



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**  
Office of Family Assistance



# OFA Webinar: Building a Culture of Trauma-Informed Practice to Serve All Tribal TANF Families

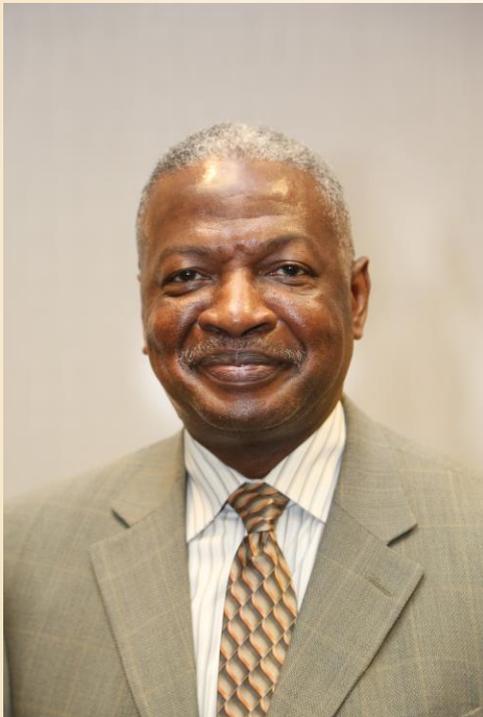
July 28, 2022



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**  
Office of Family Assistance



# Welcome



**James Butler**

**Family Assistance Program Specialist**

**Office of Family Assistance (OFA)**

**Administration for Children and**

**Families (ACF)**

**Today's Moderator**



# Webinar Objectives

This webinar will:

- Equip frontline Tribal TANF staff with trauma-informed practices and communication strategies for use during client-caseworker interactions.
- Provide participants with resources and connections to build program capacity.
- Amplify the expertise of experts by sharing strategies and resources relevant for Tribal TANF programs and staff nationwide.

# Using Zoom for Today's Webinar



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## Participation

Please submit your questions and comments using the Q&A option on the panel on the bottom of your screen. You will then see a popup of the Question and Answer box.



Chat



Raise Hand



Q&A

Question and Answer

## Welcome to Q&A

Questions you ask will show up here. Only host and panelists will be able to see all questions.

Type your question here...

Who can see your questions?



# Survey

**Thank you for attending the Meeting.  
Please click Continue to participate in a short survey.**

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Are you sure you want to continue?

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# Polling Question #1

Which of the following best describes your organization?

- Tribal TANF program
- State TANF program
- Family/Social Service Program
- Federal Government Staff
- Other (Please indicate in the chat box)



## Polling Question #2

To what extent does your Tribal TANF program already incorporate trauma-informed practices? (Select one answer)

- We have programs targeted specifically at addressing trauma in our community
- We have programs that have a broad target audience
- We are exploring our options and in the works of creating programs to address trauma
- We are here to learn more

# Colonization, Historical Trauma, and Indigenous Culture as a Protective Factor

Heather Sauyaq Jean Gordon, PhD  
July 28, 2022



Artist: Ken Lisbourn, Iñupiaq

# Land acknowledgement

Visit <https://native-land.ca>, or text your city and state at 1-855-917-5263 to see whose lands you are on.



Learn more about Land Acknowledgements at: <https://native-land.ca/about/why-it-matters/>

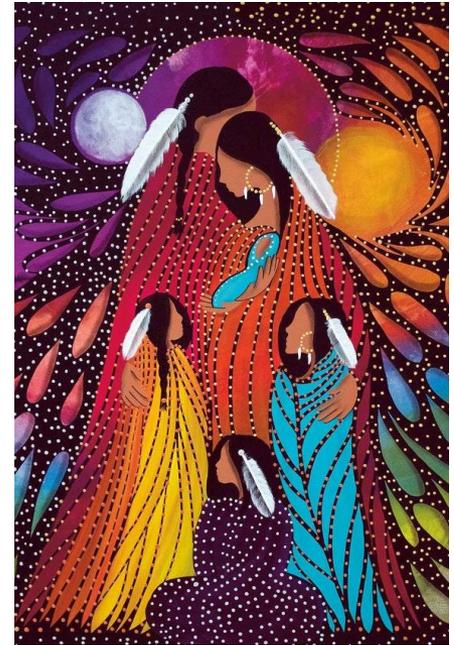
# Heather Sauyaq Jean Gordon, PhD

- From Homer, Alaska
- Iñupiaq, citizen of Nome Eskimo Community
- PhD in Indigenous Studies
- Experience in Indigenous Knowledge, culture, self-determination, sustainability, well-being, and research partnerships
- Research Scientist at Child Trends



