



The CARE *Quarterly*

Winter
2023



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WELCOME.

As we enter a new year, the team at the [CARE TA Center](#) is grateful for the tireless service and supports provided by the dedicated folx that make up our behavioral health workforce. The last few years have been very difficult for so many; the impacts of COVID-19, social and climate violence, economic turmoil, and housing instability have taken their toll not just on our communities, but also on those who have been providing frontline service amid global crises. The need for behavioral health providers is greater than ever and those working within our system are struggling to keep up with demand while also shifting to a new model of service delivery in a post-pandemic landscape. We hear the stories about burnout and compassion fatigue, and while it remains vital for providers to find ways to practice self-care and maintain wellness, it can be “easier said than done.”

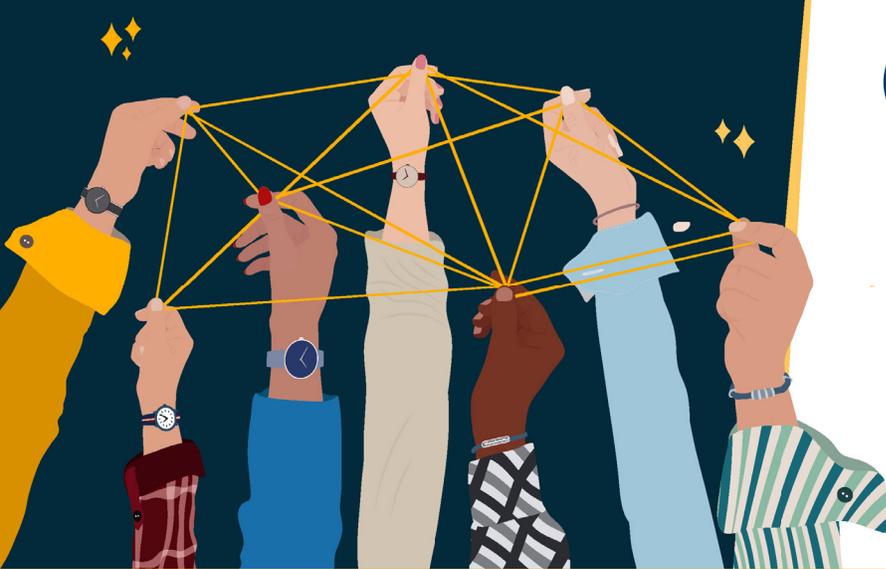
This winter edition of the CARE Magazine is dedicated to our behavioral health workforce and the critical support they provide every day to Californians in need.

In this issue, you will find informative articles highlighting the importance of cultivating trauma-informed workplaces. Articles discuss how to identify and address burnout as well as practical strategies for implementing workplace wellness and supports. We encourage employers and those in leadership to support their teams by adopting practices and approaches that are rooted in trauma-informed principles. The CARE Team is here to provide any needed support through our no-cost training and technical assistance center.

As we look ahead to the new year, we invite you to stay connected to the CARE TA Center by signing up for event announcements or following us online through our social media platforms. Additionally, we invite you to [save the date](#) for our annual virtual conference, “Reimagining Our Systems: Lessons from the Field to Advance Recovery-Oriented Communities,” which will be held April 12-13, 2023. We have a dynamic year of virtual events and activities planned and hope to see you there.

With gratitude for the opportunity to share space with you all and on behalf of the CARE TA Center, we hope that this season brings joy, however you choose to celebrate (or not). We look forward to seeing you all in 2023 and thank you for your continued support for the CARE TA Center and our dedicated partners.

With gratitude,
The CARE TA Center



Virtual Conference 2023

REIMAGINING OUR SYSTEMS:

Lessons from the Field to Advance Recovery-Oriented Communities

SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 12-13, 2023

DEAR COMMUNITY,

The [CARE TA Center](#) invites you to **Save the Date** for our third annual virtual conference, *Reimagining Our Systems: Lessons from the Field to Advance Recovery-Oriented Communities* on April 12 and 13.

