

# Tips on how to provide trauma-informed care:

## Recognize the impacts of colonialism on the lives of Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people.

It is crucial that service providers acknowledge the impacts of colonialism through processes like the residential school system, the Sixties Scoop, the ongoing theft of land and resources, gender-based discrimination within the Indian Act, and the forced sterilization of Indigenous women in order to establish healthy relationships and harbor safe environments for our clients.

## Reflect on how your personal values and beliefs influence your interactions with clients.

All of us carry a set of values that have been formed by a variety of influences over our life course and these values can be either visible or invisible. Service providers are no different and navigate their work lives through their own values, beliefs, and assumptions. We need to question how structural racism has been built into the health and social service system and how this impacts our ability to provide services and Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people's ability to receive services in a dignified and respectful way.

## Recognize and respect that traditional knowledge and biomedicine can coexist and can be integrated into sexual and reproductive health interventions.

For example, traditional ways of sharing information, such as storytelling and sharing circles can be used in a powerful way for Indigenous people to reclaim and share their stories of misconception, pain, trauma, and stigma while also reconnecting to culture. Sharing circles have potential to be healing and can take a trauma-informed approach. They are a crucial way to help Indigenous people learn and unpack their perceptions of sexual and reproductive health, and to help destigmatize conversations about healthy sexuality, sexual health and harm reduction. It's through these conversations that we will begin to turn shame into resilience.



### It is important to consider the following if you are working with Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people:

- What is the relationship of your client between their community and family?
- What is your client's home life like?
- Does your client have a support system?
- Are you aware that the word "Indigenous" encompasses three distinct groups (First Nations, Inuit & Métis)?
- Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people are strong and resilient, focus on their strengths instead of their deficits.

### Tips for service providers on giving trauma-informed care:

- You do not need to know what trauma a person has gone through to provide trauma-informed care;
- Be aware of your own positionality;
- Practice empathetic listening with clients; and
- Empower your clients to make the best decision for their sexual health.

To further your understanding of trauma-informed care, consider further exploring the concepts of forced sterilization of Indigenous women, intergenerational trauma, vicarious trauma and cultural safety.

### References:

HIV/AIDS Epi Updates. (2010). Public Health Agency of Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/aids-sida/publication/epi/2010/6-eng.php>



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