Hosting a Trauma-Informed Meeting

A guideline on how to use Trauma-Informed Principles to host a meeting

Preparing for the Meeting

• Send out meeting agenda 3-7 days ahead of time so people have time to reflect on and prepare for content, provide contact details, allow people to add items to agenda, or ask questions about agenda
• Have water and healthy snacks available- try to limit processed sugar
• Have fidget toys
  o Helps with focus
  o Have a few options- too many though can be a distraction
  o Basket on the table or few piles- Accessible to all
  o Options: Rubber bands, crayons and paper, stress balls, play dough, pipe cleaners
• Room Environment
  o Be mindful of space- too big or small?
  o Ensure there is access to the door o Seating- not too close
  o Temperature and ventilation
  o Noise pollution and/or privacy
  o Outside distractions and potential interruptions
  o When variables can’t be controlled- debrief the group on what things may come up

Starting the Meeting

• Description of expectations and reminders about caring for yourself
  o Length of meeting
  o Moving around to be comfortable- standing, walking, stretching
  o Directions to restrooms
  o Break times, however can leave when needed
• Right brain activity
  o Icebreaker or sharing
  o People can connect before moving into content
  o Remind people that they can “pass”
  o Model the game to set clear expectations
Activities should not include touching or revealing personal trauma information

During the Meeting

- Think about materials and different learning styles
  - Many formats as possible: paper, screen, etc.
  - Provide materials in advance
  - Explain concepts through text, visuals and verbal means
- Language
  - Explain acronyms
  - Have a list of frequently used acronyms on the wall
  - Reflect on the choice of words that you use
- Take breaks
  - Have scheduled breaks
  - Let people know they can take breaks as needed

- Make sure meeting is over by the stated time

Adapted from work by Mandy Davis, LCSW, Portland State University