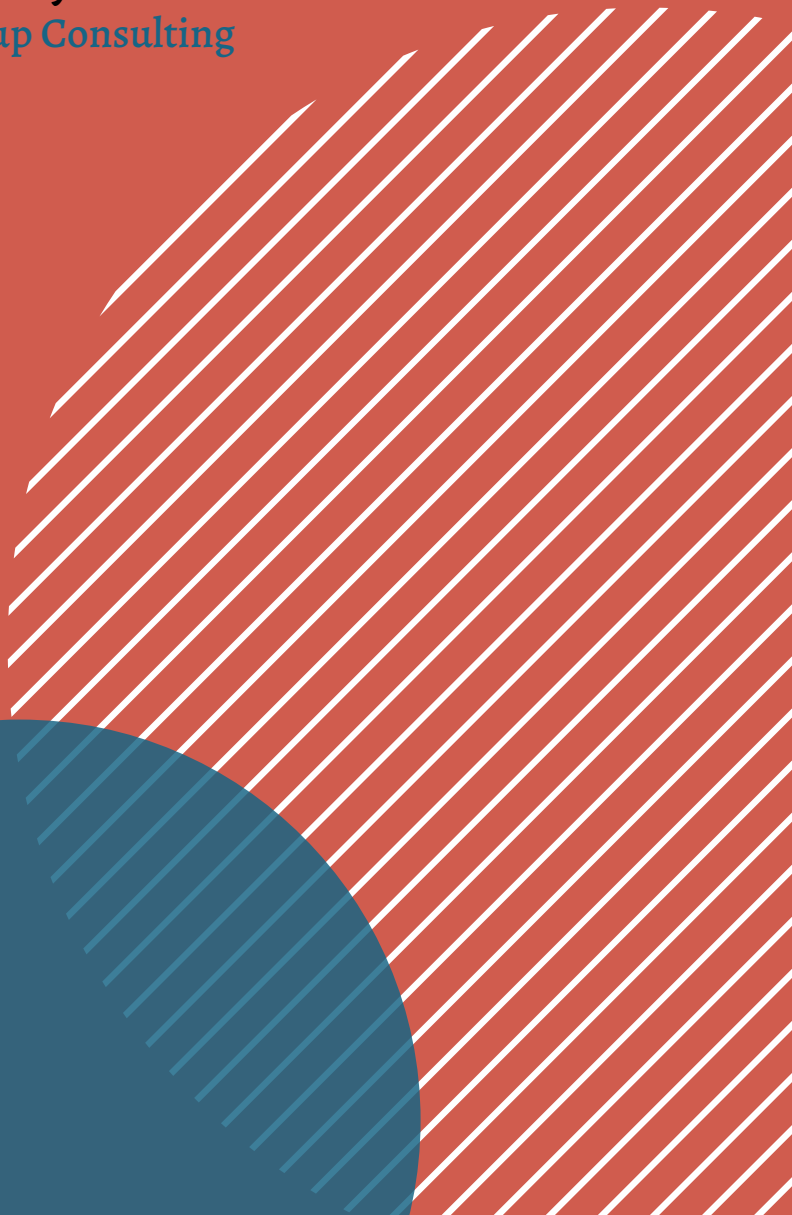
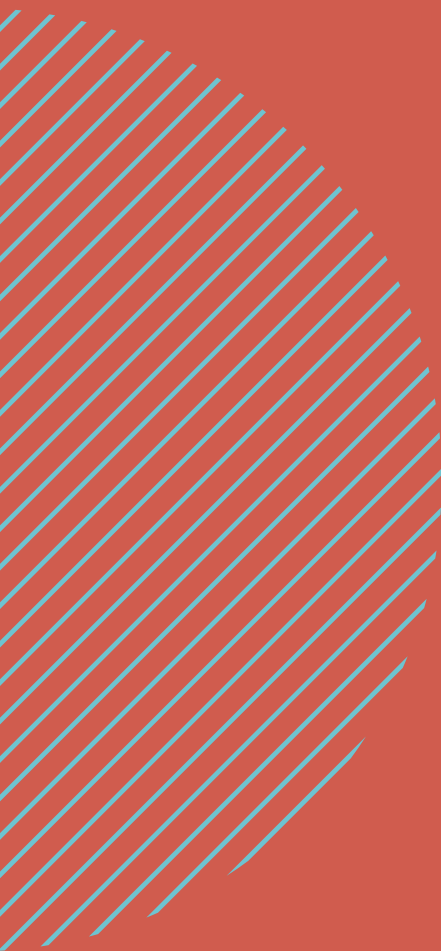


# TIO STRATEGY EVALUATION REPORT 2020

**Prepared For**  
**Southern Kenai Peninsula Resilience Coalition**

**Prepared By**  
Wellspring Group Consulting



# THANK YOU

The SKPRC Project Team collaborated to develop the questions and approach for this TIO strategy evaluation. Hannah Gustafson and Susie Amundson offered invaluable insights into setting data priorities, crafting the protocol, and supporting the methodology.

