



## **Resilient Flathead: Building a Proactive, Trauma-Informed Community**

*Thank you for your interest in becoming trauma informed! We believe that proactive, trauma-informed professionals and organizations will help build a healthier, happier community with productive employees and supportive families. We encourage you to keep these things in mind:*

### **Don't**

- just give the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Survey to your clients, students, friends or family without giving context or providing hope.
- “proselytize” or push information about the effects of complex stress and trauma on people who are not ready to receive it, or in a non-supportive environment that may lead to re-traumatizing people.
- give the ACEs Survey to people who are without supportive relationships or ways to get help.
- go outside your professional role. If you are not a therapist or trained mental health worker, you may not be ready to deal with the reactions that this information can trigger and may contribute to re-traumatizing people.

### **Do**

- find out where to turn for help through Nate Chute Foundation ([natechutefoundation.org](http://natechutefoundation.org)), Nurturing Center 756-1414 or other resources.
- practice self-care so that you can take care of others.
- know your limits and recharge when you need to.
- be aware of your own complex stress and trauma, both past and current.
- work to regulate yourself, so that you are fully present for your clients/students/patients/people.
- share this information with colleagues and leaders in your organization and profession.
- thoughtfully apply this learning within your professional and personal settings.

**What is Trauma?** (from the SAMHSA Trauma-Informed Approach): “Individual trauma results from an **event**, a series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse **effects** on the individuals’ functioning and social, emotional or spiritual well-being.” The same events can have very different impacts on the people experiencing them. In adulthood, trauma can result in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other effects. .

**Stress** that is chronic can become toxic, due to exposure to the “stress hormone” cortisol. Experiences like Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and other ongoing, unresolved stressors can result in effects on brain development, behavior, physical health and mental health in early childhood and beyond.

**The 4 Rs:** In embracing this information, we hope you will follow these “4 Rs” (from the SAMHSA Trauma-Informed Approach) to help build a Resilient Flathead:

- Realize the widespread impact of complex stress and trauma, and the paths to recovery
- Recognize signs and symptoms in yourself, your clients/students/patients, their families, staff, and others
- Respond with trauma-informed policies, procedures and practices
- Resist re-traumatizing clients/students/patients, their families, staff, and others

**What can you do?** There is no easy, one-size-fits-all solution to becoming trauma-informed.

- Can *you* be the consistent, caring person in the life of a child or adult in need of support?
- Can *you* see how the impact of complex stress and trauma might explain a lot about human behavior, including how those we work with act and respond?
- Can *you* be more understanding and compassionate toward others?
- Can *you* help others in your organization, personal life and community understand and embrace this information?

**Apply the PAPER concept\*** to become more proactive and trauma-informed, what should change with your:

***Perception*** of people – your clients, students, patients, customers, and colleagues/staff

***Approach*** towards people – your attitudes, interactions, services and programs

***Policy*** affecting people and how those support the 4Rs (or not)

***Environment*** to assess how safe and inviting it feels to be at your facility and parking lot

***Relationships*** with people and the community where you work and live

*Stay involved! Contact [flatheadbestbeginnings@gmail.com](mailto:flatheadbestbeginnings@gmail.com) for more information.*

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