

# Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being a Good Relative

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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being a Good Relative

- Water
- Song
- Hope
- Connectedness
- Good Words
- Prayers
- Welcome
- Sprit Blessing
- Choice
- Accountability
- Confidence
- Support
- Openness
- Acknowledgements
- Safety
- Reassurance



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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being a Good Relative

Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care is a concept as old as making relatives, that is accepting that one would care for others as relatives. Being A Good Relative is therefore self-explanatory - meaning one is willing and expected to care for or to be active in decreasing another's discomfort or seek to eliminate harmful conditions. Understanding of generosity, respect, belonging, connectedness, honor, and other virtues in Indian Country are reflected in Being a Good Relative

Trauma Informed Care is a recent concept for establishing principals of emotional and physical support and safety while recognizing the impact of trauma and potential trauma triggers or reminders. This contrasts greatly with the actual experiences of many of our tribal members who experience or witness to violence and threats.

Implementation of trauma informed principles are basic as we applies the cultural understanding of Being a Good Relative.



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There are ideas, understandings, information, concepts, techniques, common practices that are not unique to western knowledge.

That are therapeutic, comforting, reassuring, and healing.

Great Mystery

Indigenous knowledge we know



- Trauma Informed Care
- Relaxation
- Thought Stoppage
- Breathing
- Select Ignoring
- Praise
- Identity Formation
- Socialization
- Bonding & Attachment
- Gradual exposure

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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being a Good Relative

- Placing one in need of comfort and reassurance in the center of the circle of care
- Being aware of the needs of victims and their families
- Being aware of trauma reactions
- Being aware of trauma triggers and reminders
- Being aware of fight/flight/flee responses
- Being aware that traumatized children, youth, and adult victims who are hyper-vigilant may appear antsy, cautious, searching, avoiding, dis-interested, or in other ways that may be judged as suspicious behaviors or hiding something
- Provide predictability, consistency, and maintain client centered expectations



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- Being aware of brain development and executive functioning may differ significantly for children and youth with trauma histories
- Being aware that cognitive functioning of adult victims of crime may have difficulty processing information or understanding cause and effect
- Being aware that cognitively, victims who have trauma histories process information, safety, risk, and relationships much differently than individuals without trauma histories
- Being aware that all tribal children and youth have some level of trauma exposure
- Traumatized victims with the highest needs tend to be those who are the hardest to help



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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being a Good Relative

### SIX KEY PRINCIPLES OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice and Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues (appreciation and attention to these issues)



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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being a Good Relative

1. **Safety:** Is your location, staff, policies, conversations safe, does encounters with victims, and their families or caregivers promote a wide range of safety features?

One youth described entering a building in which victim services were offered, he was taken into an office in the back of the building, thru a maze of hallways. He said he keep asking how to do I get out of here because one of his triggers was being confined and not able to get away. This youth wanted to know where are the exits and how do I get to them.

- How is safety and encountered with aggression managed?
- What language and tone of voice is used with youth?
- Is respect and generosity part of training for each staff to better understand Being a Good Relative
- How is safety a feature of victim services so that individuals feel protected?



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2. **Trustworthiness and Transparency:** Providers and support staff are always asking about what is the best way to work with individuals who have a history of trauma. Any engagement should be authentic, honest, sincere, and open. This promotes transparency on the individual level and builds trust over time.

On the program level, clients said, “asking the same questions over and over again means the staff isn’t listening to me, how many times do I need to answer the same questions?” Let the individual know about the intake process, review the intake forms for repetition and duplication of information, use i-pads or other devices to input information, give a brief description of what the intake information will be used for and why.

Sharing program information with any individual with a history of trauma, is a critical part of trustworthiness and transparency. If due to trauma histories, individuals may have poor decision making skills, this is an important process to help them learn better decision making while staff demonstrate actions of being a “good relative.”