Overview

Seeking to close the gap between systems of care and community needs, and to offer needed support to the crisis care workforce, this conference will explore opportunities to strengthen our systems of care by highlighting strategies and models for building equitable partnerships between counties and community. By *reimagining* systems for a hopeful future to navigate the systems through a new lens, we dive into what we have *learned from the field* in the past years, highlighting best practices for supporting counties and communities. Topics will include community-based crisis care and justice diversion efforts in California, workforce development, and county-focused programming and administration. We will examine these topics through a *recovery*-focused, health equity, and antiracist lens.

Who should attend the conference?

» **On April 12**, we invite County Behavioral Health Department staff (e.g., Behavioral Health Directors, MHSA Coordinators, and Equity/Ethnic Services Managers,) to join us for county-specific discussions about MHSA funding and administration.

April 12: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. PT

Optional Lightning Talk Activity 1 - 2 p.m. PT - *Agenda details forthcoming.*

» **On April 13**, we welcome back County Behavioral Health Department staff as well as those working in community-based settings, including those working in crisis care, those involved in justice diversion (including law enforcement and first responders), school-based providers and staff, housing services agencies, foster care system providers, policy staff, data analysts, administrators, and other crisis care system partners, advocates, and stakeholders. This day will offer multimodal learning opportunities across diverse learning tracks for a broad audience as well as small sessions for in-depth discussions on key topics.

April 13: 9:00am - 3:00 pm PT - *Agenda details forthcoming.*

Registration for the CARE TA Center Conference coming soon!

To receive updated information on the CARE Conference, including a link for registration, please sign up here: tinyurl.com/356f4ums



Working Well: Workplace Mental Health, Wellness, Equity and Inclusion

from C4 Innovations

In 2021, a record number of workers quit their jobs.ⁱ The majority of those who left cited insufficient pay (63%), no opportunities for advancement (63%), and feeling disrespected at work (57%) as their reason(s) for leaving, according to the Pew Research Center.ⁱⁱ

Simultaneously, we've seen a swell of labor strikes and unionization efforts across the country, with workers pushing back against unsafe working conditions, unlivable wages, and exploitation. In August 2022, the approval of labor unions reached its highest point since 1965, with 71% of Americans approving.ⁱⁱⁱ

The impact of a labor market that does not value its worker base, does not advance workers with intention, and does not offer workers financial stability is clear. In a 2021 survey of 1,500 adult workers in the United States, 84% of respondents said their workplace conditions had contributed to at least one mental health challenge—burnout, depression, and anxiety were the most cited—and 81% of workers reported that they would be looking for workplaces that support mental health in future job searches.^{iv}

The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the link between our work and our health. It sparked a reckoning among many workers, who no longer accept that sacrificing their health, free time, family, and community for work is a reasonable or sustainable trade. Since the pandemic began, much emphasis has been placed on worker burnout and self-care practices, but reducing the problem to the individual worker's stress management skills is dangerous. In reality, "mental health is ingrained into the way an organization operates and how its people are valued."^v

The Surgeon General's 2022 [Framework for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being](#) acknowledges the need for change. It was designed to spark change in the workplace and ultimately support employers in building work environments that are engines of mental health and well-being. The Framework centers priorities and solutions that have been laid out by workers themselves and is organized by five essential components for addressing workplace mental health and well-being:

1. Protection from Harm
2. Work-Life Harmony
3. Mattering at Work
4. Connection & Community
5. Opportunity for Growth

The Framework provides helpful strategies and suggestions that guide employers on next steps. Some of these suggestions include prioritizing physical and psychological safety in the workplace. The efforts to prioritize safety involve creating opportunities for adequate rest, normalizing

