

Action Brief – Supporting Staff in Healthy Workplaces

People, organizations and systems experience trauma when their capacity to respond to events or circumstances in their lives is overwhelmed.

- ✓ Staff often experience stressful situations in their daily work with clients.
- ✓ Job requirements may make it challenging for staff to support clients in a caring and safe way.
- ✓ Staff may not feel they are able to manage their own or their client's stress.
- ✓ Staff may not feel prepared or qualified to respond to client's responses.

A healthy workplace begins with creating a culture of safety.

A healthy workplace recognizes the impact of toxic stress on staff and clients and works to build a culture of safety. A culture of safety is based on communications that nurture mutual trust and a shared experience of creating and maintaining safety.

This culture is built through providing structure, connection, and support in the workplace.

What can supervisors do to support staff in a healthy workplace?

Supervisors can work to provide CaRE – Capacity Building, Resources, and Environments that promote healthy workplaces.

Capacity Building

- Provide training and increase awareness of toxic stress and vicarious trauma
- Support stress management and coping skills to deal with one's own and clients' stress

Resources

- Provide debriefing sessions for staff and support
- Provide counselor for staff
- Ensure appropriate resources are available for clients

Environment

- Provide private space for assessment with clients
- Break space for staff
- Assess stress levels

In addition, supervisors can:

- Learn more about trauma, toxic stress and healthy workplaces at www.familiesthrive.org and attend training workshops.
- Educate colleagues about the impact of trauma and toxic stress on staff, the clients they serve, organizations and systems.
- Be aware of what responses to trauma and toxic stress might look like and how to respond supportively.
- Make information about trauma and toxic stress easily accessible to clients, including placing brochures and posters in waiting areas.
- Provide referrals to other community resources as needed.

Create a safe, supportive, and structured environment for staff

Address workplace stress and vicarious trauma

Support staff in a culture of respect and dignity

Families Thrive, a unique Contra Costa County partnership, is actively supporting agencies and organizations to build more trauma-informed and healthy workplaces and supporting the people who work with children and families on a daily basis. *Families Thrive* is committed to linking key entities (families, neighbors, schools, courts, counselors, mental and health care providers, and youth organizations) and championing cutting-edge strategies to raise awareness, share insights and build community-wide support for families affected by domestic violence.

Join the learning community at www.familiesthrive.org