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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being a Good Relative

3. **Peer Support:** Having good friendship and relationship skills is a sign of good mental health and learning how to be a Good Relative: that is how to share, support, negotiate, shift roles, follow rules, listen and be present, take turns, deal with frustrations and disappointments, be honest and open, learn to trust and be trustworthy, understand and express feelings and thoughts, accept apologies and learn to forgive, offer apologies and restitution, offer reconciliation and good will, do good and offer help, share interest and be interested in others, recognize own defensiveness, what is meant by passive-aggressiveness, or being manipulative, offer acceptance and understanding.

Tribal values are a good foundation for friendship and relationship building skills. This is the beginning stages of learning how to be a Good Relative as one grows into adulthood, establishing and maintaining healthy relationship, and moving into elder-hood and wisdom keeping.



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4. **Collaboration and Mutuality:** Teamwork, partnership, alliance, relationship building, support, empathy, responsiveness, recognizing feelings (harsh and tender emotions), understanding triggers, reminders, fight/flight/flee responses.

- What is the degree of victim services that are trauma informed?
- Are individuals who have trauma histories seen as contributors to their community?
- Are they part of the discussions on trauma related services?
- Is the program trauma informed?
- What happens when there are outburst? Is the physical setting supportive of individuals with trauma histories (posters, language, comforts, etc.)?
- Are policies in place not to over react when individuals have a melt down?
- What are the policies when there is a question of safety?
- How is safety for the individuals with trauma histories measured?
- Are there peer to peer activities?
- Are there peer to peer policies?



These are strength-based exchanges being shared, taught, and demonstrated by Being a Good Relative?

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5. **Empowerment, Voice and Choice:** this can be view as when choices are available, this promotes having a voice, and having a voice supports the process of empowerment.

Trauma Informed Care means that staff are trained to present choices to those they serve in a positive manner, individuals affected by trauma tend not to understand they have a voice with various levels of intense feelings and distorted or accurate but unhelpful thoughts behind that voice. Choice and voice supports the sense of empowerment.

Motivational interviewing skills can be learned by any staff member for when they engage with traumatized individuals and their families.

Programs can review their policies and procedures to assess if empowerment, voice, and choice are embedded in positive, strength based ways.



One does not empower another but supports the environment for self-empowerment with voice and choice.

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6. **Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues** (appreciation and attention to these issues). “I may be identified as a Native American, but until I learned I was Tsitsistas (Cheyenne), I didn’t know my culture and now realized I am not Native American. That is someone else’s terminology.

This is another great example of Being a Good Relative, do staff encourage and support individuals with trauma history to learn about their cultural ways? Their cultural healing practices that can be very therapeutic and comforting.

Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender, and other with sexual identity differences have a high probability of a history of trauma and being re-victimized. Is care and sensitive given to intake forms, bathroom access, lodging accommodations, and how reminders or triggers may jeopardized foster home or adult shelters placements?

For many in Indian Country, historical, cultural, and identity considerations go hand in hand. Honoring of the gifts given, has always been a way of Being a Good Relative.



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## Walking with Youth: Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Trauma Informed Care is about Transition

- Trauma - Event/Experience/What Happened
- Informed - Knowledge/Understanding/Safety
- Care - Behaviors/Policies/Surrounding/Environment
- Transition - From what was before to what is now
  - Defining the experience/trauma rather than have the experience or trauma define person
  - Recognize that the memories/reminders/triggers do not need to devastate
  - Learn healthy self care skills
  - Reveals ourselves to ourselves



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## Being in a Relative to Self: Self Care

Understanding that each individual is a spirit being with a physical body, capable of emotional reactions, ability to think and process information, and is connected from self to others by different kinds, intensity, and quality of relationships.

The drum beat is a good example of embracing self care, it allows for grounding of the physical body, inviting feelings that can wash over prior unpleasant feelings, allows for thinking about the sensations and surrounding events, and builds not only on the relationship to the drum but to others also invited in by the drum beat.

By tending to one's sense of self and renewal using the drum beat is a great example of self-care.



