



Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Approach

A person-centered, trauma-informed, or PCTI, approach realizes that many people have a history of trauma; recognizes how those experiences “show up” in Habitat efforts; and responds by centering the needs of community members, prioritizing safety, and intentionally integrating trust building, joint decision-making and equity into Habitat initiatives.

The core principles of PCTI include:

- Safety
- Trust
- Empowerment
- Voice and choice
- Collaboration

Research shows that person-centered, trauma-informed approaches have significantly stronger outcomes for families than traditional approaches to social services and care.^{1,2}

Trauma, adversity and housing

People experiencing housing insecurity often live with a multitude of stressors and have experienced a wide variety of adversities. Racism, classism and sexism often compound the stress of housing insecurity. Many adults have histories of trauma, including sexual, psychological or physical abuse and other adverse child experiences, or ACEs.

The term ACEs originated in a 1998 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study that documented the links between exposures to traumas and later negative health outcomes. Research indicates that as a person’s ACE score increases, so



does their risk for a wide variety of health and social challenges. This includes their risk for homelessness and poverty.^{3,4,5}

Over 90% of older adults have experienced at least one traumatic event in their life.⁶ Adults who identify as women (9.7%), those who have served in the military (up to 22%), and those who are Black (8.7%) are more likely to experience PTSD than white men not associated with the military.^{7,8} Given the prevalence of trauma, it is essential that programs understand how trauma experiences can “show up” and to offer effective ways for staff members to respond. As an organization committed to health equity, Habitat must position trauma-informed care at the root of our work.



Habitat's PCTI approach

At Habitat for Humanity, we value our relationships with the families and communities we partner with. Through generous funding from the Jewish Federations of North America, we are piloting a person-centered, trauma-informed initiative that will expand our capacity to deliver programs that are responsive to the needs of individuals.

We are working with three pilot sites – Twin Cities, Minnesota; Fort Hood, Texas; and Lake Sumter, Florida – that focus on older adults; Black, Indigenous and people of color, or BIPOC, communities; and those who have served in the military and their families on these PCTI activities:

- A yearlong training series to expand our knowledge of trauma, person-centered principles and trauma-informed care, with a focus on how this information links to programming.
- Individualized site assessments that examine our current capacity, including areas of strength and areas for growth from a trauma-informed lens.
- Development of individualized goals and targets to increase PCTI capacity with technical assistance and to help each site reach its goals.
- Review and revision of logic models to ensure program models are embedded within a PCTI framework.
- Review of assessment tools (i.e., application forms and homeowner surveys) to ensure questions are embedded within a PCTI framework.
- Development and publication of a PCTI toolkit that will include background information, handouts, tools and case studies on each pilot site for other affiliates and peer organizations to use.

¹ “The Impact of Trauma-Informed Suicide Prevention Approaches: A Systematic Review of Evidence Across the Lifespan,” *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, Aug. 8, 2022. (nih.gov)

² “Systematic Review of Evaluations of Trauma-Informed Organizational Interventions That Include Staff Trainings,” *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, October 2020. (nih.gov)

³ “Adverse Childhood Experiences and Homelessness: Advances and Aspirations” *The Lancet Public Health*, Vol. 6, No. 11, Nov. 1, 2021.

⁴ “Adverse Childhood Experiences, Overdose, and Suicide” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

⁵ “Examining the Association Between ACEs, Childhood Poverty and Neglect, and Physical and Mental Health: Data From Two State Samples,” *Children and Youth Services Review*, Vol. 116, September 2020. (ScienceDirect)

⁶ “Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Older Adults,” *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, May 14, 2013. (nih.gov)

⁷ “Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Statistics: 2022 Update,” CFAH.

⁸ “Race/Ethnic Differences in Exposure to Traumatic Events, Development of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and Treatment-Seeking for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in the United States,” *Psychological Medicine*, Vol. 41, No. 1, March 29, 2010. (Cambridge Core)

