

Trauma Screening and Brief Education on Trauma Facilitator Packet

Step 1: Welcome and Engage the Client

Step 2: Introduce the Tool

Example Language

“Here at (*agency name*), we like to offer different services to help people with their overall health and wellness (*provide examples of services you have, if applicable*).

Many people experience adverse events in their lives. Sometimes these events are traumatic and can have long-lasting effects on the individual. We are asking all of our clients to respond to some brief questions about trauma, and then we’d like to provide you with some information on trauma for two reasons:

- Experiencing a traumatic event is much more common than most people realize.
- While trauma can strengthen a person, trauma symptoms can also negatively affect a person’s health and wellness in the present, even if the traumatic event happened a long time ago.

So as part of our services, we want to educate people about what trauma is, and how it is possible to change the negative effects that trauma symptoms may have on one’s life. With your permission, I’d like to tell you a bit more about this.

There is a questionnaire that we use for trauma. It is very brief. I will not be asking you about your specific trauma experiences. I will go through a short list of examples of some of the kinds of things a person might experience at any point in their lives, that could be traumatic.

This will only take a few minutes and you can let me know if you have any questions along the way. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, though, we can take a break before continuing, so please let me know if you want to stop, and I will stop. Is that okay with you?”

Step 3: Administer the Tool

Example Language

“Please answer the following questions as honestly as you can. The answers will help us to work with you to create a plan that helps you achieve your goals.

Sometimes things happen to people that can be especially frightening, threatening, or traumatic. For example:

- A serious accident like a fire, or a natural disaster like a hurricane or flood
- Sexual or physical assault or abuse
- Repeatedly experiencing yourself or seeing someone else being screamed at, insulted, or humiliated
- Being in a war zone
- Incarceration
- Having someone die unexpectedly or suddenly [like by illness, overdose, homicide, or suicide]
- Bad treatment or discrimination because of your race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or health status
- Homelessness

Have you ever, **in your whole life**, experienced at least one event like any of the above?”

YES NO

Facilitation Note: If the answer is **NO**, stop here. Score is 0. If the answer is **YES**, have the client answer the next set of questions.

Language

The next set of questions is around symptoms that you may have experienced during the last 30 days, related to the event or events referred to in the first part of the screening tool. **In the past month**, have you...

1. Had nightmares about the event(s) or thought about the event(s) when you did not want to?

YES NO

2. Tried hard not to think about the event(s) or gone out of your way to avoid situations that reminded you of the event(s)?

YES NO

3. Been constantly on guard, watchful, or easily startled?

YES NO

4. Felt numb or detached from people, activities, or your surroundings?

YES NO

5. Felt guilty or unable to stop blaming yourself or others for the event(s) or any problems the event(s) may have caused?

YES NO

Thank you for taking the time to complete this screening tool.

Step 4: Score the Screening Tool

Staff: _____

Total score of questions, 1 – 5 _____

Date: _____

Step 5: Transition to the Brief Education on Trauma

Thank the client for participating in the screening and check in:

Example Language

“How was that for you? On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being comfortable and 10 feeling really uncomfortable, where are you?”

Facilitation Note: If the client provides a high number, or seems agitated or disengaged, invite them to do a few deep breaths, keeping eyes open. Do this (or another grounding activity) with the client as you lead them through it. When finished, ask: “Where are you on the scale now?”

“Sometimes answering these kinds of questions can remind people of stressful times. One of the things we are doing is offering brief education to help people understand what trauma is and how it can affect our lives sometimes even long after the event. It should take somewhere between 6 and 8 minutes.”

Ask permission to begin: “Is it okay if I start?”

Step 6: Conduct Brief Education on Trauma

Following the brief education session ask:

“What was it like receiving this information? What stood out for you?”

Step 7: Introduce Psychoeducation Skills-Building Activities

Facilitation Note: If, after the Brief Education on Trauma, the participant would like to be referred to the psychoeducation skills-building activities, the facilitator can mention the following:

Example Language

We mentioned there are many things people can do to minimize the impact trauma may have in their lives. Our agency offers opportunities to learn more about what to do through:

(Choose the items that apply to your agency.)

- One-on-one classes
- Group classes

The classes help people identify strategies or skills they already have that they can use to reduce the impact or symptoms of trauma, and new skills to help people take charge of their life and achieve their goals. These classes are free, and focus on three things:

- What's important to you and what you want for yourself.
- How trauma may or may not be impacting you today in terms of reaching those goals, and
- Building your skills and tools to help manage the impact of trauma so that you can have more control of your life.
- The information and materials are very practical and can be used easily on a day-to-day basis.

How does this sound to you? What questions do you have? Would you like to try it?

Facilitation Note: If client is interested, begin the process to schedule an appointment or refer them to the staff who will teach the skills. If no, thank them for their time and let them know that if at any point they would like to try the classes, to please let you or another staff member know.