Five individuals participated in an individual interview and six individuals participated in a focus group discussion. During these two discussions, participants expanded upon the support that they received as part of the SKPRC's TIO strategy. Their stories, insights, and time are treasured—and reflected in this report.

**Bonita Banks**, *South Peninsula Hospital*

**Catriona Reynolds**, *Kachemak Bay Family Planning Services*

**Ingrid Harrald**, *Flex High School*

**Jay Bechtol**, *South Peninsula Behavioral Health Services*

**Jillian Lush**, *Sprout Family Services*

**Ronnie Leach**, *Haven House*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Southern Kenai Peninsula Resilience Coalition (SKPRC) has a vision that “Communities on the Southern Kenai Peninsula cultivate healthy relationships and resilient families, free from violence and substance abuse”. In service of this goal, the SKPRC has developed a three-pronged approach: (1) ACES Communications; (2) Expanding and Supporting the Network of Trauma-Informed Organizations (TIO); and (3) Spreading the Power of Protective Factors. This report focuses on strategy #2: Expanding and Supporting the Network of Trauma-Informed Organizations (TIO) as implemented during Year One.

Further, this evaluation report focused its examination on the following key evaluation questions: What changes were made in the established and new organizations? Which organizational practices are in place today to sustain and advance TIO efforts? Five individual interviews and one focus group discussion yielded rich data that will serve to guide decision-making for subsequent years of the TIO strategy.

Because of the emergence of COVID-19 during the initial start up of the original TIO strategy, the SKPRC Leadership Team, together with the Project Manager, pivoted to create a flexible and adaptive response to the crisis, while supporting the goals and work of the existing and new TIO organizations. To that end, Kindred Consulting was hired to provide some combination of coaching, consulting, training, facilitation, assessment, policy support services, and peer support to the organizations. This report details the changes made to the new and existing organizations and addresses the organizational practices in place to sustain and advance TIO efforts. As a result of 130 hours of Kindred Consulting support, 63 individuals were trained within a trauma-informed approach and framework.

Changes that were made to the established and new organizations include:

- Increased staff buy in to the trauma informed approach across organizations;
- New or refined trauma informed policies across organizations;
- Increased trauma informed awareness and training for staff, Boards, and Executive Directors
- Organizational leadership supported through COVID-19

Organizational practices in place today to sustain and advance TIO efforts include:

- Collaboration across organizations through a sense of safety and connection;
- Cultivating an inspired workforce through transparency and trust;
- Engagement, focus, and commitment to TI work: staff, Boards, and Executive Directors;
- Organizational-specific strategies & practices to move TI work forward

The remainder of this report contains the detailed reflections of the interview and focus group discussion participants who received TIO support.

# CONTEXT

The Southern Kenai Peninsula Resilience Coalition (SKPRC) has a vision that “Communities on the Southern Kenai Peninsula cultivate healthy relationships and resilient families, free from violence and substance abuse”. To that end, the SKPRC was awarded a Comprehensive Behavioral Health Prevention and Early Intervention Services Grant from the Division of Behavioral Health in 2019. The primary goal of the project “Cultivating Supportive Adult Relationships with Youth in the SKP” is to continue to build a trauma-informed community. To do so, the SKPRC has developed a three-pronged approach:

- 1. ACES Communications;**
- 2. Expanding and Supporting the Network of Trauma-Informed Organizations (TIO);**
- 3. Spreading the Power of Protective Factors.**

The focus of this report is solely on *strategy #2: Expanding and Supporting the Network of Trauma-Informed Organizations (TIO)*.

The original intent of the TIO strategy is as follows: “A Local TIO Team will be a boon to community and will: **(1)** determine the best tools and training methods based on evidence-based literature and its own experience; **(2)** be readily available to train and support organizations face-to face; **(3)** will understand the local socio-economic and cultural terrain and challenges; **(4)** provide ongoing support to individual agencies and businesses; and **(5)** participate and lead quarterly meetings of a network of trauma-informed organizations in the SKP”. Planned steps to more fully implement the strategy of Expanding and Supporting the Network of Trauma-Informed Organizations include:

- Form a Local TIO Team consisting of representatives from two or more trauma-informed organizations to offer training, coaching, and support.
- Local TIO Team will determine topic-specific trainings (utilizing available trauma-informed resources), organizational assessment and change tools, and coaching/support methods.
- Local TIO Team will develop an approach for inviting organizations and evaluating the trauma aware readiness of interested organizations that provide services for youth.
- In Year 1, two organizations have already committed to the process as a “pilot” in order to test and evaluate the Local TIO Team’s approach. South Peninsula Behavioral Health Services and South Peninsula Haven House have committed serve in this first year pilot and become trauma-informed.
- In Year 2, three organizations will proceed through the process and in Year 3, four organizations. Both the faith-based sector and business sector will be tapped in Years 2 and 3. This graduated building of organizations participating runs parallel to the Local TIO Team gaining more capacity as they pilot trainings, tools, and coaching methods.
- In each grant year, the Local TIO Team will draft a schedule of trauma-informed trainings and support/coaching sessions with interested organizations.
- For ongoing support to the network of TIOs, the local team will lead and participate in quarterly meetings to sustain the trauma-informed efforts of the various organizations, bring new best practices to the conversation, and strengthen the continued positive relationships among these organizations.

# KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Together with the Resilience Coalition Leadership Team, a set of key evaluation questions was developed for the overall strategy. Specifically, for the TIO strategy, the key evaluation questions are as follows:

1

**How have the TIO tactics connected and engaged with new community members, organizations, and businesses in Homer?**

2

**What changes were made in the established and new organizations?**

3

**Which organizational practices are in place today to sustain and advance your TIO efforts?**

*For the purposes of this evaluation, questions number two and three served as guides, for reasons discussed below.*

# COVID-19: PIVOT

In March 2019, our worlds shifted and changed. In Alaska, schools moved to remote learning, businesses shut down or were limited to essential in-person personnel, and any plans for the foreseeable future had to adjust to a new set of parameters tinged with uncertainty.



For the organizations participating in the SKPRC TIO strategy, this meant a re-imagining of what training and support would look like. Trainings, luncheons, quarterly meetings—all envisioned as in-person events—had to be re-considered under the new constraints of COVID-19.

To that end, the SKPRC Leadership Team and Project Manager proposed bringing onboard a trauma-informed consultant to support the participating organizations during these initial months of COVID-19 adjustment. In April 2020 Kindred Consulting was hired to support the TIO organizations and strategy for the remainder of Year 1.

# KINDRED CONSULTING SERVICES OVERVIEW

## THE GOALS WERE:

*Using a TI lens, provide critical and timely support to organizational leaders as they lead through COVID-19 dynamics and transitions.*

~

*Identify areas of strength and opportunity for trauma-informed organizational development.*

~

*Ensure that organizational policies are aligned with a TI culture and responsive to COVID-19 dynamics and transitions.*

~

*Establish clear next steps for each organization and community.*

Kindred consulting provided some combination of coaching, consulting, training, facilitation, assessment, and policy support services to the organizations between May 1, 2020 and July 21, 2020. Between the services provided collectively through peer support and individually to organizations, Kindred provided 130 hours of support.

# TRAINING & SUPPORT

Utilizing the services of Kindred Consulting, the following individuals received individualized training and support through one on one consultation:

63



TOTAL INDIVIDUALS TRAINED

**SOUTH PENINSULA HOSPITAL**



3 STAFF

**SOUTH PENINSULA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

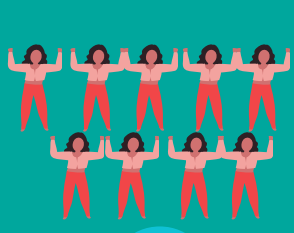


5 STAFF



1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**SPROUT FAMILY SERVICES**



9 STAFF

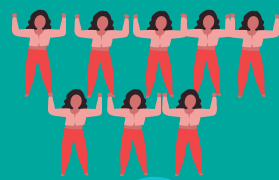


9 BOARD



1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**KACHEMAK BAY FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC**



8 STAFF



6 BOARD



1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**HAVEN HOUSE**



20 STAFF



1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



# INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS OVERVIEW

For the organizations participating in the TIO strategy, the individualized support through Kindred Consulting took different forms depending on the needs of the organization. For example, some organizations used their time to work exclusively with specific members of a leadership team each week, while other organizations utilized Kindred Consulting to train staff and Board members on specific topics.

The reflections below touch on perceived changes in organizational leadership, organizational policies, practices, workforce, and environment. Further, individuals were asked to reflect on the type of support that most strongly seemed to jump start, or re-invigorate, their TIO efforts. Responses have been grouped by themes within these categories.

# INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS: ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

## BUY IN

“If we're going to be a trauma informed organization, you have to have everybody's buy in. [That] is why I had the trauma informed basics overview brought out to my team”

“It means that as far as my leadership, I'm not, like, the tail trying to wag the dog...I've got staff buy in as well as Board buy in”

“I wanted everybody else's [staff] buy in. So to get buy in, you've got to include them and empower them to then take that back to their team”

## ENERGY SHIFT

“I think it's just energy towards it. I think it's focus. Focus and commitment, I guess” [Board training]

“It's like everybody's energized and committed, even if the Board doesn't even know how committed they're about to be”



## BOARDS

“The Board did the trauma informed training...So they're currently very engaged for that [trauma informed work]. So I'm trying to keep that momentum going”

“...for them to learn how they, at a policy and governance level, could be considering trauma informed [work] and how that is a key part to the success of the agency being truly trauma informed, making sure that they are agreeing to trauma informed practices in the budget and things like [that], I think I think they saw their role in it a whole lot more”

# INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS: ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

## ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP SUPPORT FOR STAFF

“We just spent the entire morning talking about what we can do as supervisors to be more supportive of our staff in the workplace. And I brought that up, oh, a year ago and I was met with [resistance]. Today people came with thoughts and ideas and things they've already started doing. And the little programs that they're running to try and be supportive and how we can steal from each other and build on what each other is doing. So it [went] from nothing...to that. I thought was great”

