

[Insert Logo here]

[Insert Organization name]

[Option to insert a title/name for policy]

Policy Title: Policy on Trauma-Informed Care Principles & ACEs Awareness

Policy Number: [To be assigned]

Effective Date: [Insert date]

Next Review Date: [Insert date]

Approved By: [Insert who needs to approve it]

Policy Owner: [Insert employee or department who created the policy]

DISCLAIMER: PRINTED VERSIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE OUT OF DATE. ALWAYS REFER TO THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES INTRANET SITE [Insert location for source of most updated policy] FOR THE MOST CURRENT VERSIONS OF DOCUMENTS IN EFFECT

Changes to Previous Version/Policy Update

[Future changes to this policy should be noted in this highlighted section. A brief description of the revision is to be provided in point form. Otherwise, if there are no changes to the current policy, this section can be omitted].

Background

[Quick paragraph about the need for a policy. Background information. Supporting evidence (not all policies need this)]

Trauma refers to an event or circumstances perceived or experienced as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening. It can be one event or a series of events. These experiences can have long-lasting effects on how a person thinks, feels, behaves, and functions in daily life. Trauma can also affect mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being (Center for Addiction and Mental Health, 2025). This trauma may have occurred due to adults experiencing early adversity in childhood known as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are stressful or harmful (traumatic) events that happen to children before the age of 18. ACEs may include things like abuse, neglect, and household challenges. They can also include broader issues in society such as colonialism, racism, poverty, and unsafe housing. These experiences can change how a child's brain develops and can increase the risk of long-term health concerns, including physical, mental, and behavioural issues, and even a shorter lifespan. The more ACEs a person experiences, the higher their risk for health problems later in life.

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ACEs can affect brain development, increasing the risk of long-term physical, mental and behavioural health problems, as well as a shorter lifespan. The more ACEs a person has the higher their risk for health problems later in life (Centre for Disease Control, 2025, Dawdy et al, 2025, Madigan, 2023).

A trauma-informed care approach looks at the “whole” person and looks at each client as an individual with their own experiences, culture, strength and needs. Trauma-informed care focuses on creating safe, welcoming, and supportive spaces and making policies that support healing. It also helps prevent situations that may remind someone of past trauma. This approach helps build strength, reduces harm, and helps both clients and staff feel respected and understood. Trauma-informed care also supports workers by promoting self-care and recognizing that staff may have their own experiences of trauma (Center for Health Care Strategies, 2018, ACEs Coalition Guelph & Wellington, 2020).

Definitions

[Include any definitions here. This section is optional. Examples provided]

Trauma: Trauma refers to an event or circumstances perceived or experienced as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and often resulting in long term effects on the individual's mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual wellbeing.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Difficult or harmful experiences before age 18. These may include abuse, neglect, household challenges, or broader issues in society (such as racism or poverty). ACEs can increase the risk of long-term health concerns, but they do not define a person's future. Supportive relationships and environments can help reduce these risks.

Trauma-Informed Care: An approach that focuses on the “whole” person and is grounded in understanding each person's lived experiences and the factors that shape their well-being. Trauma-informed care aims to create safety, build trust, offer choice, and avoid situations that may remind someone of past trauma.

Resiliency: The ability to cope with stress, challenges, or trauma. Resilience helps people recover or “bounce back,” and it is supported by caring relationships, community, culture, and strengths, not by facing difficulties alone

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Purpose and Scope

[Specify the reason behind the procedure, areas covered, and any exclusions]

The [Organization Name] recognizes that experiences of trauma can impact anyone. We are committed to creating a safe, respectful and supportive environment by integrating trauma-informed care principles into all aspects of our work, including interactions with clients, colleagues, and community partners.

Key objectives:

- Build awareness of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma, and toxic stress, including their signs, prevalence, and long-term impacts on health and development.
- Strengthen understanding of how trauma affects individuals across the lifespan and highlight the importance of resilience and protective factors.
- Provide staff with the knowledge to apply trauma-informed care principles in their work with clients, colleagues, and community partners.
- Promote safe, compassionate, and trauma-informed environments that reduce re-traumatization and support healing.
- Support staff wellness by providing resources and strategies for those affected by trauma.

This policy applies to all [Organization Name] staff, students, and Board/Executive members. Everyone is responsible for understanding the importance of ACEs awareness, trauma-informed care principles, resiliency, and integrating these into planning, training, and service delivery using evidence-based practices and evaluation.

Policy Statement

[Policies are your public commitment to quality and provide a broad guide to actions and decision making while allowing discretion]

The [Organization Name] is committed to providing caring, client-focused services that acknowledge and respond to the impact of trauma. All staff, students, and Board/Executive members will receive training in trauma-informed care principles and awareness of adverse childhood experiences to enhance service quality and reduce the risk of harm and re-traumatization.

The training will reinforce the following core principles:

- 1) **Safety:** Promote physical and emotional safety in all settings.