# Indigenous Peoples in the U.S. and Territories

- Indigenous Peoples from:
  - Contiguous 48 states = American Indian
  - Alaska = Alaska Natives
  - Hawaii = Native Hawaiians
  - Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands = Other Pacific Islanders, including Chamorro, Samoans, and Carolinians
- Common terms: Peoples, Nations, Bands, Pueblos, Tribes, Communities, and Villages



Artist: Betty Albert-Licenz, Cree

# Indigenous sovereignty

- Indigenous Peoples are inherently sovereign<sup>44</sup>
- Inherent vs. practical sovereignty
  - Federal Indian statute and case law
  - Termination Era 1953-1968
  - Plenary Power of Congress
- 574 federally recognized Tribes in the U.S.
- Additional state recognized Tribes
- All Pacific Nations are unrecognized



Artist: Woody Crumbo, Potawatomi

# Dates of first contact in what is now the U.S.<sup>43</sup>

- 1493: *Doctrine of Discovery*
- 1500s: Continental U.S., Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands colonized by Europeans (established as the U.S. and territories 1776-1947)
- 1700s: Alaska colonized by Russia and bought by U.S. in 1867
- 1778: James Cook landed on Kauai, American colonists overthrew Hawaiian kingdom in 1893, and U.S. annexed Hawaii in 1898



Artist: Bobby Von Marten, Choctaw

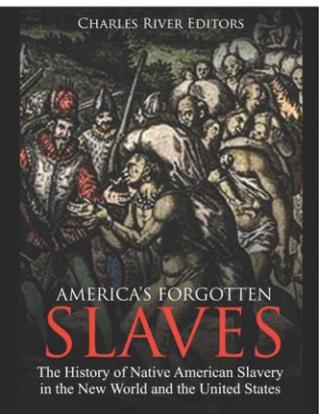
# What did/does colonization look like? Genocide.

