

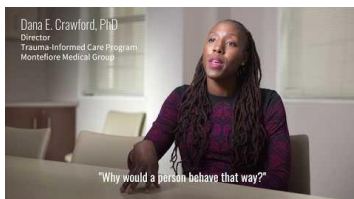
### Improving Retention Through Trauma-Informed Approach

Recruiting is an essential component of retention. It is the basis of forming a relationship that, in the event of a successful apprenticeship, will last for years. Data from successful programs like TechHire have taught us that building relationships from the outset is essential to sustained engagement.

To build relationships, YARG grantees should create a targeted recruiting plan specifically designed for today's youth participants. The plan should include strategies for establishing a connection with youth who are displaying the behavioral effects of past and/or present trauma. It is often this trauma, or the behavioral effects thereof, that cause disconnection from apprenticeship programs.

### What is Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and How Does it Relate to Apprenticeships?

TIC practices are most commonly used by healthcare professionals when treating patients with symptoms such as substance abuse. These same principles can be applied to apprenticeship programs. TIC begins with understanding the mental, emotional, and physical impacts of trauma on the program participant. Simply put, TIC is an *approach* represented by the question "What happened to you?" as opposed to "What's wrong with you?"



**TRAUMA** is an extraordinary event that takes place in ordinary life.

This seemingly minor change represents a major shift in how practitioners are thinking about approaching youth participants. It reflects an understanding that negative life experiences, such as abuse, impact behavior and create barriers to successful participation in programming if not addressed. Lack of commitment, depressive disorders, and difficulty focusing are issues often brought about by childhood trauma.

By implementing trauma-informed care practices, YARG grantees can better mitigate the effects of trauma which often lead to program disconnection. Some key points to consider when considering a shift to a trauma-informed model:

- Traditional approaches to case management (e.g., coercive interventions) can "re-traumatize" participants.
- Incorporate person-centered, response-focused holistic healing, as opposed to just mental illness treatment.
- Ideally the entire service delivery system should be grounded in the TIC principles.

Things to consider when developing a trauma-informed approach to apprenticeships:

- Create an environment in which apprentices feel safe, respected, valued (i.e., heard), and meaningfully engaged.
- Establish a "hospitality" mindset – serve the whole participant.
- Set expectations from the outset – for the program and for the career path/job.
- Use a retention advocate, navigator, or dedicated advisor, if possible.
- Assist with goal setting and follow-through with the aim of having apprentices take ownership of their career path.

### Tool, Tips, and Practices for Creating a Trauma-Informed Apprenticeship Program

- California Surgeon General and pediatrician Dr. Nadine Burke Harris finds that mindfulness practices can be a solution to the adverse effects of toxic stress. She covers three science-backed practices [in this video](#).
- The American Institute of Research (AIR) created the [Trauma-Informed Organizational Capacity Scale \(TIC Scale\)](#) so organizations can assess capacity to provide trauma-informed care, identify areas for improvement, and monitor changes in practice over time.

### References

<https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/4-supporting-victims/41-using-a-trauma-informed-approach/>  
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