

## This month's issue explores TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE.

Living through a traumatic event can have a lifelong impact. Moving into a nursing home may be traumatic for some residents. Other experiences in residents' past can also affect how they respond to nursing home life. Understanding how your residents respond to the trauma they may have experienced can help you provide the best care.

## What is trauma ?

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) defines trauma as *"the lasting emotional response that often results from living through a distressing event."*

Examples of events that may cause trauma include: war, violence, natural or other disasters, car accidents, death of a loved one, serious illness, and being assaulted, abandoned, abused, bullied, harassed, or humiliated. These events may not cause long term trauma for everyone or make everyone who does suffer trauma react in the same way. Each person is unique!

## Nursing Home Regulations

The revised Federal Nursing Home Regulations requires nursing homes to provide *"culturally-competent and trauma-informed"* care.  
(Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services State Operations Manual)

## Did You Know?

70% of adults have experienced some kind of traumatic event? That means that most of your residents have probably suffered some form of trauma.

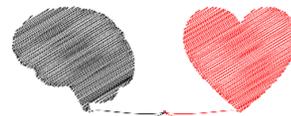


Source (LTCOP Reference Guide) <https://ltcombudsman.org/uploads/files/support/tic-factsheet.pdf>

## What is Trauma-Informed Care?

**Trauma-informed care** stresses making residents feel safe and gives residents who suffered trauma a sense of control. It assumes *everyone* may have experienced trauma that we may or may not be aware of. **Trauma-informed care is an important part of person-centered care and requires staff to get to know residents and to be sensitive to the way they may respond to past events.**

The trauma-informed care approach asks *not* "What is wrong with you?" but rather, *"What happened to you?"*



## Caring For Your Residents

### Keys for trauma-informed resident care:

1. **Understanding:** Learn what may trigger residents to be afraid, anxious, or upset due to past experiences and figure out how to avoid those things while caring for them.
2. **Safety:** Create spaces that are calm and comfortable, and activities that feel safe to the resident.
3. **Choice:** Inform residents of care and activity options and help them make their own choices about their care and lives.
4. **Empowerment:** Use residents' strengths to empower them to speak up for themselves.
5. **Trust:** Offer clear and truthful information to residents. Help them feel comfortable explaining what they want or need.

## Providing a Safe Environment

### Ways to help your residents :

- 
- ⇒ If appropriate, ask residents if they have experienced something upsetting that affects how you should care for them.
  - ⇒ Be sensitive it may be difficult for residents to talk about whatever happened to them.
  - ⇒ Be alert to how residents respond to certain situations.
  - ⇒ Find ways to avoid or minimize whatever upsets the resident. Brainstorm with your co-workers about what works best.
  - ⇒ Ask your supervisor for Trauma-Informed training and resources

## Examples of Avoiding Trauma

- A resident who has been sexually assaulted by a male may prefer female caregivers. If possible, assign female staff for his/her care.
- A resident who was isolated or locked in her room by an abuser may feel less anxious if the door to her room is left open.
- A resident who experienced wartime may need staff to avoid sudden, loud noises.
- A resident who was mugged may be sensitive to people approaching her suddenly from behind and may need staff to say who they are and what they are doing if they are close behind her.
- Staff can keep personal items that provide comfort close to traumatized residents or help them call loved ones when they are feeling anxious or afraid. Even residents who cannot explain the trauma they suffered can benefit from simple efforts you make to make them feel safer!

## Great Resource!

Watch this brief, 3-minute animated video to learn more about providing trauma-informed care: [carehttps://youtu.be/fWken5DsJcw](https://youtu.be/fWken5DsJcw)

## To Report Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation

Of a nursing home resident by a staff member:  
Call State of Michigan LARA: (800) 882-6006

Of an adult living anywhere in the community or an adult in a nursing home, if the abuse is by anyone who is *not* a staff member:

Call Adult Protective Services (APS) Centralized Intake: (855) 444-3911

If you think a crime has occurred: Call your local police/sheriff department (and LARA)



**High-five to all of you who have hung in there, to protect your residents—  
THANK YOU!!**

## For More Information

Long Term Care Ombudsman: (517) 394-3027  
Tri-County Office on Aging: (800) 405-9141

The *Michigan Elder Justice Initiative (MEJI)*'s **Excellence in Caring** newsletter is published with grant funds from the **Tri-County Office on Aging.**

Written by: **Tammy Cordes**  
**Michigan Elder Justice Initiative**  
15851 S. U.S. 27; Suite 73  
Lansing, MI 48906  
517-827-8030

**Questions or comments?** Contact Tammy Cordes at: [tcordes@meji.org](mailto:tcordes@meji.org)

*Content is for educational purposes and does not represent professional advice.*