“Over these last months, that leadership team has really been talking up to the point where it's [trauma informed care] part of an agenda item. They're naming it and identifying when someone does something that's trauma informed care, even more unintentional. So it's just that ... [it] is really what's helping everyone else see that this is something that we're doing and not just something we're paying lip service to”

“...the value came from her sitting down with our leadership team as a whole and doing that work. I think that was the best bang for our buck on that end of it, so excellent”



# INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS: ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

“Having...someone there. So I think just sort of emotional support, and maybe even competence through leadership right now. Like, specifically, it's all surrounding tasks, to be honest, but, just somebody to review something or to talk through something with me that I'm thinking about or stressed out about, and she was really helpful about...she did a really good job of being able to talk through things. And then if she didn't already start sort of analyzing it with a trauma informed lens, she would bring us back to that”

## LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

“One thing that I have changed and I've tried to sort of embody in it different way that I didn't even really realize before, is about the principle of transparency and trust...I think that I have always been pretty transparent, but just not with so much intention”

“It broadened my scope, even though we're a trauma informed organization, it assisted me in reframing things that... I would have questions that I would question myself about”

# INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS: ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES

## POLICY REVIEW & DEVELOPMENT

“We had support working on our bullying and harassment policy...and that was one of the one of the action items that had risen to the top for the [organization’s] trauma informed care team”

“I gave [Kindred Consulting] a couple basic policies, ones that we wrote within the last year even. And she gave me tips and guidance in some language to use to help us in the process”

Kindred Consulting also supported the development of a policy of “debriefing after a crisis for staff--both in the moment and...within a 24 hour time period, just depending on the situation. And that’s also something that we’ve really been looking at and trying to figure out how to make that happen”

“...completion of some [existing] policies. And then I think that you can count the [COVID-19] mitigation plan...she did tons of work on that for me [in addition to another consultant]”

“...language that made the policies more trauma informed, which better reflects our intention within the agency for both for the staff and for the community. So, up to and including the personnel policy--which we did extensive work on less than two years ago, we [had] rolled out a brand new personnel policy-- and just had significant framing and language changes for that”

“Making sure that the new policies that we write are written in a way that reflects [trauma informed care], and...when it's time to review our old policy is that we review them through that lens”

Kindred Consulting helped one organization develop “a work at home policy. And we're not there yet. So that's going to be picked up again and revisited...knowing how to move forward on that with an outside point of view, because we were so enmeshed in [being an essential service provider] it has given me a broader perspective, and it's making me look at it and say “Okay, what really, who do we really need here”

Having “somebody to review something for me and find edits...sort of like operations support is what I would call that. Like, she helped me review a mitigation policy and asked questions that I maybe didn't think of... highlight things that I needed to still build out ...just finding details that I just could not get to. So that was one thing: tasks”

# INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS: ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

## SUSTAINABILITY OF TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

“So we just had a trauma informed training with an external [facilitator], how can we embed that into onboarding? And so the intentionality around being sustainable and continuing that. We're not just focusing on trauma informed [work] at one point in time, but it becomes something we're doing all the time”

“...peer support, what that could look like, and how we could accomplish it, was talked about a lot”  
“I think it's just energy towards [trauma informed practice]. I think it's focus. Focus and commitment”

## LIVING TRAUMA INFORMED PRINCIPLES

The “training was also an investigation of our organization...[we] also talked about the ways in which we do live the principles and the challenges that we have in living the principles. And it was a really open dialogue and I got to gather lots of information, but we all heard it together. And I think there's lots of things that we were really proud of that we're doing and feel really sort of, I don't know, like “gold star” about. Lots of the areas like, “dang!”-- it was validating to have somebody just kind of acknowledge everything that's happening. And then it also was, I think, really clear that there was safety in talking about the things that weren't there yet... no one's gonna be in trouble if they say like, “we're not doing something the best way”, and so I think that that was pretty cool to have that experience [with staff]”

“One thing that I have changed and I've tried to...embody in it different way that I didn't even really realize before, is about the principle of transparency and trust...I think that I have always been pretty transparent, but just not with so much intention”


# INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS: ORGANIZATIONAL WORKFORCE

## STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND ENERGY


“We say trauma informed care every other word. But...there's not a lot of evidence of it in basic practice...I think if you took a look at our overall practices, you'd see things in our policies, in our hiring practices, in our org chart and everything that indicate that we're just a bureaucratic organization...and so when you say that [to the staff] and the staff and go, “yeah”, to actually start thinking about it differently is the change”

“The workforce is more engaged in the trauma informed work, and that we are being more intentional about how to make that that sustainable within the workforce”

“And this experience for myself but also for the staff, I saw them becoming personally engaged and seeing it as part of that professional learning rather than just this checkbox of things they're trying to do for work”



“This sort of...energy focused on trauma informed organization, my staff are definitely energized about it and ready to go”





# INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS: ORGANIZATIONAL WORKFORCE

## STAFF VALIDATION & SUPPORT THROUGH EXTERNAL FACILITATION

“I think more people felt validated as managers”

“Having an outside source come in and do trainings, it really made the staff feeling valued and heard in an organization”

