

# Apply the 4Rs to Create a Trauma-Informed Approach in Nursing Facilities

Nursing facilities that Realize, Recognize, Respond to, and Resist Re-Traumatization are better equipped to provide care, safety and well-being for residents with a history of trauma.

Use these 4 key assumptions to develop a trauma-informed approach.

## REALIZE

the widespread impact of trauma

- **Realize Trauma** - Anyone can be impacted by trauma. Staff at all levels should have a basic understanding of trauma and be aware of residents with a history of trauma.
- **Awareness** - Understand the impact that trauma can have on a resident's thoughts and behaviors.

## RECOGNIZE

the signs and symptoms of trauma

- **Recognize Triggers** - Residents with a trauma history can be impacted by sights, sounds, smells or thoughts that remind them of a past traumatic experience. Recognize that triggers will differ for each resident based on their experience of trauma.
- **Facilitate Effective Responses** - Person-centered interventions should be a part of the resident's care plan that identify effective strategies that nursing facility staff can use when triggers occur.

## RESPOND

with a trauma-informed approach

- **System-Level Response** - Offer training and implement policies and procedures to create a trauma-informed environment. Nursing facility staff at all levels of care are responsible for providing a safe environment for residents.
- **System-Level Approach** - Maintain an awareness that exposure to trauma can be direct or indirect and affect everyone. Staff should be trained to identify secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout.

## RESIST RE-TRAUMATIZATION

by assessing the environment

- **Avoid Re-Traumatizing** - Anticipate and be sensitive to the needs of residents who have experienced trauma.
- **Environmental Assessment** - Evaluate the environment and program operations that could cause a traumatic response. A facility that recognizes the impact of trauma and puts measures in place to avoid re-traumatization promotes a safer environment.

**Reference:** [SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)