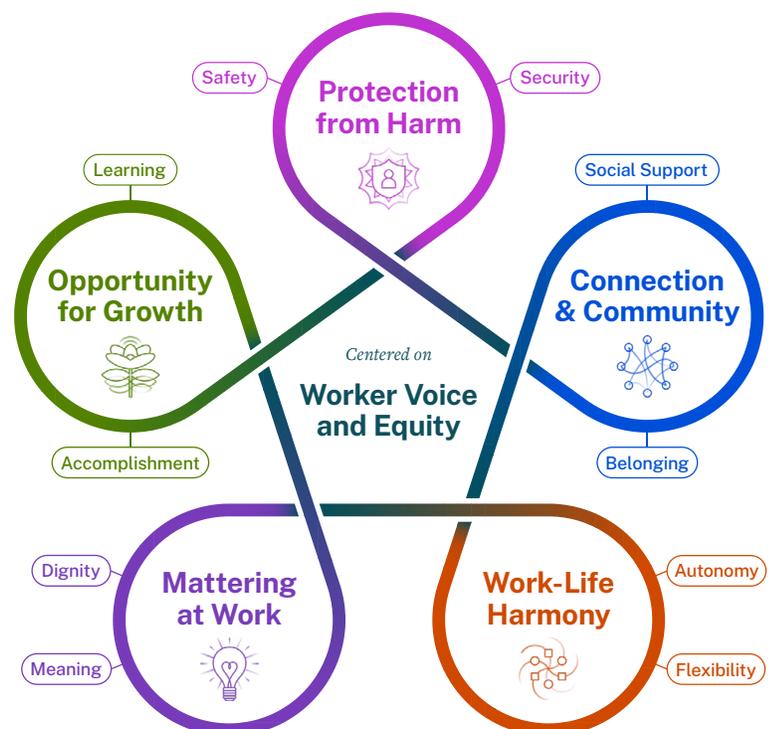


Image by The U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/workplace-mental-health-well-being.pdf>



and supporting mental health, and operationalizing diversity, equity, and inclusion by pushing for culture change, reevaluating policies, and promoting equity-centered programs. A 2020 report from McKinsey and Company suggests that while attempts to diversify workplaces are well received by over 50% of employees, those employees feel more isolated in those environments due to a lack of inclusion.^{vi}

The Framework also emphasizes the importance of an organization's environment and offers strategies to improve workplace environments. These strategies include ensuring everyone's meaningful involvement in processes and decisions, as well as including flexible and predictable structures to account for different experiences. Employees also feel valued at work when there is a culture of gratitude and recognition and when they can connect their work with the organizational mission.

“Authenticity creates a work culture where people feel more in tune and connected to their work community and loyal to their organization and its purpose, which helps attract and retain talented people to do their best work. Employees experience being themselves. They don't have to hide or cover up the differences that make them unique. Differences and diversity are welcome.”

-Dede Henleyⁱⁱⁱ

Similarly, prioritizing workplace wellness is critical. Strategies to begin making a shift toward workplace wellness may include:

- Ensuring that people are paid appropriately and have opportunities to grow
- Committing authentically to equity efforts
- Creating opportunities for staff to actively participate in the organization's processes
- Allowing flexibility and honoring boundaries with work and non-work time
- Encouraging collaborative and inclusive communities
- Supporting staff's mental and physical wellness

These critical steps can promote workspaces where people thrive and diverse, unique talent is retained.



ⁱ <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2022/article/job-openings-and-quits-reach-record-highs-in-2021.htm>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/03/09/majority-of-workers-who-quit-a-job-in-2021-cite-low-pay-no-opportunities-for-advancement-feeling-disrespected/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/398303/approval-labor-unions-highest-point-1965.aspx>

^{iv} <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/workplace-mental-health-well-being.pdf>

^v Mind Share Partners. (2021). 2021 Mental Health at Work Report.

^{vi} <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters>

^{vii} <https://medium.com/swlh/the-power-of-authenticity-how-to-keep-it-real-at-work-135a49c6ccb7>



Supporting the Behavioral Health Workforce: Strategies, Best Practices, Tools, Resources