“[Staff] could ask specific questions because what I do is different than [other staff]...barriers from my seat are different from the other seats...because we have so many facets in our organization, so many different programs, that [Kindred Consulting] was able to hone in on that specific function and give feedback and ideas to that specific workgroup”

“I think one of the things that I know is that when someone else does the training, it goes better. If I have a new policy at the agency, and I roll it out, everyone's like, “yeah, blah blah blah”...And I forget that having someone not in the group running the group facilitator piece makes it so much better, because then all of us can interact as equals, instead of one. I was trying to be the leader and coordinate and move things along, and it makes our interaction so much better. And I know that and I forget that some time. So that was it—it was a good reminder that what I know is actually legitimate”



# INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS: ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Changes to an organization's environment demonstrated the least engagement for the TIO work at each organization. Because organizations had mostly shifted from in-person to remote work, the physical environment of an organization's space became less of a focal point during this time frame. However, when organizational environment was discussed it was in two ways: physical and social-emotional.

"Well, you know, environments are so hard to define right now because of COVID and remote work. I'm not I'm not sure that there was a lot of significant change on that"

"Our actual physical environment... Those have all just been on hold. In fact, our waiting room is now, you know, two chairs. Because we took all the chairs out and people can't come in anymore"

"In fact, some of what we were already doing were just identified as...working well as far as the environment"

"Well, if you look at environment as a bigger picture, it's just that attitude shift"

"I'm not sure that I could say there was a significant change overall for the workforce"

# EXPECTATIONS

“I mean, we were all kind of skeptical about [one on one support], you know, because of the work that we're doing right now during a pandemic. We were all skeptical that it was worthwhile, that we really had the capacity to do this. And so, even though I was skeptical, I took it to [the organizational leadership team], explained what was being offered. I mean, initially when [the Project Manager] first put it out there I was just like “yeah, that's not happening. Not at [my organization]” and really didn't give it much thought. And then it was like, “okay, I guess I really have to commit something to this and reached out to [the organizational leadership team] and they were both like “really?” ...they were just like, “what benefit are we going to get out of this?” And so I went back to the [SKPRC] Leadership Team and got a little more information, talked to [Kindred Consulting] and took it back...and we all agreed to at least give it a shot”

“You know, Boards are volunteers and several of them are in the medical field in town or, you know, being involved in MAPP type things in the past and trying to try to like say, “oh, we don't really need that”. And, like I said, thinking it was ACES or thinking it was going to be like the past trauma informed [training] experience”

“there's like a breakdown of a couple different options and ways we could use [Kindred Consulting] and I remembered feeling really strongly about one or two of those and the one on one like, “oh, yeah, I really am going to use her like that”

# JUMPSTART/RE-INVIGORATE EFFORTS

## RE-CONNECTING TEAMS DOING THE WORK

“Just having that one on one support for [my organization’s leadership team] helped jumpstart the whole process, because we hadn’t been able to meet for months because of COVID. And, the three of us really had not gotten a chance to connect. And normally we do on a regular basis, you know, if not weekly, then every couple of weeks to plan what will happen at the next meeting and... just doing the work behind the scenes. So just that piece of it was really helpful to getting us jump started. And because that’s how we did our one on one [sessions], it was just [our leadership team]. But as far as you know, the actual work...I don’t think anything else would have happened...if I had talked to [Kindred Consulting] alone...it wouldn’t have jumped started the process in the same way...And so that was that was just really important to get [the leadership team] together again. And then so following that, then we’re able to move forward with working on the policy and working on the peer support and working on the debriefing for staff. So all that followed, but the actual jump off was just that connection”

## ENERGY & DOING THE WORK

“[There were] such nice presentations and a great demeanor and [Kindred Consulting] was just so interested in learning about the agency, and the staff felt that was super, super helpful. I think that everybody’s had a really engaging, enjoyable experience. And so they’re viewing trauma informed [work] in a much more appealing [way], like, it was kind of fun, and it was interesting, and it was a lot about, like, personal growth and not just kind of work changing the agency practices”

## EXTERNAL VOICE

“The biggest thing to jumpstart was having an additional voice that wasn’t the internal agency voice and bringing that information to the whole team that, yeah, that was just super beneficial to have”

“But it’s I just felt like it started jump starting the process, I kind of felt like we were just kind of...circling in the process because there wasn’t really any momentum to get us into the trauma informed organization until Kindred was hired on board. And I think it was just because there was COVID, some other factors and people’s jobs, you know, change etc.,. So it was no fault of anyone it’s just how it happened. So this was able to kind of jumpstart us and made the whole organization feel like “oh, now we’re doing it. We’ve been talking about this, but now we’re actually into it”

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

“The only thing that I feel that was kind of promised or committed to that I don't think came through at this point was with sustainability. [Kindred Consulting] talked about making asynchronous trainings for new Board members, for new staff members, and then expressed that she kinda run out of time to put those together. But I, I really do feel that that would have some value if we could end up with that at some point”