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- 2) **Trustworthiness and Transparency:** Communicate clearly about services, treatments and expectations.
- 3) **Empowerment:** Support clients in building strengths and resilience
- 4) **Choice:** Offer meaningful options that foster control and participation in care.
- 5) **Collaboration:** Encourage collaborative relationships among staff and with clients to support informed decision making.

The same core principles will also be applied to support [Organization Name] employees. These principles will help staff use similar strategies when managing their own experiences with trauma, whether at work or at home.

The [Organization Name] is committed to reviewing all policies, procedures, and strategic plans through a trauma-informed care lens to ensure that all organizational practices align with these core principles.

Roles and Responsibilities

[Specify who is responsible for each duty in this policy/procedure]

Leadership/Senior Management Team

- Champion trauma-informed care across the organization.
- Sharing best practices, allocate resources for training, implementation, and evaluation.
- Ensure trauma-informed care principles are included in planning, policies, programs, and services.
- Monitor progress and ensure accountability.
- Promote a safe, trusting, and empowering environment through corporate policies and practices.

Human Resources

- Collaborate with [Lead department or designated employee] to embed trauma-informed care principles into recruitment, onboarding, and performance management.
- Ensure all new hires are provided with training around trauma-informed care principles and ACEs awareness.
- Provide ongoing education and access to wellness supports *[May include employee and family assistance programs (EFAP)]*.

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Management Team

- Work with [Lead department or designated employee] to increase awareness of ACEs and integrate trauma-informed care principles into program delivery.
- Conduct annual reviews to assess progress and adjust strategies as needed.

All Employees, Students, and Board/Executive Members

- Complete required training on ACEs awareness and trauma-informed care principles.
- Apply trauma-informed care principles in interactions with clients, colleagues and community partners.

Procedures

[Procedures should state what will be done to implement the policy. Unlike a policy, which is descriptive and may be open to interpretation, procedures specify what it is that will be done, by whom and how. Therefore, a procedure guides the implementation process]

Training and Education

- 1) All new hires and students must complete the ACEs awareness and trauma-informed care principles [Insert type of training] training modules during orientation.
 - a. Each calendar year, existing staff will receive an email reminder to complete the required ACEs awareness and trauma-informed care principles training. The reminder will include a link to the training resources and any available refresher courses. *[Insert link to training resources and supports.]*
- 2) Staff must demonstrate completion of the ACEs awareness and trauma-informed care principles training by achieving a passing score of [insert passing grade, e.g., 80%] on the final quiz. *[This may include a quiz to assess knowledge and confirm completion]*
- 3) Upon completion, a certificate [Optional] will be generated. *[Include any other steps for how to obtain their certificate if required (i.e., printing off a copy).]*

Support & Evaluation of Training Program

- 1) The [Lead department or designated employee] will support the evaluation (including training completion rates), and updates to the policy and training

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as required. In addition, this will include a review of the resources/supports for [Organization Name] employees.

Integration into Programs & Services

- 1) The [Lead department or designated employee] will support integration by collaborating with other departments to provide:
 - a. *Evidence-informed practice recommendations and training*: Provide and share up-to-date best practices, resources, and training that will be used to help apply strategies for integration into existing programs and services.
 - b. *Integration in program planning processes*: Working with other departments to incorporate the knowledge and principles learned into planning.

Compliance

[Include organizational statement around compliance. For example: Failure to comply with this policy and its procedures may result in disciplinary measures according to [Organization Name].]

Related Policies and Documents

[Include any policies/documents that support the existing policy]

- 1) [Organization Name] [Can include Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) support documents here if organization provides this service]
- 2) [Can include websites and reports that support the policy]
- 3) [Organization Name] [Link to any training modules/resources/documents]

References

- 1) ACEs Coalition of Guelph and Wellington (2020). ACEs & Resilience Champion Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://communityresilience.ca/champions-toolkit/>
- 2) Canadian Mental Health Association (2024). Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Retrieved from <https://cmha.ca/brochure/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/>
- 3) Center for Addiction and Mental Health (2025). Trauma. Retrieved from <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/trauma>
- 4) Center for Disease Control (2025). About adverse childhood experiences. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/aces/about/index.html>

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- 5) Dawdy, J., Dunford, K. and Magalhaes Boateng, K. (2025). Ontario Early Adversity and Resilience Framework. Retrieved from https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/O/25/ontario-early-adversity-resilience-framework.pdf?rev=dab47e60f3e043528b55cba30db50e3a&sc_lang=en
- 6) Madigan, S., (2023). Adverse childhood experiences: a meta-analysis of prevalence and moderators among half a million adults in 206 studies. *World Psychiatry*. 22:463–471
- 7) Public Health Ontario. Interventions to prevent and mitigate the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in Canada: A literature review. Toronto, ON: Queen’s Printer for Ontario; 2020.

Revision History

Version	Date	Description of Changes	Approved By
1.0	[Insert]	Initial creation	[Insert]