

2025



# TRAUMA-INFORMED BUSINESSES

A Guide for Becoming a Trauma-Informed Business

Resilient  GEORGIA

## Definition: What is Trauma and How Does it Affect Businesses?

Trauma is a part of life, and it shows up in the workplace every day. Whether it stems from personal hardships, systemic inequities, or ongoing life stressors, the effects of trauma can influence how people work, connect, and thrive.<sup>1</sup> By understanding the impact of trauma and building supportive, resilient environments, businesses can foster stronger teams, enhance well-being, and create cultures where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.<sup>2</sup>

Unaddressed trauma and mental health issues can take a heavy toll on businesses, leading to lost productivity and significant financial costs. In the U.S. alone, workforce-related chronic diseases cost employers over half a trillion dollars annually, with mental health conditions like anxiety and depression contributing up to \$193.2 billion in absenteeism and presenteeism.<sup>3</sup> Globally, these issues add up to more than \$1 trillion in lost productivity each year.<sup>4</sup>

Trauma encompasses any extremely frightening, harmful, or threatening experience impacting individuals emotionally or physically.<sup>5</sup> Trauma can impact both employees and clients, often showing up as emotional or physical stress responses. Every organization interacts with people affected by trauma, and recognizing its impact can improve morale, engagement, and overall performance.<sup>6</sup>

## Why it Matters: Becoming Trauma-Informed

A trauma-informed business is one that understands the widespread impact of trauma on individuals, including employees, clients, and communities, and integrates this understanding into its policies, practices, and culture. Such a business recognizes the signs and effects of trauma and takes intentional steps to reduce re-traumatization, prioritize safety, and alleviate stress responses by **introducing resources**.<sup>7</sup> By fostering trust within their environment, a trauma-informed business not only enhances employee well-being but also strengthens relationships and improves overall productivity. This approach helps create a workplace where people feel valued, supported, and more capable of overcoming challenges, recognizing that those who have experienced trauma often demonstrate incredible resilience and develop skills to cope with life's difficulties.

By understanding the impact of trauma, businesses can reduce stress, enhance employee well-being, and improve performance.<sup>2</sup> Trauma-informed practices also strengthen relationships with clients and partners, building brand trust and loyalty. Ultimately, this approach leads to a more resilient workforce, helping businesses better serve their clients and create long-term success.

## Examples of Trauma-Informed Initiatives

**CliftonStrengths** helps businesses unlock employee potential by focusing on natural talents, boosting performance, engagement, and productivity. Grounded in positive psychology, the **Gallup - CliftonStrengths Assessment** reveals each person's unique strengths, encourages empathy, and supports a trauma-informed culture. Trusted by 90% of Fortune 500 companies, CliftonStrengths drives results such as increased sales, lower turnover, and greater profitability while promoting well-being and collaboration. For more information, contact Ellen McCarty at [mccartyandco19@gmail.com](mailto:mccartyandco19@gmail.com).

**Inclusivv** is a platform that helps businesses foster trust, inclusion, and respect through structured conversations. It empowers teams to engage in 60–90-minute peer-to-peer dialogues, both online and in person, that promote belonging and empathy. Inclusivv has partnered with **Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)** to tackle workplace incivility. **Inclusivv's Workplace Civility Solutions** and **SHRM's Civility Starter Kit** provide tools like the Political Conversations Playbook and civility trainings to foster trust, empathy, and inclusion.

**Rowen** is a 2,000-acre planned "knowledge" community situated between Atlanta, Athens, and Gainesville. Designed as a transformative, purpose-built hub— Rowen empowers businesses to create workplace cultures that address the unique needs of employees by fostering collaboration and innovation. This focus on sustainability, access to resources, and work-life balance aligns with trauma-informed principles, helping organizations build resilience and support recovery.

**Search Inside Yourself** is a mindfulness and emotional intelligence program developed at Google to help businesses improve employee well-being, focus and collaboration. It teaches self-awareness, empathy, and stress management to enhance productivity and create a positive, emotionally intelligent workplace.

**Mediation Center of the Coastal Empire, Inc** is committed to making conflict prevention and resolution services accessible through strong community partnerships and the power of volunteerism. Its robust training programs include General Civil Mediation, Domestic Relations Mediation, Specialized Domestic Violence Mediation, Probate Mediation, and Guardian ad Litem training. The Center also offers Community Mediation and De-escalation Training to equip volunteers and professionals with practical tools to navigate and resolve conflict effectively.

# Training Resources for Businesses



## TRAUMA-AWARE

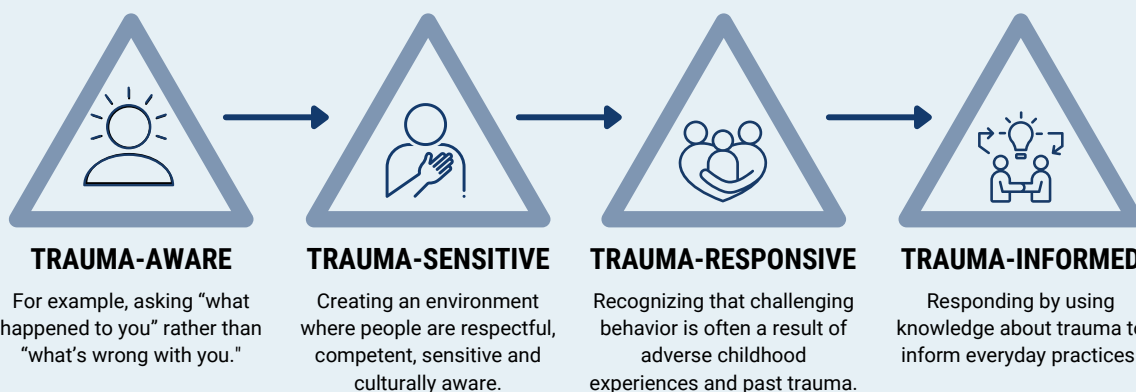
- **Connections Matter Georgia** provides in-person and virtual training to help businesses and communities build caring relationships that foster resilience, support healing, and strengthen organizational culture. The training explores trauma, brain development, and human connection, providing practical tools to create trauma-informed environments and boost employee well-being, engagement, and retention. By investing in stronger connections, businesses can boost employee engagement, reduce burnout, and contribute to a healthier, more resilient workforce.
- **LivingWorks' SafeTALK** benefits businesses by training employees to recognize and respond to signs of suicide, promoting a safer and more supportive workplace. In just four hours, staff learn practical skills to connect at-risk individuals with further help, fostering a culture of mental health awareness and care, which can improve team well-being and morale.