“We have a once a month all staff meeting and our next staff meeting. We're going to start addressing some of the things that we identified in either in our training together or in or that [Kindred Consulting] identified in the summary report to me, and one of the things That we had talked about in the group now, but we also talked about it in the training was that we don't have any, like shared agreements about meetings. And so that's going to be the theme, or not really, maybe not the theme, but that's going to be something that I'm going to leave my next staff meeting with is that my staff will have identified what did it how it is that we want to start meeting and that was something that just modeled for us every single time in our group, but also in the beginning of all of her trainings as she goes over her shared agreements. And anyway, I think that it's really, really valuable that we have that and that they're explicit, and not just an expectation that we have in groups that we do with clients. You know, like, it's so weird that we have done that [with clients], but we haven't done it with ourselves. So anyway, we're gonna start there”

“And what my hope is, is that we will continue on with consulting support to start moving through the domains just like we did the principles, and then I'll start bringing one principle at a time to my staff, each staff meeting and then eventually a domain. So that'll last longer than a year to go through that process. So it's a big one, but I'm really excited about it and feel like the model is kind of blurring the lines again, definitely. But like the model that we had in those group, in those group settings is exactly what I want to do with my staff. So I'm excited about it, and they're gonna love it. I mean, it's like, perfect, perfect processing. It's like, yeah, it's just like, it feels so good. You know?”

“Yeah, for me personally and professionally, I liked the coaching because I've never had a coach. And what developed out of that was my Board is paying for Kindred coaching for me this year. Yes, so for me professional. So there's two, there's two lanes here. We've got me professionally and then we've got the organization. So becoming a trauma informed organization is different than empowering the executive director”

“It makes me wish that I had the frequency and the time and the space to like, be able to do that with my team every single week because it was like so grounding for me, you know, but I don't think that's, I don't know, maybe it is a possibility. I'll have to talk to them about it. And see, see what can work”

# PEER SUPPORT OVERVIEW

Over the 13 weeks of Kindred Consulting support, six individuals came together for a 1.5 hour peer support group. Together, the group learned and discussed the following topics:

- Week 1: *Trauma-Informed Principles*
- Week 2: *Trauma-Informed Principles*
- Week 3: *Trauma-Informed Principles*
- Week 4: *Reflective Supervision & “My TI Why”*
- Week 5: *Racial Equity*
- Week 6: *Social Movements & Innovation*
- Week 7: *Self-Care*
- Week 8: *Building a Learning Culture*
- Week 9: *Empathy and Saviorism*
- Week 10: *Gender Diversity*
- Week 11: *Leadership & Productivity*
- Week 12: *White Supremacy Culture*
- Week 13: *Peer Support and Reflection*

# EXPECTATIONS FOR PEER SUPPORT GROUP

“I remember feeling kind of panicky about supporting staff during COVID. And feeling really connected to some of the blogs that [Kindred Consulting] was putting out about how to handle COVID in a trauma informed way. And so I remember feeling really tied to that and thinking we would be able to learn from her and support each other in our COVID responses at that time. That's what I remember. feeling really, like I was going to get out of it”

“I think in my mind, we were trying to figure out how to get more support and buy in from upper leaders. Because in our past run through, that has been the biggest barrier for organizations to successfully start implementing. And so we were trying to figure out ways to involve the decision makers and organizations into the conversation”

“I feel like I was somewhat unprepared as far as I didn't have any expectations, and I felt our agency needed to be involved. And I recognized that no one else in the agency had capacity. And no one else had, like appetite for it, let alone capacity. And I kind of enjoyed the people that are in this room. And I was like, “well, I know how much I get out of other peer situations”. So...my expectation was that it was going to be helpful in some way”

“I don't remember having specific expectations other than I was hoping to get through it would, things would start to take hold, because I know our agency went through this process the last time and we didn't quite get our claws in it all the way. So I was I was hopeful that this would help me and our agency get our claws and I think that's probably the biggest expectation I had”

“I think I would have to admit to being more concerned about using the time...I didn't feel like any middle or upper management had time to even have a conversation with me about doing this. And I wasn't sure that I had the capacity to do this. I couldn't wrap my head around how it was going to really help me need any other help, but it was a good way to get the trauma informed organization jumpstarted because we had been talking about it, so I felt like that was a good push off point. But I didn't have any expectations. I was just excited about the opportunity”



# WHAT CHANGED THE EXPECTATIONS?

“It just shifted the energy..I was sort of going into it with...a little bit of a panic mode or at least responsive to panic happening at my organization. It was so grounding [to be in] the group, that it helped me be grounding with my staff. And so very quickly, I shifted from being very, very COVID focused to instead being trauma informed focused with my organization”

“In my mind, we as a trauma informed group had evaluated our last experience and said, “you know, some of these organizations struggle because they didn't have someone to check in”. And maybe we need a mentor that's going to guide them and be their check in and this experience, it made me realize that the value of not necessarily a mentor expert in the field but the value of peers going through the experience together, sharing that experience in those struggles and bouncing ideas. I mean, we always talk about teens; it's a stage where your parents aren't important and your peers are more important. Well, that doesn't change. Our peers are still important and getting their opinions and advice is really, really valuable and we just are so insular in many ways as especially you as an Executive Director type you know, that this is how valuable just being heard and listening and sharing experience can be and and kind of flipped to the model that I had thought we were going towards on its head and made the power of the group”

