

Hiring a Trauma-Informed Workforce

Staff play an important role in setting the tone of any office environment. Hiring a workforce that embodies and embraces a trauma-informed approach is key to creating and sustaining organizational change. Following are tips on how to identify new employees who align with trauma-informed values and approaches to care.

Include interviewers from a variety of cultural and racial backgrounds, as well as different levels within the organization, in the interview process.

A more collaborative hiring process will not only yield multiple perspectives on the same candidate, but also give lower-level staff a greater voice in organizational decision-making. Including these staff in the interview process demonstrates to employees that their opinions and perspectives are valued, and may also help organizations identify the candidate that will work best with the entire care team.

Incorporate behavioral interviewing strategies to look for characteristics, such as empathy and a tendency toward non-judgement. [Behavioral interviewing](#) includes asking job candidates how they have handled previous situations to better understand how they may behave in future, similar scenarios. These characteristics indicate an employee is more likely to embody trauma-informed principles.

Ask potential new hires about their knowledge around trauma and ACEs, and whether or not they have received any prior trauma-informed training. Montefiore Medical Group in The Bronx, for example, encourages their 22 outpatient practices to incorporate questions about trauma knowledge into the interview process to assess whether a candidate is knowledgeable about the impact of trauma on health, the importance of trauma-informed care, and whether or not they would be a good fit for their organization. By reframing interview questions with a trauma-informed lens, organizations will more likely attract job candidates that share the organization's trauma-informed mission and values. These values can also be reinforced by incorporating trauma-informed trainings into employee orientation or onboarding processes.

Trauma-Informed Interview Questions



Interview questions can be framed with a trauma-informed lens. Below are sample questions.

- 1. Tell us about a time when you had to remain calm when dealing with a hostile client.** What did you learn from the experience? How did you handle the situation?
- 2. Describe a time when you had to approach people with different perspectives for support or cooperation.** How did you approach them? What was the result?
- 3. What strategies would you use to build resilience on your team,** recognize secondary traumatic stress risk, and address this risk for the team or an individual?
- 4. What techniques have you found to be effective in developing trusting relationships** and rapport with clients?
- 5. What have you done to display healthy self-care skills during the past year?** What have you done to maintain a healthy work/life balance?

Source: [Trauma-Informed Care Interview Questions](#), developed by the National Council for Behavioral Health, 2014.

Learn More

This fact sheet is a product of *Advancing Trauma-Informed Care*, a national initiative focused on better understanding how trauma-informed approaches can be practically implemented across the health care sector, made possible by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and led by the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS). For more information, visit CHCS' [Trauma-Informed Care Implementation Resource Center](#) at TraumaInformedCare.chcs.org.