

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE COMMITTEE AT LANCASTER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HOSPITAL

Is Trauma-Informed Care a Matter of Safety?

Trauma-informed care is sometimes mischaracterized as an endlessly soothing, or even enabling, approach to engaging someone. The truth is that a trauma-informed approach should never be enabling, and communication should always include well-defined boundaries. The only trauma-informed tone is a respectful one.

Every encounter we have--especially in stressful environments--can either help calm us or upset us. *Everything* in a stressful environment is either a part of the problem or a part of the solution.



And a traumatized body is a stressful environment.

Trauma-informed care provides a road map for mutually safe navigation through stressful environments; this starts by preventing undue stress.

ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice and Choice
6. Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues

These are the *Six Principles of Trauma-Informed Care*, identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). As a part of LBHH's commitment to trauma-informed care, our hospital pays special attention to one principle each month.

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Is TIC a Matter of Safety? continued:

And while some stress is inevitable, simple measures can be taken to prevent undue stress. Clear communication is the easiest, quickest, and cheapest way to help prevent an unnecessary conflict.

Aside from communicating clearly, listening is equally important. When someone feels that they're not being heard, the tendency is to escalate until that feeling subsides. Escalation can be preventable.

What shouldn't go without saying is that stressful environments also make planning ahead difficult, but it can pay dividends. Or as the maxim goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

PREVENTION Looks Like...

- Communicating clearly when changes or surprises occur
- Taking someone's sense of danger seriously, even without understanding it
- Recognizing *potential* dangers in the environment
- Being part of someone's solution in a stressful environment

Word of the Month

prevention science *noun*
the science of reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors for the improvement of the quality of life

Next
Month's
Theme

TRANSPARENCY