

# 7 Common Steps Toward Becoming Trauma Informed, Trauma Responsive, Healing Organizations – February 13, 2020

**Developed by** the Community Mental Wellbeing Action Team as part of the Community Health Improvement Partnership of Hennepin County – a collaboration of public health, healthcare systems, hospitals, health plans, public health, Minneapolis Public Schools, private sector, and non-profit organizations.

**Background:** From January 2019-December 2020, the Community Mental Wellbeing action team heard presentations from local and regional organizations who decided to become trauma-informed organizations. As we listened to and discussed their presentations, we identified 7 common steps in their varied journeys toward becoming trauma informed, trauma responsive, healing organizations.

**Key learning?** The steps are not linear, and the order doesn't matter– **begin where you have energy and buy-in.** The journey in your organization may begin with a few employees talking about trauma and its impacts on the people you serve or on employees and their families. Or your organization may feel that an organizational self-assessment is the first thing to do. The best thing to do is to start somewhere. These 7 steps may give ideas for how your organization may begin.

1. **Build awareness and start the conversation -**  
what does trauma informed mean and why does it matter?
2. **Provide education and training on trauma and its impact on all of us.**
3. **Identify champions -**  
who is invested in moving deeper into organizational change?
4. **Do an organizational self-assessment -**  
what did you learn, what are you doing well, and where are the gaps?
5. **Create a team or teams to guide the work -**
  - a. include top leaders, middle managers, front-line staff, program, and maintenance staff, and it's critically important to include customers/clients/patients.
  - b. Consider developing "layers" of teams to help sustain the work. Early on, there may be a lot of energy for making change – but there may also be resistance.
  - c. Solicit department/work unit champions to be eyes and ears of how people are reacting, concerns they are voicing. Bring those concerns forward!
6. **Mentor-train-educate new employees right when they're hired -**  
they will help be the change agents for the future.
7. **Measure steps taken, progress made, policies & practices changed -**  
document – and share – your story to help others in their journeys.