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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being A Good Relative (Staff Development)

- **Be sincere and authentic**
- **Share information about policies, procedures, protocol and expectations**
- **Open conversations about trauma, trauma reactions, triggers, reminders, victimization and trauma related outcomes**
- **Discuss different methods of communicating**
  - **Verbal and Non-verbal**
  - **Images and words**
  - **Expressions and gestures**
  - **Being or appearing non-responsive or dis-interested**



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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being a Good Relative Communication is Important

- Feelings and feelings expression are an important part of communication
- When feelings are overwhelming, there may be a shut down of communication or an outburst of negative exchanges
- Many times anger is a means of communicating withdrawal, indifference, hurt feelings, pulling up barriers, or hidden feelings
- Children and adolescents with trauma histories are still developing emotionally, physically, and sexually, all this can be confusing and unsettling, they may appear to distance themselves from any offers of assistance



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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being a Good Relative Secondary and Vicarious Trauma

- Self Care includes recognizing how secondary and vicarious trauma(s) can impact one's own feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and relationships
- Self Care is understanding when others share their trauma experiences, that by listening and having empathy to their suffering and pain can create an overwhelming sense of hopelessness, fear, helplessness, and urgency
- Self Care is recognizing that media reports and other sensory images can cause secondary or vicarious trauma reactions even when not in the immediate area of danger or threat such as violent encounters toward the Water Protectors at Standing Rock.
- Self Care is important for modeling and demonstrating for individuals with trauma histories and their families that there are healthy and productive means of caring for self and others.



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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being A Good Relative Understanding Transition Periods

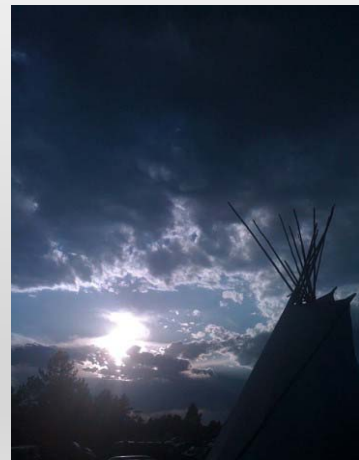
- Transitions period have always been a part of Indigenous ways and practices
  - Brushing off an individual: Acknowledging that there is something healing that the person needs and there is a time for attending to the person in a good way
  - Naming: Giving a person a new name is the most common typically because of a change in status or a change in what was before to what is now different
  - Starting out a song: Typically one singer/drummer starts the song with a drum beat, then others follow, allowing the head drummer to begin the song
  - Being silent: Not immediately responding when verbal conversations are on-going



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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being A Good Relative Understanding Transition Periods

- Transitions period have always been a part of Indigenous ways and practices
  - Prayer: Offering words before beginning any activity is a way of moving into that activity
  - Ritual: Making an offering of water or some other objects to set that time as being sacred or important
  - Gift giving: Recognition of someone being present or leaving and honoring that time since the person will no longer be around
  - Coming of age ceremony: Passing from one way of awareness of self to the next level of awareness of self



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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being A Good Relative Understanding Transition Periods

- Behavior and thoughts engaged in before are now being changed
- Relationship may be strained between family members due to trauma or victimization and now there is a opportunity to decide appropriate kind of boundaries for rebuilding a relationship or for moving away from the relationship
- Acknowledgement of a history of distrust in general does affect other relationships, especially if children and youth are involved; this is an opportunity for changing negative or unhealthy perception of relationships, toward what is desirable in a positive and reassuring relationship



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## Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care: Being A Good Relative Understanding Transition Periods

- Discussions about illegal, harmful, or oppressive behaviors can be anxiety provoking and there may be limited confidence or understanding of how to shift toward more open conversations
- A shift toward more strength based and non-judgmental understandings and practices of all providers toward individuals with trauma histories is critical
- A shift toward recognizing the impact of trauma and victimization offer relief and insight into self assessment



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- Know that you are Sacred
- Know that you are Honored
- Know that you are Prayed for
- Know that Others gave offerings in your behalf
- Know that you are Not Alone
- Know that you were Known before you came to this place
- Know that you have Choices
- Know that you have a Name
- Know that many know your Name
- Know that when you reach, you are also reaching toward others

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# Walking with Youth: Another Way to View Trauma Informed Care:



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