What is trauma?

“‘Trauma’ refers to both the event and the particular response to the event. The experiencing of, understanding of, and healing from trauma varies among individuals, because we all are unique and bring our perspectives and strengths to our experiences (Proffitt, 2010). Trauma begins when an event or experience overwhelms normal coping mechanisms.” –Building Cultures of Care, p. 4.

What are common responses to trauma?

Avoidance <---------------------------------------------> Hyperarousal
(numbing, distraction, physical avoidance) (alert, hypervigilant, flooded with emotion)

Intrusion – flashbacks, re-experiencing, rumination
May respond through retreat, self-destructive or other negative behavior

Why Trauma Informed services and environments?

Trauma Informed approaches are not designed to address the trauma impacts (though Trauma Specific services do directly work on reducing symptoms) but rather are a way to be aware of the trauma people have experienced, avoid triggering/traumatizing people, support individuals’ coping, and allow survivors to manage their trauma responses successfully so they are able to engage in and benefit from services.

Further reading:

* trauma-recovery.ca  * aces too high.com  * www.nctsn.org  * tiny.cc/CulturesOfCare