

## IMPLEMENTING TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE WITH MONTANA INDIAN HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS

### Who is Mountain-Pacific Quality Health?

Mountain-Pacific Quality Health is a nonprofit corporation that partners within the communities we serve to provide solutions for better health. We first opened our doors in Helena, Montana, in 1973. Since then we have broadened our reach to include Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii and the U.S. Pacific Territories of Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. We partner with health care providers, practitioners, stakeholders and patients on a variety of quality improvement initiatives to achieve better care, better population health and lower health care costs.

### What is trauma?

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) describes trauma as **events or circumstances** experienced by an individual as **physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening** that result in adverse effects on the individual's **functioning and wellbeing**.

### What is trauma-informed care?

Trauma-informed care takes the patient's experience into account at a clinical and organizational level. According to SAMHSA, a trauma-informed organization **realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; **recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families and others; **responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices; and actively **resists** re-traumatization.

### Project Summary

Mountain-Pacific will collaborate with **Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities, tribal health departments and urban Indian centers** to support comprehensive approaches to trauma-informed care. These approaches involve organizational and clinical practices in implementing widespread changes to address trauma and its impact on American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations in Montana.

Mountain-Pacific will provide project management services to facilitate the transformation process to trauma-informed care; engage tribal leaders and members in the planning and implementation; train staff on **trauma-informed principles** and approaches; design and track **workflows for trauma screening**; develop an **emotionally safe environment**; determine and ensure safeguards like **compassion fatigue training** to prevent secondary traumatic stress in staff; and foster **partnerships for referral sources** that can monitor and maintain the **ongoing mental and emotional wellbeing** of patients and staff.

### Project Outcomes

1. Each IHS service unit, tribal health department and urban center has **trauma-informed policies and procedures in place**, including staff training materials and guides for trauma screening, treatment or referral.
2. Indian health organizations' clinical and nonclinical staff **will receive training on the impact of trauma, recognize the symptoms and understand how to appropriately respond**.
3. **Indian cultural healing methods are accepted and encouraged** as tools to building resiliency and recovering from trauma.

# Approach to Trauma-Informed Care - Work Plan Summary

## Phase 1 - Year 1 - Quarter 1

### Governance & Leadership

Acquire support from leadership to implement and sustain trauma-informed approaches.

### Policy

Develop policies for internal organizational processes, and for cross-sector agency relations, establish protocol for referrals and other critical relations between community-based organizations and the Indian health organization.



## Phase 1 - Year 1 - Quarter 2

### Physical Environment

Support designing an environment that is nonthreatening, inviting, calming, safe and supportive through collaboration and shared areas and welcoming of cultural healing methods.



### Engagement & Involvement

Engage patients/tribal members in the planning process and assist with obtaining patient feedback on environment, trauma-screening tools and cultural healing methods.

## Phase 1 - Year 1 - Quarter 3

### Cross-Sector Collaboration

Foster partnerships with community-based and state or regional organizations that support a trauma-informed approach and encourage traditional healing as part of the treatment process. Facilitate communication with partners about goals and priorities for trauma-informed care.



## Phase 1 - Year 1 - Quarter 4

### Training & Workforce Development

Incorporate trauma-informed principles into the hiring process, supervision and staff evaluation.

Train staff on trauma-informed policies and procedures, trauma-screening tools and referral processes, deescalation, follow-up to screenings and support for trauma.



## Phase 2 - Year 2 - Quarter 1

### Screening, Assessment & Treatment Services

Assess the organization's ability to provide trauma-specific treatment or if they must refer patients to appropriate trauma-specific services.

Assist organizations with selecting an evidence-based trauma-screening tool and develop a workflow for implementation.



## Phase 2 - Year 2 - Quarters 2-4

### Progress Monitoring & Quality Assurance

Facilitate plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycles for trauma-screening workflows to assess implementation progress and identify weaknesses to address and strengths to maximize. Guide ongoing monitoring of implementation of trauma-informed principles, progress of tribe-specific goals, effectiveness of trauma-screening tools and treatment and referral follow-up rates.