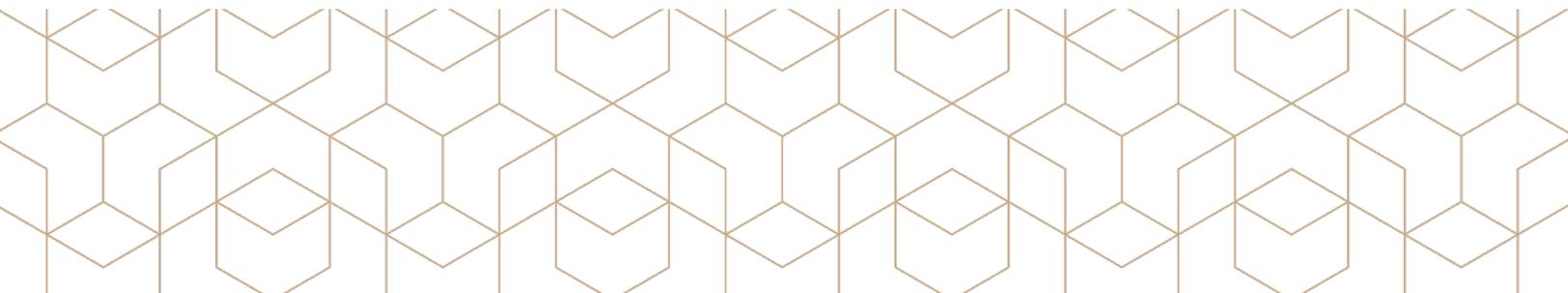
from NAMI CA

Stress can keep us from being fully focused and producing our best work, even on our best days. Over time, too much stress can result in burnout, disengagement, illness, and strained relationships in the workplace.

Stress can be especially pervasive in the behavioral health field, as behavioral health providers work with those in need, in distress, and facing crisis. For many years, professionals in this field have understood the importance of preventing burnout and compassion fatigue among those who support others. In recent years, the importance of caring for the caregivers has only grown as the COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, economic instability, and political discord have impacted us all. Our behavioral health workforce has been called to hold the front lines for communities struggling with these global challenges as the prevalence of mental health challenges has skyrocketed.

Burnout is very real. It can happen to anyone and should be taken seriously. Self-care and trauma-informed supports in the workplace can be effective ways to prevent burnout. Having a strong team—including leadership—to support the workforce is crucial for any company to succeed. Supporting one another in the workplace is extremely important no matter the job, and it is especially important for those in leadership to set the tone by prioritizing staff wellness.

Please read on to learn more about the threat burnout poses and ways to combat it. Any workplace can benefit from incorporating self-care and following the principles of trauma-informed leadership.



Burnout Defined:

According to SAMHSA, “burnout is a complex issue resulting from chronic workplace stress that encompasses exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.”¹ Burnout should not be confused with work stress. Work stress involves having too much work to handle or too many responsibilities, while burnout typically involves lacking the motivation, energy, or care to complete tasks.

5 Stages of Burnout:²

Stage 1: Job Satisfaction/Commitment to the Job/Accepting responsibilities/Need to prove oneself

Stage 2: Anxiety/Lower productivity/ Onset of Stress/ Inability to Focus

Stage 3: Persistent tiredness/ Procrastination/ feeling Pressured/ Denial Problems

Stage 4: Self Doubt/ Pessimistic outlook/ Mental Fatigue/ Neglect of Duties

Stage 5: Chronic Sadness/ Chronic Mental Fatigue/Chronic Physical Fatigue/No Motivation

Reasons for Burnout:

Often, employees point to working long hours and taking on too many tasks as the cause of their burnout. Some other factors include feeling the need to be constantly “on” while at work and not taking enough days off.

Anyone can be affected by burnout, but environmental factors and individual practices matter. For example, an employee with a great work ethic and healthy attitude to work may still eventually be worn out by a workplace with some fundamental issues such as not supporting its employees or not ensuring healthy culture. On the other hand, a high-achieving employee with perfectionistic strivings who neglects her own needs and personal boundaries and puts her job at the center of her universe is most likely to experience burnout, regardless of workplace conditions.



¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Addressing Burnout in the Behavioral Health Workforce Through Organizational Strategies. SAMHSA Publication No. PEP22-06-02-005. Rockville, MD: National Mental Health and Substance Use Policy Laboratory. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2022. <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/ebp/addressing-burnout-behavioral-health-workforce-organizational-strategies>

² See Figure 4 in Stefan de Hert’s 2020 article, “Burnout in Healthcare Workers: Prevalence, Impact and Preventative Strategies.” Local and Regional Anesthesia, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 28 Oct. 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7604257/>



Self-Care:

Self-care is an important set of practices meant to improve one's well-being. Self-care refers to actions individuals take to look after their own health using the knowledge and information available to them.

Benefits of Self-Care:

Self-care is anything you do to take care of yourself so you can stay physically, mentally, and emotionally well. Its benefits are better physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being. NAMI understands that it can be incredibly hard to find time for yourself, and even when you do, you may feel distracted by thinking about what you "should" be doing instead. Any amount of time taken for yourself is important.



