

# Specific Trauma-Aware Strategies for Healthcare Professionals

- ✓ Remember that safety is both physical and psychological.
- ✓ Speak to patients at eye level so they do not feel physically intimidated.
- ✓ Provide multilingual information on where various rooms/services are located and offer guidance if needed.
- ✓ Ensure that responses to patients are consistent and respectful.
- ✓ Offer the patient a choice whenever possible.
- ✓ Have multiple ways for patients to let staff know if they are uncomfortable, scared, anxious, etc.
- ✓ Ask and wait for permission to touch the patient or their belongings.

(Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery, n.d.; Schulman & Menschner, 2018)



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## TRUSTWORTHINESS AND TRANSPARENCY

- ✓ Explain the what, why, and how of patients' care.
- ✓ Inform patients about what to expect before, during, and after exams or procedures.
- ✓ Let patients know which body part will be examined and narrate tasks and procedures.

## AWARENESS OF PERSONAL/SOCIAL CONTEXTS

- ✓ Recognize that life experiences and community background can influence how a person responds to trauma.
- ✓ Listen to and validate the patient's emotions.
- ✓ Ask the patient how you should address them.
- ✓ Ask and use the patient's preferred language to communicate, using interpreters when appropriate

(Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery, n.d.; Elisseou et al., 2019)



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## COLLABORATION AND MUTUALITY

- ✓ Allow patients to make decisions about their goals and care.
- ✓ Invite patients to ask questions.
- ✓ Learn about the patient's strengths and resources that have helped them manage past challenges.

## EMPOWERMENT, VOICE, AND CHOICE

- ✓ Inform patients about all aspects of their care.
- ✓ Maintain awareness and respect towards the patient's basic rights and freedom, including their right to decline treatment.
- ✓ Allow patients to invite a support person during their visit.
- ✓ Provide clients options about treatment.

## PEER SUPPORT

- ✓ Offer mutual support groups and peer supporters/navigators for patients when appropriate.

(Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery, n.d.)



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- ✓ Meet with patients when they are fully clothed, review the procedure, and answer any questions.
- ✓ Leave the room to allow the patient to change in private and give clear instructions on how to wear the gown.
- ✓ Allow patients to wear clothing on body parts that are not being examined.
- ✓ Use simple language and stay within the patient's eyesight.
- ✓ "Are you ready to start?" Ask for permission before touching the patient.
- ✓ Observe signs of distress. If you see any signs of distress, stop what you are doing, check in with the patient. Remind them they are in control.
- ✓ If the patient is in distress, validate the patient's distress, offer resources, and reschedule the appointment if needed.
- ✓ Leave the room so the patient can dress after the exam is over. Return and review the findings of the exam once the patient is dressed.
- ✓ Outline any next steps or follow up appointments.

(Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery, n.d.; National Clinical Training Center for Family Planning, 2022; Elisseou et al., 2019)

