Sharing Power

An Essential Element of Trauma-Informed Practice

Sharing Power is a deliberate approach to engagement with individuals. It seeks to combine knowledge and training of the human service professional with the lived experience of the individual receiving services. Sharing Power is as integral to Trauma-Informed Care as psychoeducation, narrative, or skills-based practices. When Shared Power is incorporated, individuals will be more invested in reaching goals, more satisfied with services, and more hopeful about managing life beyond the service relationship.

Respond to the prompts below

Enhanced Participation

Do you prefer to be told what to do? Or to work with someone who supports you to make your own decisions?
_____

Combined Expertise

Individuals are always the experts of their own experiences. What is one way to elevate their voice in meetings?
_____

A Focus on Learning, not Compliance

What is one way you can shift your approach from a focus on compliance to communicating the value and purpose of services?
_____

More Honest Communication

When you don't know the answer to something, how can you communicate that along with a plan to find the answer?
_____

Increased Compassion Satisfaction for Providers

Sharing Power limits compassion fatigue. How would sharing power improve your sense of meaning in the work you do?
_____

When ⬆ strategies are used, they lead to ⬇ outcomes

Greater Sense of Empowerment for Individuals

This can look many ways. One example is staff as facilitators of recovery rather than controllers of recovery.

New Mastery & Independence for Individuals

In a Shared Power partnership, individuals are given the space and opportunity to develop mastery of skills.

More Enduring Change

When lived experience is counted as a source of expertise & is combined with the providers expertise, the sum of what the partners have to offer leads to greater and more lasting change.

Expanded Professional Growth

It is a form of wisdom for providers to recognize that each individual is unique and has something to teach. It is this wisdom that makes us better providers and lifelong learners.

Without Shared Power, it's not Trauma-Informed Care

DHS trauma think tank

Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Reflect on Your Practices

Place a check in the boxes to indicate a "yes"	Tell us more

Language & Tone *Examine your organization's written materials, advertisements, and outreach materials*

- ☐ Would you understand the information as a service recipient?
- ☐ Has a family member or youth partner reviewed the material?
- ☐ Is the tone inviting?

Intake & Registration *Examine the processes within your organization*

- ☐ Are the agency's practices designed to recognize triggers?
- ☐ Are the agency's practices designed to be both efficient and personal?
- ☐ Are individuals told why they are being asked for information and that they have a choice how/if they share?

Initial Meeting *Examine how your verbal and nonverbal cues can impact individuals*

- ☐ Do you ensure you are fully present?
- ☐ Do you make eye contact and offer a friendly greeting?
- ☐ Do you clearly explain the plan for the path forward?

Feedback *Examine the communication patterns that occur*

- ☐ Does the individual have a chance to ask questions?
- ☐ Are assessments/evaluations free of jargon?
- ☐ Do you provide time for individuals to provide feedback on services?

Decision Making *Examine how the agency makes plans with individuals*

- ☐ Do you and the individuals you serve plan goals together?
- ☐ Do you encourage open communication about what is and isn't working?
- ☐ Do you celebrate strengths with individuals?

Navigating Obstacles *Examine how crises are handled. These events may jeopardize or strengthen the relationship*

- ☐ Do you have regular communication with the other providers serving your clients?
- ☐ Is there a clear crisis plan developed with the individual's input?

Ending Services *Examine the process for service discontinuation. It is as pivotal as the start of care.*

- ☐ Is the decision to end services mutually agreed upon & are referrals made?
- ☐ Are limitations on services communicated and is feedback solicited?

Consider reviewing the questions above with others in your agency and individuals receiving services. How does that feedback compare? Discrepancies offer a platform for growth!