One CMHC's Journey – Setting Up Center-wide Trauma Informed Care (TIC)

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PRELUDE: About a year ago, I was looking into the Trauma Informed Care (TIC) organizational model and realized a few things.

a. The model seemed ideal for Job Corps and some of the common problems we face.
- A large percent of students with trauma histories, behavioral/mood, and learning disorders.
- Early terminations or discipline apparently related to the above.
- Staff turnover.
- Student on student violence, verbal aggression and/or bullying.
- Both staff and students are affected by trauma and secondary trauma.

b. Being relatively new to Job Corps and having been somewhat exposed to bits and pieces of TIC for the clinical setting, I had not heard much about the organizational approach in Job Corps trainings.

c. I am not a TIC expert nor have the time to do this by myself.

THEN:

- Last fall I began discussing with my CMHC and TEAP colleagues, and then with my Wellness Manager and gained support from them.

- We sought out TIC trainings (some FREE) while working from home during COVID-19.

- Presented first training on TIC and social emotional learning (SEL) at residential quarterly meeting.

- We began collecting and analyzing data at new student input to look at ACE scores vs. mental health and TEAP relationships. This was used in our efforts to get buy-in from administration and staff.

- Began discussions with the Center Director and Assistant Director at our monthly Wellness Team meetings and were granted permission to present the basics of TIC in all staff training.

- Attempted to gauge staff buy-in at all staff training and surprised to find about 80% "would like to know more."

- Contacted Regional Mental Health Specialist to see if there was any history of TIC at an organizational level prior to my employment and asked for advice on gaining support.

- Center Director granted permission to form a steering committee to develop a plan to implement center wide. Split the team to consider ways to attract and train students and then one for staff.

- Presented training (via Zoom) on TIC-organizational approach to Directorate Team (i.e. top level managers) and asked them to provide names of committee members from their department(s) who would be passionate, able to define problem areas in their departments, and assist in "trickle down training".

- Currently, planning to meet with those teams to problem solve and provide resources to develop individualized training for their areas. For example, working with CPP to figure out how to train and provide resources to students on TIC at input via virtual CPP, and/or utilizing Google Classroom.

- Currently, we are thinking about ways to maximize technology, ways to attract student leadership and buy-in for the collaboration and transparency pieces, both now and after students return.