“It was just a really fun learning experience was one thing. It's like there's two separate things going on: just the pleasure of being in the room and being engaged in that and then also the benefit that what I was learning was tangible and practical and supportive. And, they could see how it was moving while we wanted to move forward as a community. So...It was two different things there; the process was fun and engaging and real. And then what we were learning was what we actually were there to do”

“It completely...like I got it, you know, one session, I was like, “Oh, this is what we can get from peer support. And yeah, I have to make time for this”. Even though there were many times where I couldn't because it conflicted with a State [of Alaska] call that I often had to be on.. it completely transformed what I thought this was about”

# TAKEAWAYS

“It expanded my thought process because I get honed in on exactly what I’m doing every day. So it gave me a broader view. It was really important to have that especially in the middle of a pandemic and all the chaos in the world. So to me was really important and like [another person] said...it feels necessary”

“It helped not feel alone in this process. And to have the problem solving was really helpful to get those questions from other people and just be able to voice you know, an issue that was happening in the moment in a safe setting with someone who isn’t involved in the problem”

“[I am working on] how, [in my position], do I bring us all together in a way that’s safe and vulnerable-and this is a tool I never knew existed and the power of this tool to be utilized in many different ways, where we’re struggling in, in kind of insular dynamics that we’ve created in our organizations. It’s like this huge breath of relief to have a tool where I can uproot how we can approach some of these things”

“...leveraging this experience into recreating it in another [large] group”

“I think one of the things that just was a hard take home for me was I really appreciate the whole idea of sometimes I feel like I’ve processed something and asked all the questions and this has been a really nice lesson of “have I asked all the questions that other people might ask”? Like that whole idea of bringing a problem to you and having you say, “have you asked these questions” is such a powerful tool because I, you know, I think of things through my lens and think that I’ve completely thought of it and now this has been a really good experience for me to say “okay, what are the questions other people would ask in the situation and it’s brought in my capacity to to process and look at problems”

“Everything we did in here was just either revealing or reinforcing.. I think that is the big one there for me”

“I would say a takeaway from me that feels really strong is the benefit of this being so, so useful and really, to me it feels necessary. Maybe because the outcomes were so strong for me as far as my ability, through the group, to then have my focus be on trauma informed work in the organization. And so it really lifted the priority I think, and focus”

“I think specifically for the grant, it does a nice job of really also tying all the work all the agencies are doing back to the grant. So it’s done a lot. I get a lot out of it personally but I think it does a really nice job of hitting that macro issue as well”

“We kind of just got started, but it’s not linear. It’s kind of circular. And so you could dig into it [peer support] in the same way that we did for however long that was, like I think close to a quarter, but you could dig into that for a whole year and restart and there would be fresh conversations and fresh information and fresh ways to apply it at the agency. And by that, I think one of the things I realized was that while I haven’t gone through this before, I’m still very much in the learner seat and not in the teacher mentor seat, in a lot of ways”

“I feel that I got an inkling of of, of how this could be embedded as kind of an ongoing lifelong process for the agency”



# PERSONAL GROWTH

“As far as my individual benefit, I think it was just like not feeling alone. And, that was both through crisis, through the pandemic, as a leader in the organization and also as someone who is trying to sort of strategically embed trauma informed principles into the organization that I work with. So it was just having the collaboration and the people that were supporting and investigating some of my assumptions, I think”

“A lot of what we did in the group was about us as individuals personal reflection, which of course then expands out into how to apply that at the agency. But there were several different elements that fed into my already personal interests. But help with personal growth around understanding, like, those tenets of white supremacy that I haven't seen before, but the various things that help and augment the work I'm wanting to be doing as an individual as well. I think that's the most I got out of it for me personally, as well as the wellbeing support of being with this group and having you know, there was there was at least one meeting where I was in tears in crisis and having that deep feeling of being held by a group. So that was definitely a personal benefit too”

“I think for me personally, even though I know and trust each of you individually, as a group, I felt like there was-- for me personally I felt a real sense of safety and trust in a group setting that...is kind of stabilizing and grounding and allowed me to do the rest of my work from a different place”

“When I think of personal growth, what I think of is, is it turning the concepts and ideas into practical usage? Because it's easy to stand up, say we're gonna be trauma informed, and we're going to think about the way we do things. Yes, let's go do that and sort of throw that out. But when you come away with my little list of the things that we are doing, and that we have already implemented, either by brainstorming by other agencies doing them or just by my practical discussion, that's been the hugest thing to turn thoughts and ideas into practical application for me”

# ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

“It helps with leadership not having to consider how to do things in a vacuum by myself and to hear other people's ideas of how they introduce some of the TI elements work and not having to create the wheel, so to speak at [my organization] alone, you know, and that someone you know, someone else in the room would have already done that work. So being able to learn a little vicariously from how that had gone from them and then adapting it and applying it at my work”

“I'd say like an increased commitment to the work.. I had that increased passion about trauma informed organization work and then being able to utilize the tools and modeling that happened in this peer group to go into the organization. And also, even just the ideas of doing that, where this group was meeting so frequently, you know, like, we haven't even begun to scratch the surface of what we did with with the rest of my organization, but just the ideas that it prompted”

