

MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &
Community Services

DATE: March 7, 2023

TO: Human Services Commission Members

FROM: Leslie R. Miller, Human Services Manager
Parks & Community Services Department

SUBJECT: Creating a Culture of Equity for the Commission's Work Part III

The Commission will adopt their community agreements and group norms once finalized and have a short discussion regarding trauma-informed care.

Background

Community Agreements and Group Norms

At their meeting on February 22nd, Commissioners reviewed the community agreements and group norms presented by the Diversity Advantage Team at their previous meeting on February 7th. Commissioners were interested in adopting the agreements and norms for the Commission. Commissioners expressed interest in reviewing these agreements on a regular basis at meetings.

Commissioners were interested in having the third bullet begin with a positive verb like the other bullets. Staff offers the following edit to be considered.

- Listen closely with curiosity and respect
- Take a pause and breath, understand reacting vs. responding
- ~~Don't be afraid~~Encourage yourself to ask questions
- Provide everyone a chance to speak and engage
- Embrace moments of discomfort
- Consider how your own experiences and social status (race, gender, ability, class, sexuality, age) may influence your perspectives and responses to your facilitator, peers, etc.

Commissioners will have the opportunity to propose additional items to the agreements. Once all additions and edits have been considered, the Commission will adopt the community agreements and group norms.

Trauma-Informed Care

Staff will provide an understanding of equity and belonging through the lens of trauma-informed care.

What is trauma-informed care?

Trauma-informed care is a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.¹

Trauma-informed care takes into consideration as well that current service systems can retraumatize individuals.² Trauma-informed care shifts the focus for service providers from “*What’s wrong with you?*” to “*What happened to you?*” A provider creates a trauma-informed care culture when they:

- Acknowledge the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery.
- Recognize signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system.
- Integrate knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and seek to actively resist re-traumatization.³

Recent literature has highlighted that racism is part of the trauma that people of color carry with them and needs to be addressed. This is true for both clients and staff of color.⁴ The extreme toll that racism has taken on the health and well being of many people in our community is underscored by the declaration of King County government and Public Health – Seattle & King County in 2020 that racism is a public health crisis.⁵

¹ Hopper, E. K., Bassuk, E. L., & Olivet, J. (2010). *Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Services Settings*.

² Trauma Informed Oregon, “[What is Trauma Informed Care.](#)”

³ Mehschner, Christopher & Maul, Alexandra (April 2016). “[Issue Brief: Key Ingredients for Successful Trauma-Informed Care Implementation.](#)”

⁴ <https://www.chcs.org/resource/incorporating-racial-equity-into-trauma-informed-care/>

⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20211010214023/https://publichealthinsider.com/2020/06/11/racism-is-a-public-health-crisis/>