily startled, nervous, and anxious.
- Children may reenact the event(s) or portray the event(s) through drawings.

Negative Thinking or Mood since the Event Happened

- Regular on-going worries and beliefs about people and the world.
- Self-blame for the traumatic event(s).
- Decreased interest in participating in regular activities. Particularly if once enjoyed doing these activities.
- Feelings include anger, shame, fear, or guilt of what happened.
- Feeling separate and isolated from others.
- Unable to feel and express positive emotions.

*For more information please visit: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/ptsd.html>

Lasting Feelings of Anxiety or Physical Reactions

- Sleep difficulties and the possibility of developing sleep disorders.
- Being irritable and angry.
- Difficulties focusing and concentrating.
- Always looking out for danger and/or warning signs.
- Startles easily.

The Five Principles of TIP

TIP practices are based on five principles that guide not only counselling and therapy, but also how various service providers working with victimized and/or at-risk youth can better understand the children/youth they are working with. Furthermore, using the principles of TIP allow service providers to not only better understand the populations they are serving, but also better equip service providers with tools that will allow them to assist children/youth should they be in crisis. Butler, Critelli, and Rinfrette (2011) provide clear descriptions of TIP principles that are described on the following page. The five principles of TIP are: (1) Safety; (2) Trustworthiness; (3) Choice; (4) Collaboration; and (5) Empowerment.