

An Introduction to a Trauma-Informed Approach: Providing a Framework for Camp Orientation

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SUMMARY:	This session provides an overview of SAHMSA's key principles to a trauma-informed approach within a camp orientation setting
TOPIC(S):	Trauma exposure in youth, camp mental health supports
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Attendees will be knowledgeable about the potential exposure of youth to adverse experience and an overall framework for a trauma-sensitive environment
AUDIENCE:	Target audience includes camp administration and leadership
TIMING:	45 minutes
APPENDICES:	Brief overview of important concepts and accompanying discussion questions
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Due to the sensitive nature of this material, running this workshop without a mental health professional in a presenter role is not recommended
SET-UP DETAILS:	Chairs in a semi-circle; space to move about the room

Session Outline* *Provide trigger warning*

1. **Provide overview on the prevalence and exposure rates for traumatic experiences within a nation-wide sample of children and adolescents (see: Finkelhor 2013; 2015) (15 minutes):**
 - a. Discuss and define "trauma"
 - i. Place poster sheets around the room: *5 minutes to fill in*
 1. Poster 1: What is trauma? (Poster states: "Trauma is...")
 2. Poster 2: Who may be impacted by it? (Poster states: "Who may be impacted by trauma...?")
 3. Discuss and Debrief
 - ii. Camp supports
 1. Embodied activity: *10 minutes to explore*
 - a. Specto-gram:



- i. Experience and comfort level with trauma among campers/counselors/staff members
- ii. How does your camp support campers with high behavioral needs?

2. Brief review of signs/symptoms of trauma exposure among youth (5 minutes):

- a. Signs and Symptoms:
 - i. Opposition/Defiance/Isolation or trauma reaction?
- b. Distinguish clinical responsibility and the action of *noticing*
 - i. Recognize your limitations
 - ii. Identify/consult with your supports at camp
 1. Link to camp social worker/counselor/lead person rather than take on clinical responsibility
 - iii. The importance of self-regulation
 1. Think before you react – practice the follow co-regulation strategies:
 - a. Breathing
 - b. Counting
 - c. Positive visualization

3. Brief Review of A Trauma-Informed Approach (5 minutes):

<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4884.pdf>

- a. *Realize* the widespread impact of trauma
- b. *Recognize* the signs and symptoms (to the best of your ability)
- c. *Respond* by bringing a trauma-informed approach to your camp ecology
- d. *Avoid Re-traumatization*
 - i. Stop and think role play: *5 minutes to role play*
 1. Counselor (harsh tone)
 2. Camper (reactive/angry outburst)

4. Incorporating SAMHSA's Six Key principles for Camp Climate (10 minutes):

- a. The following principles are supportive for campers who have been exposed to trauma and for campers in general, offering a comprehensive social-emotional system across individuals:
 - i. Safety
 - ii. Trustworthiness and Transparency
 - iii. Peer Support
 - iv. Collaboration and Mutuality
 - v. Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
 - vi. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

5. Writing/Reflection activity: What systems are already in place that can support this type of broad conceptualization within your camp setting (10 minutes)?

- a. Discussion of adaptation
- b. Limitations to implementation
- c. Review of what is manageable within setting