## From 1492-Present 13 million deaths<sup>46</sup>

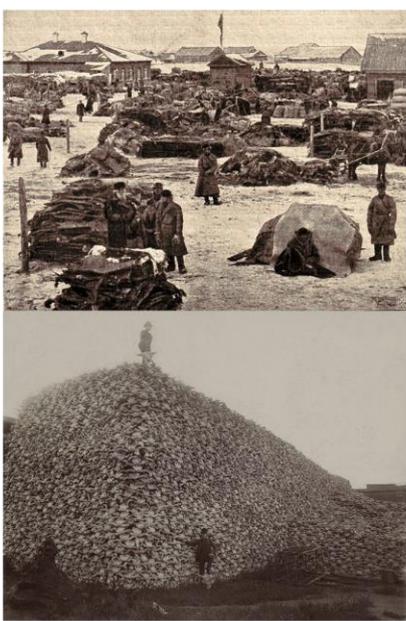
Assimilation<sup>1</sup>



Enslavement<sup>2</sup>



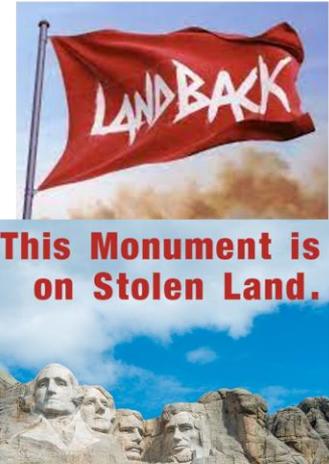
Starvation<sup>4,5</sup>



Termination<sup>6</sup>



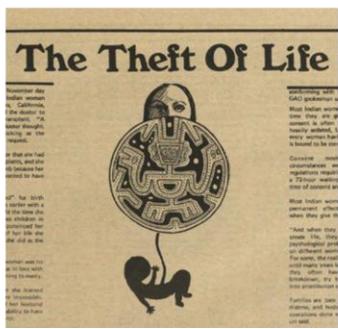
Decolonization/land back<sup>8,9</sup>



Removal Policies<sup>3</sup>



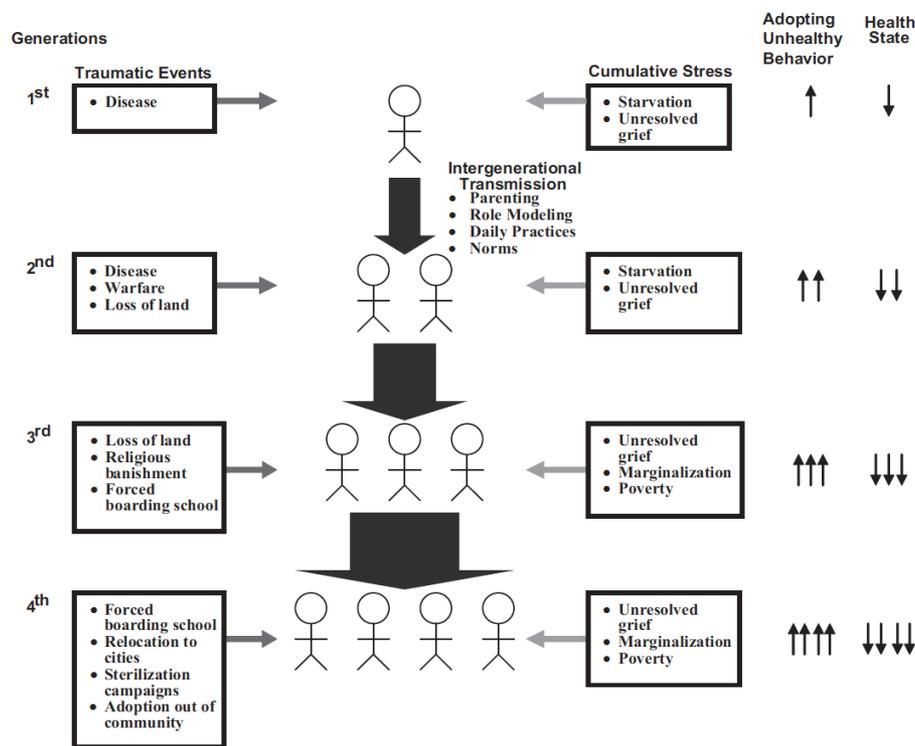
Involuntary sterilizations<sup>7</sup>



# Results of colonization: Trauma<sup>12</sup>

- **Historical trauma:** Intergenerational, emotional, and psychological<sup>10</sup>
- **Cultural trauma:** Attacks the society and essence of community/members
- **Intergenerational trauma:** Passed down from one generation to the next

- ➔ Health assaults from traumatic events in Native American history
- ← Health assaults from examples of daily cumulative stress (e.g., unresolved grief, poverty)
- ⬇ Increasing strength of negative psychological issues onto subsequent generations



# Results of colonization: Adverse current community conditions

- Lack/loss of federal Tribal recognition<sup>2</sup>
- Food insecurity and insufficient nutrition<sup>13</sup>
- Inadequate living conditions<sup>14,15,16</sup>
- Loss of Native cultures and languages<sup>17</sup>
- Poverty<sup>18,19</sup>
- Low educational achievement<sup>20</sup>
- Living in violent communities<sup>21, 22, 23</sup>
  - Loss of lands and the rights to manage them<sup>25,26</sup>
  - Overrepresentation in the criminal justice system: juveniles/adults<sup>27</sup>
  - Weakened or ineffective governance structures<sup>28,29</sup>
  - Environmental justice issues<sup>30</sup>
  - Missing and murdered Indigenous relatives crisis<sup>45</sup>

# Results of colonization: Adverse current individual and family outcomes

Increased prevalence and disparities in:

- Mental and behavioral health (e.g., higher youth suicide rate, early use of alcohol, tobacco and/or other substances) <sup>31, 32, 33, 34</sup>
- Physical health (e.g., higher obesity rate, increased comorbidities) <sup>35,36,37,38,39</sup>
- Social/relational health (e.g., domestic/intimate partner violence, prevalence and number of Adverse Childhood Experiences) <sup>21, 22, 23</sup>

\*Individual/family well-being is further challenged by limited availability and access to healthcare<sup>40</sup>

**There is a tendency to focus on deficits but focusing on strengths allows us to draw on culture as a protective and preventative factor.**

