Trauma-Informed Practices
for Supporting Others Through Adversity

What is Trauma-Informed Practice in Technical Assistance?

- Recognizing and responding to the broad impact of chronic stress and trauma in order to create a safe and effective working relationship.
- Trauma-Informed practice is NOT diagnosing or treating trauma (but it IS understanding how trauma impacts thinking and behavior and when a referral to a behavioral health provider might be warranted.).
- It is important to be aware of signs in farmers that might indicate prolonged and/or acute stress.

Signs to Watch For

- ➔ Change in mood
- ➔ Physical illness
- ➔ Change in routine and/or sleep disruption
- ➔ Memory issues
- ➔ Behavior issues in kids
- ➔ Change in appearance of farm, livestock, and/or fields
- ➔ Change in physical appearance
- ➔ Increase in farm accidents
- ➔ Avoiding or ignoring paperwork

Trauma-Informed care is understanding the brain and what farmers might be experiencing if they are experiencing chronic or extreme stress. Trauma is a normal response to abnormal situations. A Trauma-Informed approach changes the conversation from “What’s wrong with me?” to ***“What's happening to me?”***

Important Facts About Trauma

- Traumatization occurs when our internal and external resources are insufficient to cope with a threat.
- Fight, flight, and freeze are trauma responses and each can show up when you are working with a farmer.
- Plan for continuation bias, the concept that humans tend to keep doing things according to their original plan.
- Trauma can be related to an acute situation but chronic and repetitive stressors also contribute to trauma.
- Every person has an innate drive for predictability - uncertainty is painful and to be avoided.
- Stress is a well-known risk factor in the development of addiction and in addiction relapse vulnerability.

Remember the SELF Model

The SELF Model is a non-linear model outlining issues to address when working with people experiencing chronic or acute stress and trauma.

➔ **Safety:** Includes Physical Safety (physical environment), Psychological Safety (mind and thoughts), Social Safety (relationships with others), and Moral Safety (ability to live true to values).
➔ **Emotions:** Increase emotional intelligence and explain rather than express emotions.
➔ **Loss:** Recognize, honor, and grieve loss, which is at the heart of every trauma.
➔ **Future:** Cultivate hope and stay connected to people and activities that provide a sense of meaning and purpose.

Supporting Resilience is a Key Part of Trauma-Informed Care

- Encourage play and humor when appropriate.
- Emphasize the power of social connection.
- Get familiar with professional support that you can connect farmers with: therapists, doctors, religious leaders, financial experts, legal experts, etc.