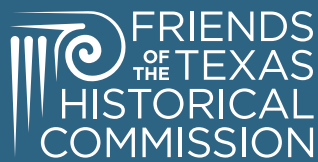


CRISIS AND TRAUMA
RESPONSE TOOLKIT
FOR CULTURAL WORKERS
2023



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INSTRUCTIONS

This toolkit is designed to be used as a whole or in-part. It contains stand-alone chapters, which can be used on an as-needed basis. The organization of the toolkit proceeds from larger topics to more specific topics.

TIPS FOR USAGE:

1. Watch the video(s) for the toolkit chapter(s)
2. Review the toolkit chapter in its entirety.
3. Use the discussion prompts to facilitate discussion with staff, community members, or others.
4. Engage in the recommended trainings or programming as desired.

Please note that this toolkit includes content that will continue to be updated.

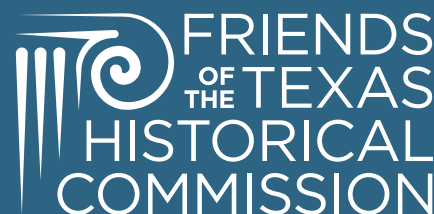
This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Grant #CAGML-247929-OMLS-20 (www.imls.gov).

The views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this "Crisis and Trauma Response Toolkit" do not necessarily represent those of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

As stated in the introduction, this toolkit is offered as "permanently incomplete" product and will be continually updated as new information and resources become available. The views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations shared in the video presentations are those of the presenting experts and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission.

While some of the video presentations are provided by licensed therapists, the training and programming recommendations, which came out of the "lab" sessions, are presented as suggested practices to be used by cultural workers at their discretion and NOT as therapy.

FRONT COVER: Images of Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, Fulton Mansion State Historic Site, and Maggoffin Home State Historic Site.



RESILIENCE AMONG CULTURAL WORKERS

*How a trauma-informed workplace can
increase resilience among cultural workers*



In much the same way that larger communities can be shaped by experiences of trauma, a cultural organization can also feel the continuing effects of trauma. Because many cultural workers engage with difficult histories and historical trauma, they are in need of work environments that are responsive to the unique impacts that this work can have on their wellness. Creating an environment that supports the wellbeing and resilience of workers can have a broad-reaching effect. In her presentation, “Resilience Among Cultural Workers and a Trauma Informed Work Environment,” Dr. Tanisha Thelemaque states that “two key factors in harnessing resiliency are acknowledging trauma and becoming a trauma-informed workplace.”

Using the metaphor of raindrops, Dr. Thelemaque describes how trauma impacts communities. Like raindrops on the surface of a body of water creates ripples that converge with other ripples, the consequences of traumatic events impact not only individuals but those in community with that person. In the context of a cultural organization, community can include coworkers, stakeholders, visitors, and others, showing that the potential reach of trauma can be quite substantial. The need to create support for cultural workers is vital.

Dr. Thelemaque discusses the “6 Guiding Principles to a Trauma-Informed Approach,” which was created by the Centers for Disease Control in collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s National Center for Trauma-Informed Care. She gives detailed explanations of each of the six principles, relating them specifically to the context of the organizational work place. She goes on to give specific, actionable policy recommendations for creating a trauma-informed work place, including using data to inform decisions, examining the role leadership plays, and reviewing policies around bereavement, vacations, and other applicable topics. This presentation serves as a fundamental beginning tool for any organization wanting to implement trauma-informed practices.

DR. TANISHA THELEMAQUE

Dr. Tanisha Thelemaque is a licensed psychologist with a private practice in San Francisco, and works with renowned mental health organizations such as the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the Journalist Trauma Support Network. Dr. Thelemaque continues to create workshops as an equity consultant for international corporations, non-profits, and universities.



KEY TERMS

RESILIENCE: Both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

*Talk with others within your organization
about creating a trauma informed workplace*

Using the facilitation tips below, set aside time to engage members of your organization in discussion about creating a trauma informed workplace.