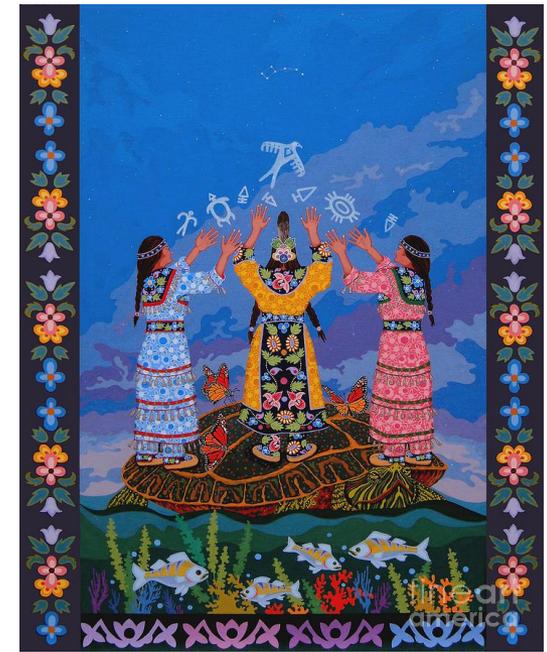


Artist: Sarah Ayaqi Whalen-Lunn, Iñupiaq

# Indigenous cultures as protection/prevention to address colonization<sup>11,43</sup>

**Indigenous Knowledge and a growing body of research tells us the following are important:**

- Enculturation and Indigenous identity formation
- Traditional activities and games
- Relationships with the land including subsistence and traditional foods
- Social connectedness: Family, intergenerational, Elders, and the community
- Native languages
- Spirituality and ceremony



Artist: Chholing Taha,  
Cree First Nations

# Indigenous Connectedness Framework<sup>41, 42</sup>



# Concluding thoughts

- Indigenous Peoples are inherently sovereign
- Colonization:
  - Is ongoing and a genocide of Indigenous Peoples
  - Leads to historical trauma which has adverse outcomes
- Culture:
  - Serves as a protective/preventative factor
  - Brings Indigenous well-being through relationality and connectedness



Artist: Daniel Ramirez, Saginaw  
Chippewa Tribe of Michigan

# Quyanaqqak!

(Thank you very much in Iñupiatun)

## Any questions?

Dr. Heather Sauyaq Jean Gordon

[hgordon@childtrends.org](mailto:hgordon@childtrends.org)

[@HeatherJ\\_Gordon](https://twitter.com/HeatherJ_Gordon)

You can also find me on [LinkedIn](#) and [ResearchGate](#).



Artist: Rhonda Shelford  
Jansen, Unungan/Aleut

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# Polling Question #3

Which of the following cultural activities do you think may be able to be used as protective factors against trauma in your community? (Can select multiple)

- Native languages
- Spirituality and ceremony
- Traditional activities and games
- Relationships with the land
- All of the above

# Building a Trauma-Informed Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

Andrea Hetling, PhD

Rutgers University – New Brunswick

July 2022

# Introduction and Thank You

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- Andrea Hetling, PhD, Professor at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University – New Brunswick
- Research interests in human services policy, U.S. safety net, intimate partner violence, and social equity and analysis
- Former program administrator at a domestic violence agency
- My presentation draws on my experiences with collaborative, applied projects:
  - *The TANF Trauma-Informed Evaluative Toolkit* – collaboration with Vermont Department of Children and Families, Economic Services Division, Reach Up/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Contract No. HHSP233201500111I – Peer Based Training and Technical Assistance (OFA PeerTA)
  - *Home Safe Home* – collaboration with Dr. Hilary Botein, based on interviews with staff and survivors affiliated with agencies in Connecticut and New York
  - Other TANF-focused and survivor-centered projects in Maryland and New Jersey

A trauma-informed approach to services is based on 4 assumptions:

*“a program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed **realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery; **recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and **responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively **resist re-traumatization**.”*

SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach, 2014

Trauma-informed care is a holistic, systematic approach grounded in an understanding of, and responsiveness to, the impact of trauma on a person, family, or community



Being a trauma-informed agency is a continual process that requires:

Commitment of leadership

Involvement and engagement with staff and families

Integration of a trauma-informed lens as the foundation in policies, practices, and procedures

Systematic and regular evaluation and “closing the loop” actions

Taking an Agency and Institutional Perspective

# Applying 4 R's to Policy, Practice, and Procedure Reviews

<b>Assumptions</b>	<b>Foundational elements</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Realizes trauma	Document contains language that recognizes the pervasiveness of trauma in the lives of people using services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How well does the policy match the principle?</li><li>• What are some areas to improve?</li><li>• What steps must be taken to make changes?</li></ul>
Recognizes signs	Document has language that recognizes and addresses trauma and the impact of toxic stress	
Responds	Evaluation of this document (and related ones) uses the 6 key principles of a trauma-informed approach	
Resists re-traumatization	The document expresses a commitment to promoting well-being and recovery	

