Principles of a Trauma-Informed System

Understanding Trauma & Stress	"Learning about the psychology of stress, toxic stress, and trauma is liberating for people. It gives us explanatory reasons for some of the puzzling behaviors we engage in and the feelings that can come to dominate us." (Bloom, 2014, p.48)
Safety & Stability	Trauma unpredictably violates our physical, social, and emotional safety resulting in a sense of threat and need to manage risks. Increasing stability in our daily lives and having these core safety needs met can minimize our stress reactions and allow us to focus our resources on wellness.
Cultural Humility & Equity	We come from diverse social and cultural groups that may experience and react to trauma differently. When we are open to understanding these differences and respond to them sensitively we make each other feel understood and equity is advanced.
Compassion & Dependability	Trauma is overwhelming and can leave us feeling isolated or betrayed, which may make it difficult to trust others and receive support. However, when we experience compassionate and dependable relationships, we reestablish trusting connections with others that foster mutual wellness.
Collaboration & Empowerment	Trauma involves a loss of power and control that makes us feel helpless. However, when we are prepared for and given real opportunities to make choices for ourselves and our care, we feel empowered and can promote our own wellness.
Resilience & Recovery	Trauma can have a long-lasting and broad impact on our lives that may create a feeling of hopelessness. Yet, when we focus on our strengths and clear steps we can take toward wellness we are more likely to be resilient and recover.

Leadership Competencies of a Trauma-Informed System

Trauma-Informed Communication	Focuses on the practice of intentionality about the mode, frequency, and amount of information to offer to others in order to minimize the impact of stress and trauma. **Examples:** Connect before correct - Right-sizing information - Framing + Storying Offering stabilization: Providing the why's, likely impacts, and what's next
Inclusive Leadership	Makes space for diversity and difference. Understands power analysis and uses both power building and sharing to create more expansive contexts and communities. Promotes voice and choice. Acknowledges some wounds are results of oppression and must be remedied in relationships and institutions. **Examples**: Power analysis - Power sharing - Power building - Doing with and not for - Taking multiple perspectives - Participatory management
Mindfulness & Reflection	Practice of cultivating awareness, contemplation, and deliberation. Long-term focused versus reactive. Creates opportunities for healing in real time and prevents reverting back to former structures and practices that re-produces stress and trauma. **Examples:** Reflective supervision- Curiosity - Capacity to see & feel without reacting
Complexity	Awareness of systems thinking and change management. Able to operate in space of uncertainty and ambiguity in order to evolve our systems and structures where there are no pre-defined roadmaps. **Examples:** Tolerate ambiguity -Synthesize disparate pieces of information - Ability to consider multi-variate inputs simultaneously
Radical & Critical Inquiry	Capacity to be deeply reflective about one's own self-concept (radical) as well as the institution one leads (critical inquiry). **Examples:** Critical self awareness -Willingness to challenge assumptions - Humility -Critical Institutional Inquiry about organizational treatments, interventions, and problem formulation.
Relational Leadership	Values centrality of relationship. Uses relationship and influence more than power and authority to affect change and systems transformation. **Examples:** Frequent use of appreciation - Whole person consideration - Build cultures of staff connection and shared success - Express and hold emotion and vulnerability- Interact with transparency and trust