

CHAPTER 3

Section 3.7.1. Trauma Awareness and Trauma Informed Systems of Care Overview

In February 2009, the Michigan Department of Community Health(MDCH), issued directions for each of the 18 Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans(PIHP) to develop a five year quality improvement plan. The directions were outlined in eleven sections and one section was devoted to improving the Systems of Care (SOC) for all the consumers receiving services in the public mental health system. In the Application for Renewal and Recommitment, MDCH required:

The PIHP must identify responsible leader(s) and utilize a plan for developing, implementing, monitoring and continuously improving the effort to support a trauma-informed system of care. The PIHP must develop procedures for identifying individuals who have been exposed to trauma and to include trauma-related information in planning services with them; for inquiring about and respecting individual preferences for responding in crisis situations; assurances that each person is asked about crisis preferences, and their responses are available to all appropriate direct service staff. Finally, the PIHP must develop a written de-escalation policy that minimizes the possibility of re-traumatization, and includes reference to an individual's statement of preference for crisis response.

In the spring of 2011, a NorthCare regional project team began working to achieve the goals outlined by MDCH. NorthCare's initial focus, from 2005 until 2011, was to assure hope and belief in recovery transformed our philosophy and practices in providing services to our consumers. Now it is time to move forward in the crucial work of providing a safe harbor to individuals with symptoms who may be expressing their trauma history through the behavior that is bringing them to the attention of law enforcement, mental health, schools, foster care and other human services agencies. There is a significant body of research and material available about trauma, trauma informed systems of care, healing trauma, and healing the healers. Currently NorthCare does not endorse or follow any one particular system of care nor do we put forward any one model of treatment. The regional project team will assist in guiding staff and community members and the individuals and families served by CMH in creating a safe and trauma informed system of care. The documents outlined below will provide the foundation to guide the changes in our community to provide kinder and more effective trauma recognition, support and recovery.

The seven documents below are arranged to first provide a context for the discussion of trauma by looking at the prevalence of trauma in our society. The next three documents analyze the systems of care and how to improve them as well as forces that may create barriers to having a trauma informed system of care. The document "Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue" is a beginning exploration of the important need for healers to heal. The website offers protocols to assist agencies in their efforts to reduce staff burnout and compassion fatigue. The last two documents give extensive resources for further research and study. Updates will be added to the Practice Guidelines as the project team and local CMHSPs set specific goals and outcome measurements for improving trauma awareness and care in the Upper Peninsula.