

SAMHSA SPOTLIGHT

A SERIES ON BUILDING RESILIENT AND TRAUMA-INFORMED COMMUNITIES.

BUILDING RESILIENT AND TRAUMA-INFORMED COMMUNITIES is essential to improving public health and well-being. Communities can be places where traumatic events occur, and they can also help keep us safe. They can be a source of trauma, or buffer us against the negative effects of adversity. Communities can collectively experience trauma much like individuals do, and they can be a resource for healing.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has a long-standing commitment to addressing the consequences of trauma and adversity. SAMHSA supports an array of trauma-related prevention, treatment, and supportive interventions. The SAMHSA Spotlight Series builds on that history, providing snapshots of communities taking innovative steps to create safer and healthier places to live, learn, work and play.

The goal of this series is to highlight strategies and create a dialogue among communities. SAMHSA defines any setting as “trauma-informed” if the people there *realize* how widespread trauma is, *recognize* signs and symptoms, *respond* by integrating knowledge into practice, and *resist* doing further harm. SAMHSA identifies six principles of trauma-informed approaches. The illustration below provides some examples of how a trauma-informed community might reflect SAMHSA’s six principles.

SAMHSA’S 6 PRINCIPLES *of a*

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH



SAFETY

Prevents violence across the lifespan and creates safe physical environments.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Fosters positive relationships among residents, City Hall, police, schools and others.

EMPOWERMENT

Ensures opportunities for growth are available for all.

COLLABORATION

Promotes involvement of residents and partnership among agencies.

PEER SUPPORT

Engages residents to work together on issues of common concern.

HISTORY, GENDER, CULTURE

Values and supports history, culture and diversity.



SAMHSA's Community Trauma Initiative

SAMHSA's community trauma initiative was launched with a "listening session" in May 2015. The goals of the meeting were: to learn how different localities are implementing change; to facilitate community-to-community sharing; to develop materials for dissemination; and to lay the initial groundwork for a national plan for trauma-informed communities.

Six communities sent teams to the listening session, including three large cities (Philadelphia, Kansas City and San Francisco), a small city (Tarpon Springs, FL), a rural city/county (Walla Walla, WA), and an urban city/county (Worcester, MA.) A seventh community, the Menominee tribe in Wisconsin, hosted a site visit in July and will participate in future activities. All seven communities have been recognized for implementation of innovative trauma-informed approaches.

Each team described why they undertook this initiative, how they organized themselves, key activities, and indicators of success. Over two dozen federal partners, foundations and other external groups added significantly to the learning and discussion.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE LISTENING SESSION:

- Communities take different approaches to addressing trauma and building resilience, depending on local resources, cultures and circumstances.
- Initial leadership can come from residents, government, the faith community, the business community, or service sectors.
- Cross-agency and cross-sector collaboration is the norm.
- Community initiatives build on strengths while addressing challenges.
- Addressing trauma in the workforce is an essential element.
- Communities seamlessly combine education about trauma and resilience with prevention, treatment, supports and social justice.
- Funding for the effort varies among communities.
- Although they differ in approach, communities benefit from networking.

NEXT STEPS: SAMHSA will continue to support community-to-community sharing through the development of resources, online learning communities, and peer-to-peer exchanges. SAMHSA will also continue to work with federal partners, foundations and other external groups in the development of a comprehensive national plan.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

PHILADELPHIA: Public Health Partnerships for Trauma Transformation

KANSAS CITY: A Community Coalition in the Business of Compassion

SAN FRANCISCO: Aligning the Workforce to Create a Trauma-Informed System

TARPON SPRINGS: A Community Journey Towards Resilience

WALLA WALLA: Mobilizing a Community for Resilience

WORCESTER: Healing Community by Sharing Lived Experience