Trauma-Informed Leadership Defined:

Trauma-informed leadership involves understanding that emotional responses in the workplace may reflect people's emotional scars, traumas, and emotional strengths. According to the Health Administration Degree at USC University, "Trauma-informed leadership recognizes and honors the emotional scars that people may struggle with."

Why are Trauma-Informed Practices Important?

In "6 Reasons to Practice Trauma-informed Leadership in your Workplace," Kima L. Tozay, LICSW, quotes clinical psychologist, David Tweedy, who observes that "trauma-informed leadership is a way of... appreciating [that] there is an emotional world of experiences rumbling around beneath the surface." Tozay goes on to explain the reasons why trauma-informed leadership is so important.³

Reason #1: We are ALL affected by trauma.

Reason #2: Trauma occurs at the individual and organizational levels.

Reason #3: Trauma-informed leadership consists of skills that are applicable to any industry or institution.

Reason #4: Trauma-informed leaders make self-care a priority

Reason #5: Trauma-informed leaders know how to lead with empathy.

Reason #6: Trauma-informed leaders know that empowerment is key to avoiding re-traumatization.

³ See Kima L. Tozay's "6 Reasons to Practice Trauma-Informed Leadership," <https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/6-reasons-to-practice-trauma-informed-leadership-in-your-workplace/>



Putting Self-Care and Trauma-Informed Leadership into Practice:

Self-care practices vary from person to person and may even change over time, as people adopt different practices. Self-care can start with improving your physical well-being, which can support your mental health. Starting with your body can help to build a strong, resilient foundation for maintaining good mental habits. Moreover, when those in leadership practice self-care, their actions model such behavior for others in the organization.

Some Self-Care Ideas:

- **Exercise daily.** Exercise can take many forms, such as taking the stairs whenever possible, walking up escalators, and running and biking rather than driving. Joining a class may help you commit to a schedule if that works best for you. Daily exercise naturally produces stress-relieving hormones in your body and improves your overall health.
- **Eat well.** Eating mainly unprocessed foods like whole grains, vegetables and fresh fruit is key to a healthy body.
- **Get enough sleep.** Adults generally need between seven and nine hours of sleep. A brief nap—up to 30 minutes—can help you feel alert again during the day. Even 15 minutes of daytime sleep is helpful.
- **Take conscious breaths.**
- **Daily Stretching.** Take a couple minutes to stretch all parts of your body.

For many years, NAMI has been a leading voice in supporting families and caregivers, including identifying strategies and supports for those who are feeling the impacts of caring for others. As part of that work, NAMI affiliates across California offer local, free support groups, education classes, and other activities to create awareness of and provide resources for those experiencing burnout. [NAMI's Peer-to-Peer groups](#) are taught by trained leaders with lived experience and are available online and in-person. If you or someone you know is in need of support or want more information, please reach out to a local [NAMI](#) affiliate.



The Need for Trauma-Informed Leadership within Workplaces

Ana Ramirez Zarate, MPP, Research Analyst I, Impact Justice

During the last two years, the ongoing pandemic, natural disasters, and multiple public health crises have left people experiencing stress and varying levels of trauma. Behavioral health providers, educators, community-based organizations, and others deemed essential workers have been at the forefront, providing care to individuals experiencing crises, sometimes at the expense of their own well-being. These crises illustrate the need for trauma-informed leadership within workplaces to better support staff.¹

While it is important for individuals working in the field as providers to engage in self-care, it is also vital for employers and those in leadership to support providers by adopting practices and approaches that are rooted in trauma-informed leadership. Preventing burnout is not solely an individual's responsibility, but also involves changing the work culture within organizations, agencies, and systems. Preventing burnout among employees requires staff and leadership to learn to recognize the signs.² According to SAMHSA, "burnout results from chronic workplace

stress that encompasses exhaustion (feeling depleted, overextended, and fatigued), depersonalization (being detached from oneself and emotionally distanced from one's clients and work), and feelings of inefficacy (having a reduced sense of professional accomplishment)."³

One way to combat burnout within the workplace is to adopt a trauma-informed approach to leadership. Dr. Dave Tweedy describes trauma-informed leadership as "a way of understating or appreciating [that] there is an emotional world of experiences rumbling around beneath the surface" and these may impact the way individuals behave in the workplace.⁴

