

From Trauma to Healing: Building a Trauma-Responsive Learning Collaborative

It may seem like a small shift – from being asked, “what’s wrong with you?” to “what happened to you?” – but integrating trauma-responsive practices is a seismic shift in the way that agencies work with survivors of trauma.

In 2017, with funding from the Wilson Foundation and the Rochester Area Community Foundation, CCSI led a Trauma-Informed Care Learning Collaborative among seven agency teams implementing trauma-responsive practices in Rochester – the Villa of Hope, Society for the Protection and Care of Children, Catholic Family Center, Monroe #1 BOCES, YWCA, Willow Domestic Violence Center, and Monroe County DHS. CCSI supported these agencies’ practice transformation by leading learning sessions and providing expertise and coaching in trauma-responsive and culturally-responsive approaches.

At a recent gathering of grantees and funders, the agency teams reported on their successes over the past year. This included great strides in implementing widespread staff training, surveying staff and clients to inform change, and improving physical environments to be more trauma-responsive.

Instead of walking down a ‘dark and scary’ hallway, clients are now greeted with cheery murals. Instead of ignoring the secondary trauma they experience, staff are participating in self-care practices. These seemingly subtle changes can have a big impact.

Agencies report that change is difficult, especially systemic change that requires training and practice transformation at *every* level of an organization. But with buy-in from leadership right down to front-line staff, change is happening.

With CCSI’s Learning Collaborative, agencies are in this together. As one agency commented in a year-end survey, “Love the sharing of ideas and knowing we’re not alone in... the challenges.” Another reported that the Learning Collaborative provided an “atmosphere of mutual respect and support.”

The Wilson Foundation and Rochester Area Community Foundation recently announced that the agencies will receive another year of funding for this effort. CCSI is looking forward to continuing to lead the Learning Collaborative in 2018!