A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed follows SAMHSA’s four “Rs”:

1. **REALIZES** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery
2. **RECOGNIZES** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system
3. **RESPONDS** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices
4. Actively seeks to **RESIST** re-traumatization

### What does it mean to be trauma informed?
Trauma informed organizations make a commitment to understand trauma, how to respond to trauma, and how it affects those they work with. Being trauma informed is an organizational cultural change.

Organizations that are considered trauma informed, have these things in common:

- Provide a safe environment, everything from well-lit parking lots and visible directions/signage to natural light, soft furniture, etc.
- Offer effective peer supervision
- Encourage all to find balance in life and work
- Promote self care
- Work to be transparent
- Ask, “What happened to you?” -- not, “What’s wrong with you?”
- Continually offer professional development opportunities
- Value confidentiality
- Promote recovery and resiliency
- Continually change to meet the needs of those they serve

### Keep in mind: Trauma can be caused by many things.

- Abuse and/or neglect, as a child or adult
- Violence
- Natural disasters
- Loss of a loved one
- Bullying
- Long-term health problems
- Witnessing abuse
- Generational trauma

### Keep in mind: Trauma is common.

Trauma is a nearly universal human experience, so it makes sense that everyone working with kids and families should be trauma-informed.

Nationally, more than 46 percent of U.S. youth—34 million children under age 18—have had at least one ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience.)