## 6 Key Principles

Safety

Trustworthiness and Transparency

Peer Support

Collaboration and Mutuality

Empowerment, Voice, and Choice

Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach, 2014

## Evaluative Practices

- Principle is defined and operationalized in the specific context
- Relevant data are collected
- Relevant data are analyzed critically
- Changes are made based on findings

# Building Resilience among Agency Staff

## Organizational role

- Create structures that provide supervision and supports
- Continually assess staff risk and resiliency
- Provide continual trainings for all staff and leadership
- Assess and implement trauma-informed principles in all agency domains

## Supervisor role

- Practice active and reflective supervision
- Model self-care behaviors
- Learn more about secondary traumatic stress
- Advocate for staff needs

# What Does this Mean for TANF Agencies?

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- Challenges are real
  - Block grant structure
  - Time limits
  - Participation requirements
- Opportunities exist
  - New case management based on strengths-based, goal-oriented, and two-generation approaches
  - Good cause waivers
  - Collaboration with other community organizations
- “Closing the loop” may require advocacy and change at the federal level

# Key Takeaways

Being a Trauma-Informed Agency is a Continual Process of Reflection and Improvement



Supporting Resilience Among Families Leads to Well-Being and Growth



Addressing Secondary Trauma Among Staff is an Organizational Responsibility



Resources and Supports are Available

# Building a Trauma-Informed TANF Program: An Evaluative Toolkit



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**The Toolkit** – What it is and what it is not

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**Chapter 1** – Project Background and Introduction

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**Chapter 2** – Trauma in the Context of Poverty and Human Services

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**Chapter 3** - How can Trauma-Informed Principles be applied to the TANF Context?

**Tool 1:** Understanding and Applying Principles of Trauma-Informed Approach in the TANF Context

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**Chapter 4** – Assessing Agency Commitment and Culture

**Tool 2:** Evaluative Questions on Agency Commitment and Endorsement

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**Chapter 5** – Evaluating Policy and Rules

**Tool 3:** Evaluative Rubric for Trauma-Informed TANF Policies and Rules

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**Chapter 6** – Evaluating Practices and Interactions with Participants

**Tool 4:** Practice Reflection Tool for Client Assessment

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**Chapter 7** – Evaluating Agency and Office Space

**Tool 5:** Evaluative Rubric for Evaluating Trauma-Informed Spaces

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**Chapter 8** – Addressing Secondary Trauma Among Staff

**Tool 6:** Strategies for Building Resiliency and Addressing Secondary Trauma

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**Chapter 9** – Developing Training and a Culture of Continuous Improvement

**Tool 7:** Evaluative Rubric for Trauma-Informed Program Evaluation Practices

# Resources

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- The Evaluative Toolkit available at: OFA Peer TA, <https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov>
- Center for the Study of Social Policy, Strengthening Families <https://cssp.org/our-work/project/strengthening-families/#training>
- Trauma-Informed Oregon <https://traumainformedoregon.org>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Resource Guide to Trauma-Informed Human Services <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/trauma-toolkit>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach [https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA\\_Trauma.pdf](https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf)



# Polling Question #4

What are some ways your Tribal TANF program may already implement trauma-informed practices? (Can select multiple)

- Awareness of culture and the importance of incorporating this awareness in daily practice and organizational operations
- Diversity and inclusion training for staff
- Staff training on ethics, boundaries, and expected behavior
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Others (please indicate in the chat box)



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# Polling Question #5

What else might you like to hear about regarding building a trauma-informed Tribal TANF program?

Type your answers in the chat box!