FACILITATION TIPS

Create a safe space for productive group discussions

- Create a set of agreed-upon guidelines for group discussions.
- Clearly articulate the goal(s) of the discussion.
- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Listen actively and with an ear to understanding others' views.
(Don't just think about what you are going to say while someone else is talking.)
- Avoid criticizing. We all can learn something from each other, even if your views do not necessarily align.
- Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
- Allow everyone the chance to speak.
- Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups.
Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.
- A brief check-in and check-out is often helpful to include everyone—even a one-three word description of how they are doing as they come in and their impressions at the end can be good.
- We are accountable for our words and their impact.
- Personal information that comes up in the conversation should be kept confidential.

*Facilitation tips based upon information from MIT's Discussion Guidelines webpage.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

How do you define resilience within your cultural context?

What are some ways that your ancestors demonstrated resilience?

In what concrete ways do leaders in your organization empower cultural workers?

Think about three ways that you engage in peer support in your work.

Name at least two policies or procedures your organization has that demonstrate a commitment to trauma-informed supports.

Using the CDC's six guiding principles for a trauma-informed approach as a blueprint, how would you grade your organization in each of these 6 areas (e.g., peer support, trustworthy/transparent, etc.) on a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 being not at all present and 10 being always present?

Without judgment, consider why you answered the way that you did.

What policies or procedures would you like to see implemented in your workplace?

What processes are in place to solicit feedback from people and ensure anonymity and confidentiality?

FROM A HR PROFESSIONAL

In March of 2020, the Pandemic changed how the Texas Historical Commission (THC) provided services to the constituents of the State of Texas. Our mission to protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, enjoyment, and economic benefit of present and future generations was interrupted, but only briefly. The THC had to pivot and did so quickly. Employees were impacted both personally and professionally.

In the past, our agency had not utilized all of our technological resources, but the Pandemic forced us to embrace technology and communicate remotely with our employees. Agency leadership met regularly to provide this continued guidance. Messaging had to be succinct and quickly delivered as the Pandemic changed how we did business. It was different, but it was a catalyst for change that we had only talked about moving towards.

Unlike some businesses, the THC was able to remain open and provide continued services through the use of technology. We had to rethink how we offered our services to the people of the great State of Texas. Meetings and site programming were shifted to online platforms such as TEAMS or Zoom. In many ways, it allowed us to explore other avenues of communicating and quickly became a staple at our agency.

From a Human Resources standpoint, the use of DocuSign and these online platforms were also instrumental in forging a pathway for continued communication with our staff, whether it was personal or professional. Phone calls, video chats, and the use of DocuSign were very important tools for us to continue our work. Paperwork was digitally routed and processed. A change we embraced and found beneficial in quickly routing and finalizing administrative tasks.

These same tools helped us update agency processes/procedures as the CDC provided guidance on how to respond. The pandemic was and continues to be an incentive for change. We've had to learn, adapt, and overcome obstacles as they come.

Although THC is a business, the impact personally on our staff was traumatic and agency leadership realized the need to offer flexibility. Employees that were unable to work due to personal responsibilities or illness were offered Emergency Leave, flexible scheduling, telework for eligible positions, accommodations, EAP services, and continued support during the height of the Pandemic. We recognized early on that our employees were impacted and provided as much guidance and flexibility as we could while maintaining services in Austin and at our sites.

As we progressed through the Pandemic, a realization in the importance of family, work-life balance, and meaningful job fulfillment brought resignations to the forefront. Businesses began experiencing an increase in resignations and employees leaving their positions. Our agency recognized this trend and has continued to offer flexibility when available to retain employees. We've had to recruit differently and emphasize flexibility, benefits, and the mission of our agency as important reasons to work for us. The Pandemic has made it very competitive, and we strive to meet this expectation when we have the flexibility to do so.

