

LESSONS FROM MOANA: SUPPORTING CLIENTS WITH TRAUMA

What do you think is happening in these scenes?



**"I know your name.
They have stolen the heart from inside you,
But this does not define you.
This is not who you are.
You know who you are."**

-Moana singing to Te Kā



Use the following checklist to indicate which trauma informed service strategies Moana used in the scenes depicted above. Be prepared to explain your selections.

TRAUMA INFORMED SERVICES CHECKLIST

- Build a sense of safety and trust.
- Provide stability.
- Empower your clients and inform/remind them they have a choice.
- Collaborate with your clients.
- Shift your perspective from “What is wrong with this person?” to “What has happened to this person?”
- Consider your client’s cultural background.
 - Use culturally appropriate terminology with your clients.
 - Understand similarities and differences you share.
 - Understand areas you may be able to build rapport.
 - Understand areas you may have blind spots?
 - Shift the power in the relationship in a culturally appropriate way.
- Set appropriate boundaries (fences, not walls)
 - Remove yourself and your client from the Trauma Roles Triangle
 - Be calm, direct, and supportive.
 - Express appropriate empathy and acknowledge their experience.
(Empathy versus sympathy, empathy versus pity)
 - Set aside time for the intake, explain timeframe.
 - Do not promise something outside of your control.
- Assume a history of trauma without asking.
- Neutral facial expressions
- Be aware of your body language, use mirroring.
- Active listening
- Silence is ok, sometimes it is necessary.
- Learn about your clients apart from their trauma.
- Validate your clients and use validating language:
 - “I respect the steps you’ve taken.”
 - “I know this is hard, but it is important.”
 - “We can take a short break any time, just let me know.”
 - “This is not your fault.”
- Practice non-judgmental responses that encourage clients to continue talking.
- Acknowledge and thank your client for sharing the traumatic event.
- Be a guide shining a light and hold hope for your client until they can hold it for themselves.
- One question at a time and clarify what you do not understand.
- Explain in advance why you are asking about a difficult subject.
- Try not to ask “why” questions as they are often felt as victim-blaming.
If necessary, explain why you are asking.
- Open ended vs. closed ended questions