Trauma & Resilience at Work

CSW
CORPORATION FOR A SKILLED WORKFORCE

Our Work Supporting **Trauma-Informed Equity (TIE) Principles**

Organizations are increasingly recognizing that workplace culture plays a critical role in staff well-being, engagement, retention, and the quality of services provided to communities. However, many organizations struggle to move from general ideas to concrete practices that will create a healthy culture.

A 2026 McKinsey Health Institute survey of 30,000 employees found that 33 percent report experiencing a traumatic event that has affected their lives. Less than 50 percent of all employee respondents reported high levels of engagement, adapability, and psychlogical safety, and those experiencing trauma had even lower scores in these areas. CSW's Trauma-Informed Equity (TIE) Principles provide organizations with a framework for identifying specific practices, actionable ideas, and distinct policies to cultivate a mentally healthy workplace culture that supports employee well-being and productivity.

- **S** — **Safety, Acknowledgement, Respect, & Structured Interaction**
- **T** — **Trust & Transparency**
- **E** — **Empowerment, Voice, Choice, & Flexibility**
- **P** — **Peer Support & Belonging**
- **C** — **Collaboration & Mutuality**
- **C** — **Cultural Humility & Critically Engaging Difference**

Each principle highlights an important part of workplace culture, but they are not meant to operate separately. The TIE principles mutually reinforce each other: safety strengthens trust; trust makes voice and choice more meaningful; cultural humility deepens collaboration, belonging, and respect across the workplace.

Embedding these principles into organizational policies, leadership practices, and cultural norms can address and prevent staff burnout, interpersonal conflict, turnover, and participant disengagement. Putting these principles into practice can restore staff loyalty and innovation, reignite leadership, and reengage participants.

Examples of This Work

Creating Sustainable Trauma-Informed Culture Shifts

State workforce, human services and K-12 education systems play a critical role in helping individuals secure employment and access essential services that strengthen communities. However, staff and customers increasingly experience trauma, chronic stress and burnout, impacting well-being, engagement, and service delivery. CSW partnered with the Michigan NEAR Collaborative to design and implement a cross-agency Trauma-Informed Ambassador Program that combines training, action labs, coaching, peer learning and implementation planning. Ambassadors work to embed trauma-informed approaches into daily operations, leadership practices, and customer engagement. Developing Ambassadors across participating agencies creates a sustainable model for continuous learning, local implementation, and organizational capacity—ensuring trauma-informed and resilience-building practices can evolve as staff and organizational needs change.

Implementing Trauma-Informed Equity Principles

Even organizations with healthy cultures need structured opportunities to gather employee feedback, celebrate strengths, identify blind spots, and prioritize improvements as organizational needs evolve. Without a shared framework and structured process, employee feedback can become inconsistent, lose momentum among competing priorities, and fail to translate into a healthy workplace culture. CSW facilitated a two-part workshop series using our Trauma-Informed Equity (TIE) Principles to create a shared language and structured process for assessing workplace culture. Through guided learning, reflection, and dialogue, staff identified organizational strengths, surfaced opportunities for growth, and informed leadership priorities. The findings guide ongoing improvements to policies, communication, leadership development, employee engagement, conflict resolution, and employee voice.

Further reading

How to Improve Workplace Culture and Increase Psychological Safety at Work

Article | Published 2025 | Access this document

A Trauma-Informed Action Planning Tool for Improving Workplace Culture

Toolkit | Published 2026 | Access this document

Trauma & Resilience at Work Quick Guides

Toolkit | Published 2023 | Access this document

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