Overall, the Pandemic continues to be an opportunity that has required our agency to look at how we provide services while retaining top talent. As an agency, we handled the Pandemic well and were able to make the needed timely adjustments, but employees will continue to place emphasis on work-life balance opportunities, pay, and job fulfillment. THC strives to meet this demand while maintaining productivity and meaningful experiences for both the employees and the public we serve.



JADA LOUHELA

Jada Alley Louhela, PHR, SHRM-CP and Level 1 COOP Certified, is a graduate of the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, having earned a BA in Organizational Communications. She is currently the Director of Human Resources at the Texas Historical Commission. She has over twenty two years of State of Texas experience specializing in all various aspects of Human Resources to include Benefits, Compensation, Classification, Applicant Services, Continuity of Operations and Time and Leave. Jada previously worked for the Texas Department of Agriculture from May 2006-September 2015 and University of North Texas from June 2000-April 2006.

TIPS FOR PROVIDING SUPPORT

Training and programming to enable organizations to provide support.

TRAINING

Training for staff can ensure they are ready to respond to the community as well as care for their own well-being in the face of a traumatic event.

RECOMMENDATION: Provide staff, especially managers, training on becoming trauma informed.

RECOMMENDATION: Re-evaluate organizational policies on bereavement. Recommended allowance of time off for bereavement is five to ten days (i.e., 1 to 2 weeks) per year. Also, expand what it means to be family members.

RECOMMENDATION: Model work-life balance. Provide adequate vacation time and consider a policy that vacation time be taken.

RECOMMENDATION: Have regular check-ins with staff. Make sure your messages align with your actions. Focus on listening to what each person is managing. Acknowledge their feelings and experiences. Recalibrate expectations together. Discuss resources for support.

RECOMMENDATION: Provide accommodations. Create avenues for employees/coworkers to request accommodations or resources. They should not feel guilt or shame over their needs. Have resources available.

RECOMMENDATION: Build trust and transparency. Recognize and support skills/expertise that strengthen the ability to make daily decisions.

RECOMMENDATION: Provide employee assistance programs. Work with a trauma expert to create programs. Extend employee assistance program benefits to family and household members as well.

RECOMMENDATION: Conduct formal, confidential, and tailored workplace health assessments with a goal of learning about workplace factors that may be negatively influencing employees' overall health.

RECOMMENDATION: Provide a listing of mental health resources available to staff through their health insurance policies.

RECOMMENDATION: Prepare employees for trauma in the workplace by giving them adequate tools to respond in the moment and access to necessary coping strategies after the incident. Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) real life testing and drills give employees the tools to make decisions and later provide after action exercises on how to provide more proficiently.

RECOMMENDATION: Discuss potential traumatic events relevant to the workplace and build policies and procedures to help prevent these situations.

PROGRAMMING

Creating opportunities for communities and staff to engage in programming can take many forms. Here are a few ideas for implementing programming within your organization.

RECOMMENDATION: Prepare and keep on hand a trauma toolbox for employees. It should contain items an employee would find comforting—a blanket, snacks, water, etc. The trauma toolbox should also contain a written safety plan.

RECOMMENDATION: Listen carefully to the needs and wants of impacted employees and provide online resources the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides to develop appropriate, tailored responses.

RECOMMENDATION: Host information sessions with qualified speakers to address their experience of trauma. Employees can learn coping strategies when exposed to trauma and build a tool kit of resources that will be helpful to them.

RECOMMENDATION: Provide continuous and varied programming to staff to create a workplace where employees feel healthy, engaged and supported by the organization.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Evaluation Resource:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/wellbq/default.html>.

National Center for PTSD Web-Based App: "PTSD Coach."

<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/ptsdcoachonline/default.htm>

National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

<https://nationalfund.org/our-resources/publications/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-workforce/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf

Trauma-Informed Care: The 4 'R's—YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vO9DJRd5b4k>