“...the shared resources from each other, how we learned so much from each other and are able to embed [that]. And I already have done that in some capacities with some of the things that I've learned from you all in this group”

“I think with peer support, it just helped me be a better listener. And I'm a “get into the solution” [person], and it just helped me learn to step back and ask the three questions “Do you need me to get involved?; 2) Do you need me to offer advice?; 3) Do you need me to just listen?” But instead of solving the problem for a staff member or leadership team person, asking what they need before going in, so we don't have to figure out “what is the purpose of you coming to me? What are you looking for?” So it was real clear what specifically you need to do”

“[It was] a nice foundation for all the logistics and things that just have to take place. So...it did just boost [TI Work] in priority by having it the forefront of my mind”

# CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES, PRACTICES, WORKFORCE, ENVIRONMENT

“One thing that I started doing differently is utilizing visual prompts differently. So [in peer groups] we're always walking through a PowerPoint...even though we're here together and can see each other...But I just really, really benefited from that personally, because of the way that I learned; I really need to see words to really integrate them. And so that really helped me. And I think it's really a trauma informed approach, to be able to both hear things and see things and be with each other. There also was like, a very sort of “come as you are a sort of approach” and I think that that has been something that I really, really integrated and have brought to my team. And, again, that's just a very trauma informed approach. And...another thing [was] the learning agreements, so being really directed towards creating those with my organization and team. Those are the things that sort of stand out right away”

“And then I've integrated some action with the leadership team in just continually reviewing the principles and how management can help reinforce trauma informed principles”

“We've already done the problem solving exercise that we learned... as a team [at my organization]”



# COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

“This is one of the things I've been really excited about. That [another person] and I have often talked about sharing things and we've worked together [in a different capacity] for a long time, but as a result of this group, we're often bouncing ideas off of each other separate from here, too. So, I mean, that's been on my wish list for years. And I think it was a result of this group that we saw each other frequently enough that we realized that was a resource. So we are, we practice as a resource getting in touch”

“I know the people in this group and I know the organizations in this group, but this [peer] group allowed me to see the organization's soul. You know, like, what are the driving forces behind the decisions being made... I work with [others in the group] and so I know the processes and the procedures [of their organizations], but it's really good for me to see the living being of the organizations that drives those processes and procedures and helps me be the conduit for the [people with whom i work]. Because I...believe in the mission of these places, and I feel like I can be able to explain them...that helps me work with the [population I serve]. And, that's been really, really valuable for me”

“...just sharing resources, I would say is the biggest one I have”

“I feel like I understand the organization's so much better as a result of this. And so I know, “oh, I can go to [this person] to find out about the flyer that they posted for their staff so that I can adapt it for my staff or you know, vice versa...everybody has something that I feel like I've harvested or that I have the intention to when it comes time. So lots and lots of understanding and just shared collaborative efforts, I think”

“I just understand everyone so much better and I know what to ask for because I know that they've done that before. I think that we really know each other's strengths pretty well from this process...but I think my big takeaway is the depth of the relationships built...that's probably the biggest one for me”

“I work with everyone, and I know everyone, but I didn't know I needed that. And I felt like I really got to know [other group members] better, and I really liked that. And that was really meaningful to me. And, also, I got to learn how everybody's thought process works, which is different because I'm more of a mental processor and I think about things and then we know, like, something will spark it and then I'll have this idea, but I didn't know everybody has a different learning process and a thought process. So it was really cool for me to see that come out in group meetings”

“I always had a pretty strong collaboration and had particularly developed that through [other work] over the last more than a decade. But there was a different level of kind of trust understanding that came out of this that that has to do with that kind of “soul or that agency” or, hard to define [thing]”

# OVERALL

“This is like hashtag COVID silver lining! This is like the one group that I think actually worked better on Zoom, because it's a lot of busy people that have a hard time taking [time] out of the schedule...and then the vulnerability, it worked in this setting. So, I I do think it was a great format for it. And I very rarely say that about Zoom, maybe never”

“Our receptionist was talking about the saying “the dog days of summer”...it was like, April had 952 days and August now feels like it has 80 days. But the Kindred peer group was like, the silver lining in the dog days of summer, you know?”

“We've still been meeting and still been trying to be intentional about how we do that meeting and planning for what's coming next. And I'm not wanting to lose the benefit of this group”



# KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

## **WHAT CHANGES WERE MADE IN THE ESTABLISHED AND NEW ORGANIZATIONS?**

- Increased staff buy in to the trauma informed approach across organizations;
- New or refined trauma informed policies across organizations;
- Increased trauma informed awareness & training for staff, boards, and executive directors;
- Organizational Leadership supported through covid-19

## **WHICH ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES ARE IN PLACE TODAY TO SUSTAIN AND ADVANCE TIO EFFORTS?**

- Collaboration across organizations through a sense of safety & connection;
- Cultivating an inspired workforce through transparency & trust;
- Engagement, focus, & commitment to TI work: staff, Boards, executive directors;
- Organizational-specific strategies & practices to move TI work forward

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