



City of Long Beach

Working Together to Serve

Memorandum

Date: November 19, 2019

To: Thomas B. Modica, Acting City Manager *T. Modica*

From: Kelly Colopy, Director of Health and Human Services *KC*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Trauma and Resiliency-Informed Long Beach (TRI LB)**

On September 18, 2018, the City Council requested the City Manager work with the Health and Human Services Department to identify best practices for implementing trauma-informed methods to the Human Resources standards. This memorandum provides an update on that request.

The continuous exposure to violence, poverty, and inequity can have persistent traumatic impacts on communities. Studies show that exposure to persistent trauma can result in higher rates of disease and behavioral health conditions. Persistent trauma impacts our community members and clients, service providers, systems, and the built environment. Organizations have the potential to either mitigate or exacerbate the effects of trauma exposure for their employees and service providers. The way in which service providers hold, process, and manage trauma will in turn have an impact on the experiences of clients, most of whom are trying to navigate complex systems while carrying their own traumatic load.

The Health and Human Services Department (Health Department) recognizes that a crucial point to interrupt the cycle of re-traumatization in community members seeking City of Long Beach (City) services is supporting staff in addressing the vicarious trauma they might experience regularly in the workplace. Vicarious trauma, also known as secondary trauma, can be described as indirect exposure to a traumatic event through first-hand account or narrative of that event. People in helping professions or who are on the front lines of service, may be at risk of vicarious traumatization.

In 2015, the Health Department launched Trauma and Resiliency-Informed Long Beach (TRI LB), formerly known as the Long Beach Trauma and Resiliency-Informed Taskforce (LBTRIT), a Citywide initiative focused on reducing the impacts of persistent trauma in organizations and systems. In 2017, the Health Department was awarded funding through the California Endowment and First 5 LA to continue the work of developing and strengthening a cross-systems, Citywide trauma and resiliency-informed approach to address the concerns in communities across the City experiencing high rates of trauma.

The TRI LB project goals are to:

1. Pilot trauma and resiliency strategies within two identified systems, the Health Department and the Long Beach Public Libraries (LBPL), to adopt policies and procedures that enhance the delivery of services through trauma and resiliency-informed approaches;

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2. Convene a diverse taskforce to advise and guide the development of strategies to support staff delivering trauma and resiliency-informed care; and,
3. Document organizational culture shift and the associated processes demonstrating how services are delivered and communities engaged for future replication.

TRI LB implementation includes three core components: Training and Education, Policy and Practice Change, and Evaluation. The staff from the Health Department, LBPL, the Human Resources Department, and the City Council will receive training on trauma-informed care practices, the impact of trauma on ourselves and our clients, and tools for building resiliency to maintain healthy, trauma-informed responses in our workplace relationships. Additionally, the Health Department and LBPL policies and procedures will be assessed for alignment with trauma and resiliency-informed approaches, and recommendations will be made for policy change.

The Health Department has contracted with Dr. Juan Carlos Araque, a researcher and professor at the University of Southern California, School of Social Work, to conduct a process and outcome evaluation on the implementation of TRI LB. The evaluation component is designed to help us assess how well the training promotes learning and implementation of trauma and resiliency-informed approaches, and the degree to which the policy change was effective.

The benchmark of a trauma-informed system is one that builds awareness and knowledge of trauma to shape policies and practices focused on reducing the re-traumatization of clients, patrons, and the professionals who serve them. The first year of this project was focused on creating and planning the TRI LB implementation, identifying the pilot sites, recruiting experts, and formalizing the governance structure of the network. Entering the second year of the project, TRI LB is focused on implementation by providing training to all pilot site staff, conducting policy review and recommendations, and evaluating the effectiveness through identification of performance metrics and evaluations. Training for Human Resources, pilot site staff, and the City Council will be prioritized and conducted in January 2020.

Thank you for your support and patience in this effort. A presentation to the City Council on TRI LB will be given at its November 19, 2019 meeting. If you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 570-4016 or via email at Kelly.Colopy@longbeach.gov.

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