



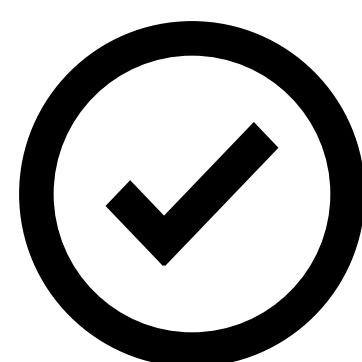
Trauma-Informed Community Network

Part of the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax

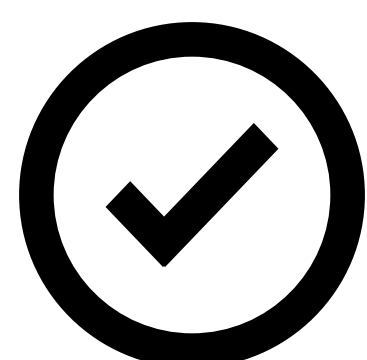


Using a Trauma Lens to Create Forms

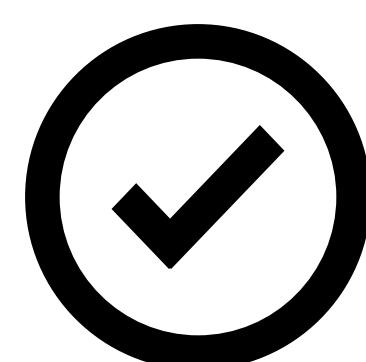
Agency forms can be overwhelming! We can help by...



Keeping forms brief,
and not asking
unnecessary questions



Keeping
language simple
and acronym free



Using ample white space. A multi-page
form with open white space is preferable
to a 1-page form with tiny print and lots of
questions squeezed together



Provide an example of a completed form if possible.

Complete a form to use as an example that you can laminate and provide to clients when they are given their own form to complete. When stressed or overwhelmed, having a visual guide can be helpful.

Our agency forms
often help clients
form their first
impression of us!



Are we welcoming?

Forms might include a simple statement explaining how the information being gathered will be used, and thanking folks for taking the time to complete them.

Are forms available in multiple languages when that makes sense, and do we provide access to interpreters or others who can assist when needed?

Do we provide a comfortable space for clients to complete forms?

Are we inclusive?

The way we ask for basic client information provides an opportunity to be inclusive and to demonstrate how accepting our agency might be, or might not be, regarding differences.

Asking for a Full Name can be more welcoming to folks from cultures where names that don't fit a first/last name format are common

Asking for a Preferred Name shows that we want to know what name people want to be referred to by

Giving clients an opportunity to identify their Pronoun is inclusive of LGBTQ2 identities, as is using language like Spouse/Partner as opposed to husband/wife

When asking about Gender, a blank line allows folks to complete the form without being limited to checking a box or circling male/female

We can acknowledge the diversity of families by using terms like parent/caregiver instead of mother/father

We can also consider where it might make sense to include an "other" option for folks to be able to answer questions in the way that makes the most sense to them

How do we view the concerns clients are bringing to us?

Language matters

Tone matters

Language should be clear, direct, and strengths-based. Not blaming, threatening or accusatory

A drug addict = A person diagnosed with a substance addiction or a person whose substance use interferes with their life

Weaknesses = Possible barriers to change or areas to target with supports and services

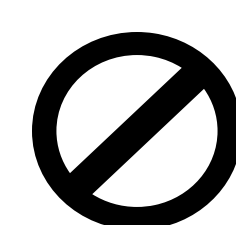
Resistant = Individual chooses not to...

Suffering from = Person living with or experiencing

Hostile / Aggressive = Protective

Offer clarity about program guidelines without reliance on threatening language.

Avoid words like mandatory, non-compliant, suspended, and terminated



"The expectation is that - - - - - . If that doesn't happen, - - - - - could be at risk."