What Does It Mean to be a Trauma-Informed Camp?
Based on Concepts Used by Trauma-Informed Schools

What does “Trauma-Informed” mean?

- It’s understanding the prevalence of trauma, its impact upon an individual, and acting in a manner that’s supportive to those who have experienced trauma.

How prevalent is trauma among kids?

- 26% of children in the U.S. will witness or experience a traumatic event before they turn four.
- Four of every 10 U.S. children say they experienced a physical assault during the past year; one in 10 received an assault-related injury.
- 1 in 5 children witness violence in their family or the neighborhood during the previous year.
- Nearly 14% of children repeatedly experienced maltreatment by a caregiver, including nearly 4% who experienced physical abuse.
- 1 in 4 children was the victim of robbery, vandalism or theft during the previous year.
- More than 13% of children reported being physically bullied while more than 1 in 3 said they had been emotionally bullied.
- 60% of adults report experiencing abuse or other difficult family circumstances during childhood.


What are the characteristics of a trauma-informed camp?

- Caregivers have capacity & skills to be supportive
- Staff: Examine camper activities to identify and adapt components that may trigger trauma feelings or behavior.
- Fundamental principles of a trauma informed (sensitive) camp
- Empowerment & resiliency
- Shifts perspective
- Comprehend the prevalence & impact of trauma
- Use relationships to heal & build camp connectedness
- Ex: Campers are consistently reminded to let someone know if a camp experience makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Ex: When caring for people, the camp nurse consistently asks open-ended questions such as “How are you doing with being here at camp?”
- Ex: The camp experience is designed to strengthen the external assets needed by youth while also supporting development of their internal assets.
- Ex: Rather than asking, “What’s wrong with you?”, staff ask, “What do you need?”