A trauma-informed approach encompasses four components that can be implemented in any setting or system.⁵ First, such an approach realizes the widespread nature of trauma and understands that there are paths to healing.⁶ Second, it recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma and how these may be impacting job performance.⁷ Some of the effects of

¹ Rackets, M. (2022, July 6). Why Today's Workplace Needs Trauma-Informed Leadership. Encore Outpatient Services. <https://encorerecovery.com/why-todays-workplace-needs-trauma-informed-leadership/>

² Meinert, D. (2017, July 19). How to Prevent Employee Burnout. SHRM Better workplaces Better World. <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/0817/pages/how-to-prevent-employee-burnout.aspx>

³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Addressing Burnout in the Behavioral Health Workforce Through Organizational Strategies. SAMHSA Publication No. PEP22-06-02-005. Rockville, MD: National Mental Health and Substance Use Policy Laboratory. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2022. <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/ebp/addressing-burnout-behavioral-health-workforce-organizational-strategies>

⁴ Tweedy, D. (2022). Trauma Informed Leadership: An Approach for Healthcare. <https://healthadministrationdegree.usc.edu/blog/trauma-informed-leadership/>

⁵ Huang, L. N., Flatow, R., Biggs, T., Afayee, S., Smith, K., Clark, T., & Blake, M. (2014). SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.



trauma can manifest through behaviors such as showing up late to work or experiencing difficulty completing tasks.⁸ Understanding these behaviors as consequences of trauma, leadership can respond by integrating trauma-informed knowledge into the policies, procedures, and practices within the workplace.⁹ Lastly, a trauma-informed approach seeks to not re-traumatize individuals.¹⁰ Trauma-informed leadership comes from adopting these principles and ultimately helps leaders respond to employee behaviors with compassion as opposed to punishment. Leadership within workplaces can implement trauma-informed approaches by:¹¹

- Promoting flexible ways of communicating where staff can take the time to process and share when they feel most comfortable
- Offering supportive check-ins and debriefs, which can be particularly useful when important and challenging work comes up
- Planning regular self-care and mindfulness trainings to best prepare staff to deal with stressful situations
- Bringing in experts to share about trauma-informed leadership in order to incorporate it across organizations, agencies, and systems
- Providing opportunities for staff to come together while acknowledging power dynamics and positionality



Trauma-informed leadership also requires those in leadership positions to model what taking care of oneself looks like. This means knowing how to recognize triggers and personal tipping points in order to encourage staff to do the same. Modeling may also include taking breaks, naming symptoms of trauma, and taking time off of work. Changing the workplace culture requires commitment and continuous implementation resulting in higher levels of satisfaction among staff and, in turn, among those that they serve.

While self-care often puts the emphasis on “self,” it is also essential for workplace leadership to put policies and practices into place that are trauma-informed in order to encourage and enable individuals to engage in self-care when needed—ideally, before burnout occurs. Building a trauma-informed workplace takes deliberate thought and action. To be successful, it also requires modeling. These investments are needed to promote employees’ well-being, and by extension, the well-being of the organization as a whole.

⁸ Pohl, S., Larsen, R., & McCormick S. (2021, November 29). Five Ways to Practice Trauma-informed leadership. University of Utah Health. <https://accelerate.uofuhealth.utah.edu/leadership/five-ways-to-practice-trauma-informed-leadership>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (2020). Understanding Trauma and Healing in Adults: Brief 5. Creating a Program-Wide Trauma-Informed Culture. <https://www.brazeltontouchpoints.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/understanding-trauma-and-healing-in-adults-strengthening-trauma-informed-staff-practices.pdf>





ABOUT US.

The Crisis and Recovery Enhancement (CARE) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is a cross-agency team from the fields of mental health; training and technical assistance; crisis response and recovery; criminal justice diversion; and wraparound supports for youth and adults at greater risk of mental health crisis, including people experiencing homelessness.

The CARE TA Center is led by the Center for Applied Research Solutions (CARS) in partnership with RI International, NAMI California, C4 Innovations, Impact Justice, and Stanford Sierra Youth & Families. This project is funded by Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), and administered by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), Community Services Division.



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