## TRAUMA-SENSITIVE

- **National Council for Mental Wellbeing's Adult Mental Health First Aid** trains participants to recognize and respond to mental health and substance use challenges. Courses are available for adults and youth, with options for in-person, blended, or virtual formats. For businesses, MHFA helps create a supportive work environment by equipping staff to address mental health concerns, improving overall well-being, and team performance.

*The trauma-informed approach is a continuum that progresses through stages. The stages of becoming trauma-informed are:*







### TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

- **CDC's Total Worker Health Training Resources** provide businesses with training opportunities to enhance worker safety, health, and well-being. Through webinars and events, companies can learn to integrate these strategies into their operations, promoting a healthier workforce, reducing risks, and improving overall productivity and employee engagement.
- **Center for Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC)** helps businesses by fostering a culture of self-care and emotional resilience among employees. By teaching individuals to manage stress and difficult emotions with kindness, this training can enhance employee well-being, reduce burnout, and improve workplace morale, leading to more motivated and productive teams. It's especially beneficial for leaders and teams in high-stress environments, promoting a supportive, compassionate work culture.
- **The Resilience Enhancement and Leadership Model (REALM)** is a training program focused on building practical, evidence-based skills to build resilience at the individual, interpersonal, and organizational levels. Drawing on proven programs like the Community Resiliency Model (CRM), Stress Management and Resilience Training, and Mindful Self-Compassion, this training offers tools for self-regulation, communication, trust-building, and value-based leadership.



### TRAUMA-INFORMED

- **Compassionate Integrity Training (CIT)** equips businesses with skills like self-regulation and compassion to align values with actions, fostering ethical decision-making and improving workplace well-being and collaboration.



## Mental Health and Trauma-Informed Resources for Businesses

The **Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice (CTIPP)** toolkit offers educational insights and practical strategies to help team members across all roles and sectors advocate for trauma-informed workplaces. It emphasizes that creating trauma-informed spaces requires a collective commitment to continuous reflection, evaluation, and reform, rather than following a fixed checklist.

**Mind Share Partners** provides businesses with comprehensive toolkits and guides to support employee mental health in the workplace. These resources include strategies such as establishing employee resource groups focused on mental health and implementing healthy work practices for teams. By offering practical tools, Mind Share Partners empowers companies to foster a supportive and mentally healthy work environment.

The **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** has introduced an initiative known as **StigmaFree Workplace**. This initiative offers a comprehensive approach to mental health such as health awareness, support, and community within businesses to support their employees. Tools and resources are given to businesses to increase awareness, culture, and access to mental health.

**The Trauma-Informed Approach to Workforce: An Introductory Guide for Employers and Workforce Development Organizations** by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions offers practical guidance on implementing trauma-informed practices in the workplace. It helps employers and workforce development organizations understand how trauma impacts workers and provides strategies to create supportive, resilient environments. The guide emphasizes fostering employee well-being, improving retention, and enhancing productivity by embedding trauma-informed principles into organizational culture and operations.



## Additional Individualized Support for Workers

- For those in crisis, **calling 988** will connect you with a trained counselor who can offer support and referral to appropriate resources.
- **Community Service Boards (CSB)** also provide a large range of behavioral health services – from crisis stabilization and substance detoxification to counseling and peer support services.
- **Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)** in Georgia offers many types of behavioral health services, with a focus on providing 24-hour crisis care, evidence-based practices, care coordination with local primary care and hospital partners, and integration with physical health care.

## What Can I Do Now? Next Steps

1. Offer Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) to your employees. EAP is a confidential, short-term counseling and support service to help employees manage personal and work-related challenges. To provide an EAP, employers can partner with third-party providers such as **Anthem** to offer accessible mental health resources.
2. Implement an organizational assessment such as the **NCTSN Trauma-Informed Organizational Assessment (TIOA)** that prioritizes a trauma-informed approach to training.
3. By taking the **Connections Matter Georgia** training, business leaders and employees can better recognize and respond to trauma-related behaviors with empathy and effectiveness, creating a healthier workplace culture. Encouraging staff and partners to participate strengthens support networks, boosts resilience, and reduces workplace stress. Learn more about sector-specific resources through the **Resilient Georgia Trauma-Informed Training Roadmap**.
4. Explore professional development and resiliency building programs like **CliftonStrengths**, and the **Community Resiliency Model (CRM)**.

To learn more, access our references **here**.







FOR MORE TRAUMA-INFORMED RESOURCES, VISIT [RESILIENTGA.ORG](https://resilientga.org)

Questions or feedback?  
Contact [info@resilientga.org](mailto:info@resilientga.org).

