Six Guiding Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice*

- **Safety**: Because trauma involves a physical or emotional threat it’s important that services and supports be hospitable.

- **Trustworthiness**: Trauma impacts one’s ability to trust. Trust comes from role clarification, clear and consistent actions and policies, and clear tasks.

- **Choice**: Prioritizing family and youth choice in services and supports and providing mutuality; a shared relationship.

- **Collaboration**: Working jointly with families and youth through shared power.

- **Empowerment**: Recognizing the importance for families and youth to achieve mastery, develop skills, and utilize these skills.

- **Language Access & Cultural Competence**: Eliminating health disparities based on culture and language differences.

Key Questions in Reviewing Service Procedures

- How can we ensure physical and emotional safety for families, youth and staff?

- How can we maximize trustworthiness? Make tasks clear? Maintain appropriate boundaries?

- How can we enhance family and youth choice and mutuality?

- How can we maximize collaboration and sharing of power with families and youth?

- How can we prioritize family and youth empowerment and skill-building at every opportunity?

*Modified by THRIVE family and youth and based on Using Trauma Theory to Design Service Systems, eds. Fallot and Harris*
### Traditional Human Services Paradigm

#### Understanding of Trauma
- PTSD as organizing model
- Impact of trauma predictable & obvious
- Trauma is an event
- Trauma impact follows definable course

#### Understanding of Child/Youth Survivor
- Different system, different view of child & problem
- Understood out of context as individual difficulty
- The problem is the symptom, so treat symptom
- Responsibility not allocated appropriately

#### Understanding of Services
- Primary goal is stability & absence of symptom
- Crisis-Driven
- Time limits economically & administratively driven

#### Understanding of Service Relationship
- Child/youth/family passive recipients of services
- Child/youth/family’s safety & trust taken for granted
- Provider/Consumer relationship uniformly hierarchical

### Trauma-Informed Human Services Paradigm

#### Understanding of Trauma
- Complex PTSD as organizing model
- Impact of trauma is complex & seen in apparently unrelated life domains over life course
- Trauma a core event changing one’s development

#### Understanding of Child/Youth Survivor
- Integrated, whole person view of child & challenges
- Contextual, relational view of challenges & solutions
- “Symptoms” seen as coping & survival strategies
- Developmentally appropriate allocation of responsibility

#### Understanding of Services
- Primary goals are growth, empowerment, resilience & life skill development
- Service priorities are prevention driven
- Service time limits are determined by child’s needs

#### Understanding of Service Relationship
- Each child, youth, family member & service provider has a unique & valuable perspective
- Young voices need to be drawn out in empathic relationships, sensitized to the silencing impact of trauma
- Young person’s safety must be ensured & trust developed over time
- Service relationships involve developmentally appropriate collaboration