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.