# Trauma-Informed Care in Practice

Crystal Christiansen

Family Preservation Coordinator

Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian  
Tribes of Alaska



- From Metlakatla, AK; Currently residing in Juneau, AK
- Deg Hit'an Athabascan
- Nine years of experience in tribal social services
- Family Preservation Coordinator at CCTHITA Tribal Family and Youth Services

# Crystal Christiansen

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# Understanding the Effects of Trauma

Impairs memory, thinking, learning, concentration, and adaptability

Impacts ability to trust, cope, and form healthy relationships

Disrupts emotional regulation and expression

Shapes beliefs about self and others, hope, and life outlook

Linked to chronic illness and substance use disorders

# Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Care



Safety



Trustworthiness  
and Transparency



Peer Support



Collaboration and  
Mutuality



Empowerment,  
Voice, and Choice



Cultural, Historical,  
and Gender Issues



# **Implementing Trauma-Informed Principles**

# Creating a Safe and Welcoming Environment

## Physical Environment

- Well-lit common areas
- Monitor who's coming and going from buildings
- Noise levels are minimal
- Ensure work areas are well kept
- Positive messaging

## Social-Emotional Environment

- All staff are courteous and respectful
- Maintain clear communication and expectations
- All staff are trained in trauma-informed practices

# Building Trustworthiness & Transparency

- Ensure families know their rights and responsibilities
- Be clear, consistent, and dependable
- Acknowledge achievements
- Establish and maintain appropriate boundaries





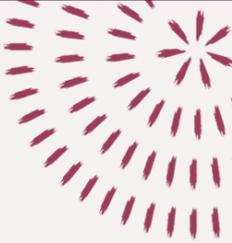
# Recognize Benefits of Peer Support

Encourage community engagement by:

- Offering groups and activities that promote peer interaction
- Knowing and utilizing community resources



# Fostering Collaboration & Mutuality



## Emphasize

- Emphasize equality

## Share

- Share decision-making responsibilities

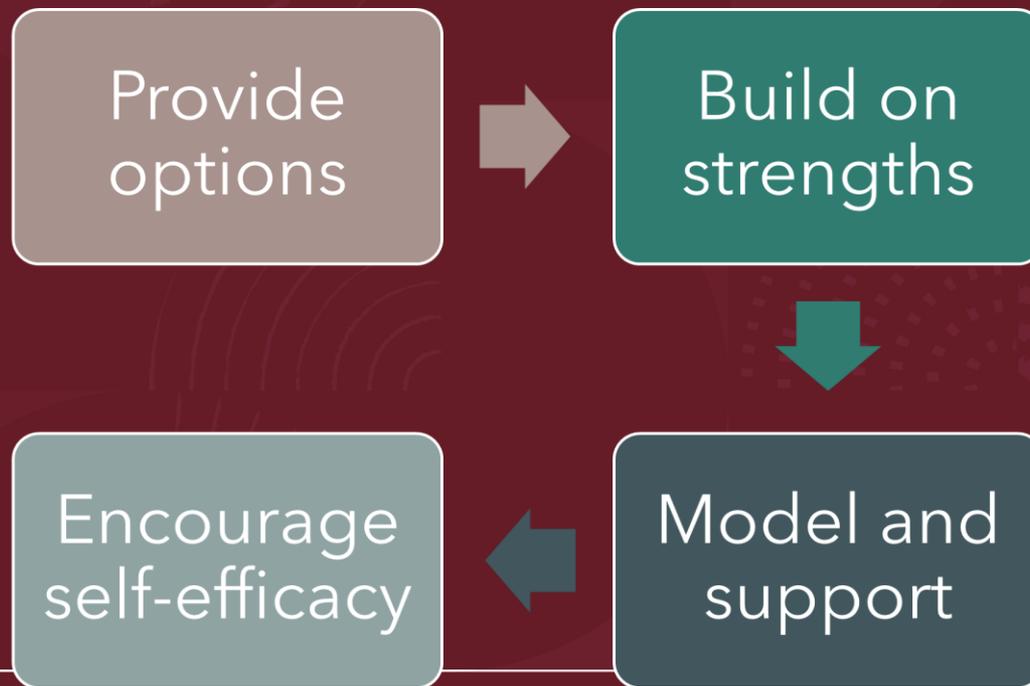
## Assess

- Assess family strengths and needs

## Utilize

- Utilize warm hand-offs
- 

# Empowering Families



# Cultural Awareness



## **Understand that cultural factors:**

Influence responses to traumatic experiences;  
Impact a person's willingness to seek help;  
Shape communication style

