

THE TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE COLLECTIVE



Proposed Government Action:

We propose that suitable training in trauma-informed care (TIC) be mandated for all staff in every branch of service delivery within the Government of Alberta (GoA).

The TIC Collective is excited to offer support to the GoA during the process of implementing trauma-informed training. This can include connecting you with various training methods and providers (including no-cost options) and supporting the creation of the training materials.

The Trauma-Informed Care Collective:

The Trauma-Informed Care Collective is a network of 25+ social service agencies in Alberta that are committed to promoting trauma-informed care across provincial government ministries. We are actively engaged as individual organizations in becoming trauma-informed and invite the Alberta Government to be part of this process. Together, the TIC Collective has considerable experience and expertise in working with vulnerable individuals and families, which positions us well to support the government's efforts.

Expected Outcomes:

- √ Improved provider-client relationships and staff job performance
- √ Increased client participation and staff satisfaction
- √ Reduced re-traumatization and staff burnout
- √ Reduced strain on emergency-services, healthcare, and criminal justice systems

Rationale:

- The GoA provides invaluable social programs and community services to thousands of Albertans every day ranging from income support to health. Each of these are a critical piece of the social safety net that supports individuals and communities across the province, yet some Albertans experience significant barriers due to trauma histories and current stresses related to poverty
- However, due to trauma histories and current stresses related to poverty some Albertans experience significant barriers that prevent them from accessing essential supports.
- 56% of all Albertans have experienced one or more adverse childhood experiences; 12% have experienced four or more¹. This is an extremely high rate of trauma, which makes it critical that trauma-informed care is implemented to support those who have experienced trauma.
- TIC offers preventative, holistic service delivery to a population currently impacted by a global pandemic, a downturned economy, and real threats to public and personal health.

¹ Sheila McDonald et al., "Adverse Childhood Experiences in Alberta, Canada: A Population Based Study," *Medical Research Archives*, no. 3 (June 8, 2015), <https://journals.ke-i.org/mra/article/view/142>.

- Increasing the uptake of TIC in practice aims to **improve** relationships between service providers and clients, **increase** client participation, hope for the future, housing stability, self-esteem, and resiliency, and **decrease** vulnerability, system dependence, and demand for crisis services.²
- A more trauma-informed organizational culture **reduces** staff burnout, **increases** staff satisfaction, and **improves** job performance.³
- In ministries offering person-focused supports, research shows “consumer participation” **increases** when TIC is adopted,⁴ leading to **fewer** missed appointments.
- Through our work, we know that systems that implement TIC enable those living with the impacts of poverty to build resiliency and move towards self-sufficiency, **thus reducing strain on emergency-services, health care, and criminal justice systems.** This aligns with the Ministry of Health’s currently identified vision, which includes centering the health care system around Albertans and supporting the well-being of Albertans with population health initiatives.⁵
- With TIC being implemented in jurisdictions such as British Columbia⁶ and Delaware,⁷ the GoA has an opportunity to be one of the first in Canada to implement evidence-based training that improves both individual and system-level outcomes.

Implementation:

Phase 1: Create a committee tasked with investigating the optimal approach to implement TIC training, perhaps starting with onboarding of new employees and then rolling it into annual training of all staff

Phase 2: Identify change champions within each department to support the implementation of training

Phase 3: Implement mandatory TIC training for all GoA employees

Trauma-Informed Care:

TIC recognizes the pervasive nature of trauma and the importance of creating emotionally and physically safe environments that promote healing and recovery, thus avoiding practices and situations that may re-traumatize individuals. TIC is a commitment to practices that recognize the complex effects of past and present toxic stress, histories of adversity and trauma, and the complex paths to healing and recovery.^{8 9}

The TIC Collective wants to see Albertans succeed; that means helping services succeed in promoting staff wellness and healthy client relationships through trauma informed care.

Learn more at www.ticcollective.ca

² Stephanie Hepburn, “Quantitative Benefits of Trauma-Informed Care” (Alexandria, Virginia: National Association of State Mental Health Directors, 2017), https://www.nasmhpd.org/sites/default/files/TAC.Paper_.5.Quantitative_Benefits_TraumaInformedCare_Final.pdf

³ Travis W. Hales et al., “An Association Between Implementing Trauma-Informed Care and Staff Satisfaction,” *Advances in Social Work* 18, no. 1 (September 24, 2017): 300–312, <https://doi.org/10.18060/21299>.

⁴ Hepburn, “Quantitative Benefits of Trauma-Informed Care” (2017)

⁵ Government of Alberta, “Health 2019-2020 Annual Report” (Government of Alberta, 2020), <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/4bb6bc99-ab59-47fd-a633-dfc27d7a049e/resource/04c7e15d-c88e-4172-b3fd-169be52ffe73/download/health-annual-report-2019-2020.pdf>

⁶ Nancy Poole, Christina Talbot, and Tasnim Nathoo, “Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families” (British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development, January 2017), https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/child-teen-mental-health/trauma-informed_practice_guide.pdf.

⁷ Governor John C. Carney, “Executive Order Number 24,” October 17, 2018, <https://governor.delaware.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2018/10/Executive-Order-Number-24-Trauma-Informed-State.pdf>

⁸ Roger D Fallot and Maxine Harris, “Creating Cultures of Trauma-Informed Care (CCTIC): A Self-Assessment and Planning Protocol” (Washington: Community Connections, 2019),

<https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Creating%20Cultures%20of%20Trauma-Informed%20Care.pdf>.

⁹ Angela Sweeney et al., “A Paradigm Shift: Relationships in Trauma-Informed Mental Health Services,” *Bjpsych Advances* 24, no. 5 (September 2018): 319–33, <https://doi.org/10.1192/bja.2018.29>.