

**CITY OF TACOMA | COMMISSION ON IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE AFFAIRS**  
**RECOMMENDATION: Implementation of trauma-informed policing strategies to TPD**  
**training module**

**OBJECTIVE:**

The objective of this proposed workshop is to provide Tacoma police officers with the knowledge and tools needed to recognize, understand, and respond effectively to the unique trauma challenges faced by refugees and immigrants. By implementing trauma-informed policing strategies, we aim to create a safer environment and build trust between law enforcement and these vulnerable communities. We also hope that city council can support this proposed approach to policing and make it a policy that requires every police officer to receive training and evaluated ensuring they understand trauma, the effects of trauma, and what trauma looks like for different communities to ensure that police officers do not re-traumatize victims.

**WORKSHOP OUTLINE:**

**1. Introduction to Trauma-Informed Policing:**

- a. Overview of trauma-informed principles and their application in law enforcement.
- b. Education on the impact of trauma on refugees and immigrants and its potential influence on their interactions with the police.
- c. Role playing scenarios of interactions between refugees or immigrants with police officers taking into account how trauma affects the outcomes and focusing on the importance of safety and avoiding retraumatizing the suspect or victim.
- d. Practical exercises to simulate real-life encounters, allowing officers to apply trauma-informed approaches.
- e. Feedback sessions to promote continuous learning and growth.

**2. Cultural Competency and Sensitivity:**

- a. Training on cultural norms, beliefs, and practices to enhance understanding and communication with refugees and immigrants.
- b. Strategies to establish rapport and build trust in order to effectively address trauma-related issues.
- c. Role playing scenarios of interactions between refugees or immigrants victims with police officers taking in account different cultural awareness and sensitivity while assuring safety for the suspect.
- d. Practical exercises to simulate real-life encounters, allowing officers to apply trauma-informed approaches.
- e. Feedback sessions to promote continuous learning and growth.

**3. Recognizing Signs of Trauma:**

- a. Identification of trauma symptoms and possible triggers specific to refugees and immigrants.
- b. Techniques to safely de-escalate potentially traumatic situations.
- c. Role playing situational de-escalation techniques and breathing techniques when experiencing traumatization.
- d. Practical exercises to simulate real-life encounters, allowing officers to apply trauma-informed approaches.
- e. Feedback sessions to promote continuous learning and growth.

#### **4. Effective Communication:**

- a. Strategies for clear and empathetic communication with limited English proficiency individuals.
- b. Utilization of interpreters and cultural liaisons when necessary to enhance communication.
- c. Practice identifying languages, speaking for interpreters, explaining next steps
- d. Feedback sessions to promote continuous learning and growth.

#### **5. Building Community Relationships:**

- a. Collaboration with community organizations to provide ongoing support and resources.
- b. Fostering positive connections and engagement with refugee and immigrant communities.
- c. Practice: Identifying partners, what they do, who to contact, conveying information to VOC.

#### **6. Accountability and transparency:**

**a. Establish Performance Metrics:** Determine the key performance indicators (KPIs) and annual performance review goals that will be used to measure the success of the training program specific to each topic. These metrics may include improvements in officer interactions with individuals who have experienced trauma, reduced use of force incidents, or increased community trust.

**b. Develop Training Guidelines:** Collaborate with subject matter experts to develop comprehensive training guidelines for trauma-informed policing. This should include topics such as understanding trauma, de-escalation techniques, communication skills, and empathy-building exercises.

**c. Design Assessment Measures:** Create assessment measures for evaluating officers' understanding and application of the training content. This could include quizzes, scenario-based exercises, or role-playing simulations.

**d. Implement Regular Assessments:** Conduct regular assessments to evaluate officers' comprehension, skill acquisition, and application of trauma-informed policing principles. Consider using a mix of written exams, practical assessments, and feedback from trainers or peers.

**e. Encourage Peer Support and Evaluation:** Foster an environment of peer support and evaluation, where officers can provide feedback and support to each other in applying trauma-informed practices. This could involve regular debrief sessions or mentorship programs.

**f. Implement Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish feedback mechanisms, such as anonymous surveys or suggestion boxes, to allow officers and community members to provide input on the effectiveness of the training program. This feedback can be invaluable in making improvements.

**g. Continuous Training and Improvement:** Recognize that trauma-informed policing is an ongoing process. Continuously update and improve the training content based on emerging research, best practices, and feedback from officers and the community.

**h. Monitor and Celebrate Success:** Regularly monitor the progress of the accountability program and celebrate successes along the way. Acknowledge the efforts of officers who demonstrate an understanding and application of trauma-informed policing principles.

**j. Periodic Program Evaluation:** Conduct periodic evaluations of the overall accountability program to assess its impact on officer behavior, community trust, and public safety outcomes. These evaluations can be adjusted and refined as needed.

This is just a starting point, the police department and all parties involved can modify the training to fit the specific needs and context of this accountability for the trauma-informed policing training.

### **7. Budget and Logistics:**

We will work closely with you to align the workshop with your budget and logistical constraints. We propose an annual two-day workshop, with a team of experienced trainers, experts in trauma-informed policing, cultural competency, and refugee/immigrant issues.

### **8. Expected Outcomes:**

Implementing trauma-informed policing strategies can lead to several positive outcomes, including improved community trust, enhanced safety, reduced re-traumatization, and more effective responses to incidents involving refugees and immigrants. By investing in this workshop, the Tacoma Police Department will be taking a significant step towards creating a supportive and inclusive environment for an all-inclusive community.

### **9. Recommended Professionals and Organizations in The Field of Trauma- Informed Policing:**

**MORGAN VANDERPOOL** is an ecologically and intersectionally grounded:

coach, trauma sensitive movement specialist, restorative practice facilitator and community builder, who has been in direct, or relational, contact with almost every system of harm & healing out there. <https://morganicmovement.my.canva.site/#about-your-coach>.

### **10. Conclusion:**

We firmly believe that the implementation of trauma-informed policing practices will not only benefit refugee and immigrant communities in Tacoma but also empower law enforcement officers to better serve and protect these vulnerable populations. We sincerely hope that you will consider this proposal, and we are available for any further discussion and collaboration.