



Tribal Nursing Homes Principles of Trauma-Informed Care

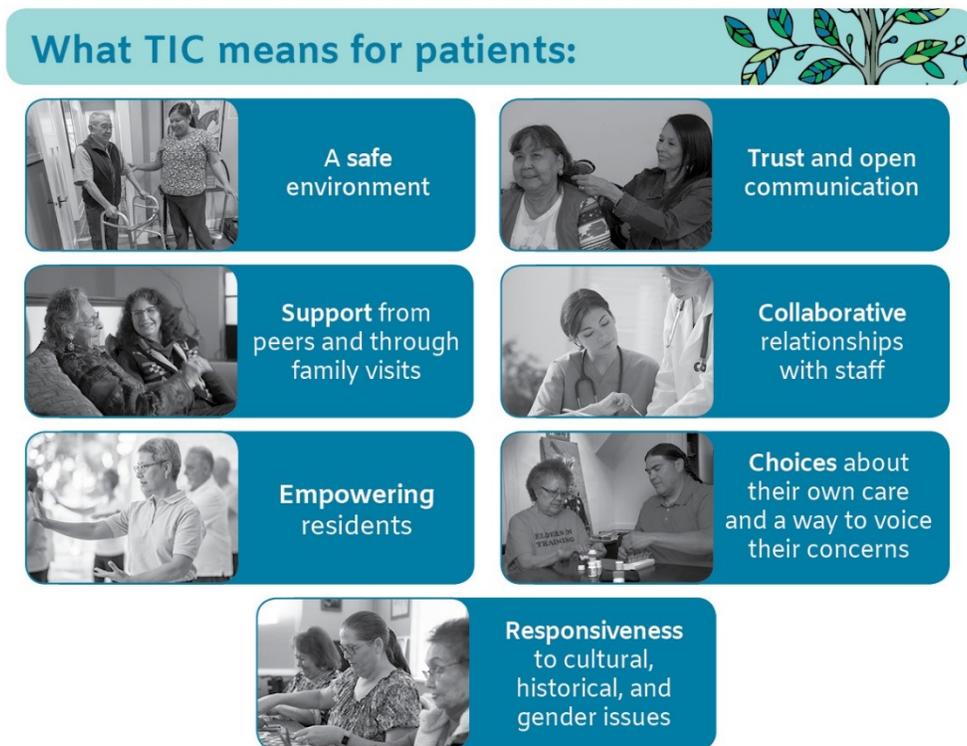
Trauma-informed care in tribal nursing homes

Research shows that AI/AN people experience trauma more often than the general U.S. population.¹ These life experiences often combine with historical trauma to create complex layers of trauma. By providing **trauma-informed care** (TIC), long-term care facilities can promote healing among AI/AN elders who have experienced trauma and be sensitive to their unique care needs.

What is trauma-informed care?

TIC is a framework for understanding the complex role trauma plays in a person’s wellbeing. This approach helps care providers adjust their strategies to improve care for patients who have experienced trauma.² The TIC framework includes seven principles, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The seven principles of the TIC framework



¹ National Native Children’s Trauma Center. (2016, Sept.) National Native Children’s Trauma Center fact sheet on trauma among AI/ANs. https://gallery.mailchimp.com/14c9b28176e2c0fa03209b9ed/files/NNCTC_Trauma_Fact_Sheet_9.2016.pdf

² SAMHA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions. Trauma. <https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/trauma-informed>



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Tribal nursing homes' approach to TIC

Long-term care facilities can incorporate each TIC principle without a formal TIC program. Experts who provide long-term care in Indian Country³ offered the following insights and recommendations for this process.

Safety

- Provide programs and equipment to help elders avoid falling.
- Monitor visitors to the facility.
- Promote feelings of safety in interpersonal interactions, such as by encouraging staff to:
 - Ask open-ended questions and
 - Be sensitive when they need to interrupt an elder's activity to provide personal or medical care.

Transparency and Trustworthiness

- Communicate decisions or announcements to residents right away.
- Explain any medical procedures to elders and obtain their permission before the procedures.

Peer Support

- Listen to the elders and encourage them to share their stories.
- Provide transportation for elders to attend community events.

Collaboration

- Ask elders about their life before admission to the facility, including past traumas, and tailor their care based on this information.
- Discuss the elder's care plan with them regularly.
- Encourage all staff, including those who do not work directly with residents, to interact with elders during activities and events.
- Have all staff introduce themselves to new residents.
- Accommodate each elder's desired daily routine.

"We try to accommodate whatever shower schedule they want, whatever time they want to eat, what time they want to get up...It's about what the resident wants in their daily routine and what they're used to at home."

Dr. Blythe Winchester, Tsali Care Center

³ Dr. Blythe Winchester of Tsali Care Center and Deborah Dyjak, RN, BSN, MS, with the Health Services Advisory Group



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Empowerment

- Empower elders to address their health holistically by helping them connect with behavioral health care and other types of health care providers.
- Inquire about and accommodate elders' language preferences.
- Ask residents about their spiritual beliefs and offer faith-based activities and spiritual support as appropriate.

Voice and Choice

- Offer multiple avenues for residents to express concerns, including a resident council.
- Give residents as much privacy as possible.

“If you think about what you want when you go into your home, nobody knocks on your door and says, ‘I’m going to come into your home and start cleaning your house when you’re trying to watch TV.’ It doesn’t happen in personal homes, but in long-term care, somehow, that type of behavior can happen”

Deborah Dyjak, Health Services Advisory Group

Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

- Ask about gender identity and any related health care needs during admission.
- Serve traditional foods.
- Provide activities that the elders enjoy, including cultural and traditional activities.
- Host Veteran appreciation activities, in acknowledgement that many Native elders are Veterans.

How facilities can implement TIC

Gaining buy-in from leadership is critical to implementing TIC in a long-term care facility, since they can act as champions to promote organization-wide change. Training caregivers and care providers is also crucial to implementing TIC across the facility. Since they interact with elders directly, many aspects of TIC, such as trust and collaboration, begin with them. The long-term care experts also recommended instating TIC by writing it into facility policies, quality assurance processes, and patient care plans.