

Checklist for Trauma-Responsive Patient Engagement



NOTICE YOUR STRESS

- Scan your body for any physical or emotional discomfort
- Recall two actions you can take, that have worked in the past, to ease your discomfort



SUPPORT PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY

- Look for signs that the patient may be feeling unwelcome, stressed, or uncomfortable
- Identify actions you can take or things you can say to help them feel more welcome, calm, and comfortable
- Check your body language to adopt an inviting posture (e.g., making good eye contact, showing warm facial expressions, leaning forward rather than back, and keeping arms open rather than crossed)



COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

- Listen for comments from the patient that indicate their understanding of why you are meeting
- State the purpose of the appointment, share what will take place, and clarify expectations

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ENCOURAGE CHOICE

- Resist the urge to control participants' experiences or choices
- Strive for collaborative decision-making



CONNECT TO THE PRESENT

- Observe indications that the patient may be disengaged (e.g., fidgeting, staring off into space, pacing, becoming agitated, shutting down)
- Pause to refocus the conversation, check in on how the patient is doing, or offer a quick "reset" (e.g., a few deep breaths)