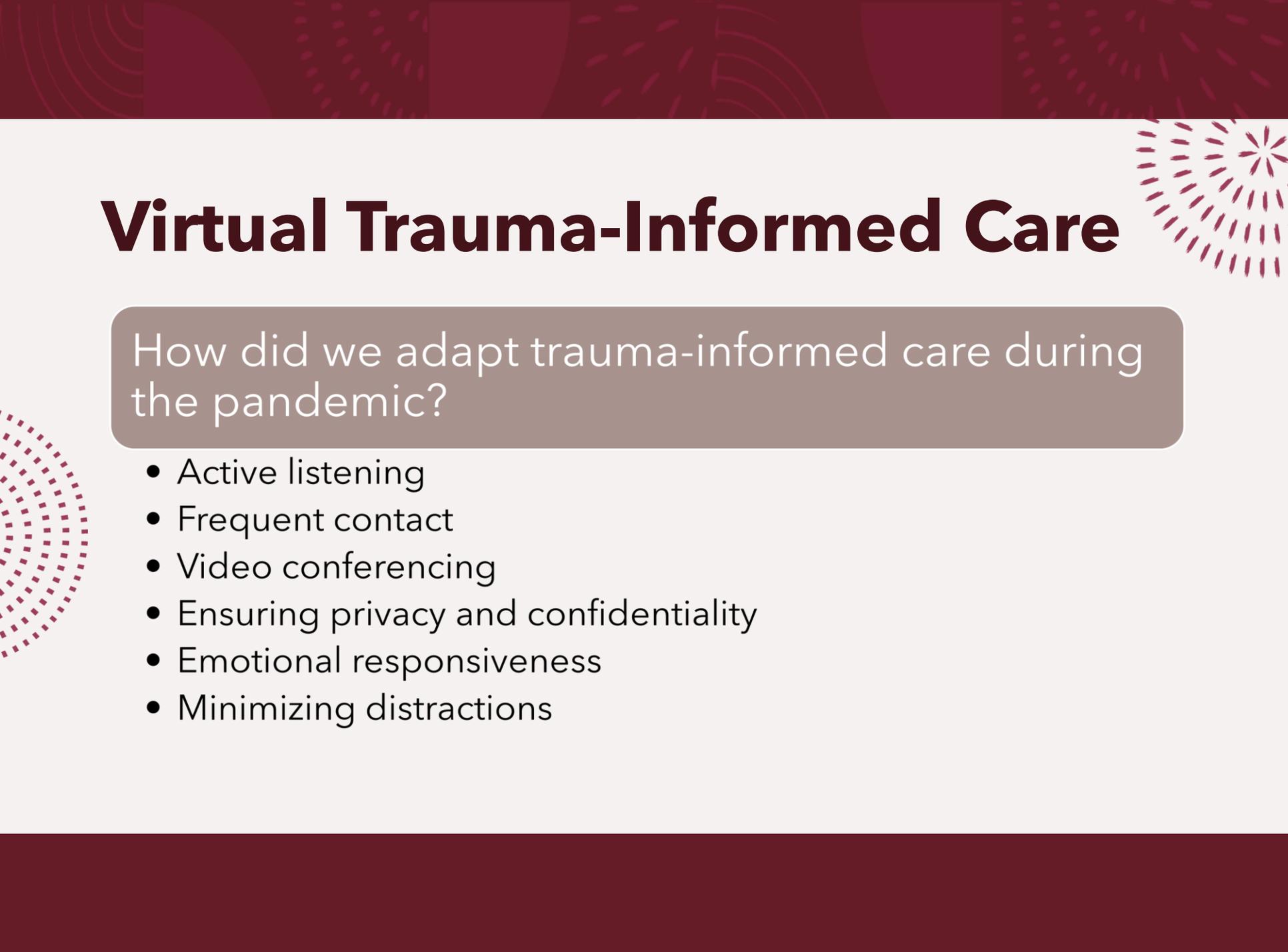


## **Encourage cultural connection to promote healing and well-being**



## **Recognize, understand, and address historical trauma**

# Virtual Trauma-Informed Care



How did we adapt trauma-informed care during the pandemic?

- Active listening
- Frequent contact
- Video conferencing
- Ensuring privacy and confidentiality
- Emotional responsiveness
- Minimizing distractions

# Improving Trauma- Informed Response



Provide regular staff training



Utilize a wholistic approach



Recognize triggers



Use appropriate language



Reframe behavior



Practice empathy



Take time to reflect



**Questions**





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# Q&A Session





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# Additional Information

- A recording of this webinar will be available shortly on the OFA PeerTA website (<https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov>).
- We would also like to hear from you about future webinar topics. Please send us your ideas by e-mail to [peerta@blhtech.com](mailto:peerta@blhtech.com).



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# Webinar Feedback

- Send us your feedback via the survey that will launch when the webinar ends.

# Thank you!