

TIP SHEET FOR HILL TRAUMA-INFORMED MEETINGS



Before the Meeting

- Secure a quiet and confidential space for discussion. Since it may be hard to find a private space, communicate if this won't be an option and offer a virtual meeting for the survivor
- Communicate clearly who will attend the meeting.
- Set aside the time to be free from distractions and be clear about time restrictions/end times.

During the Meeting

- Focus on the experience of the survivor rather than problem solving/problem identification.
- Consider the seating arrangement and how survivors might perceive it. For example, try not to have anyone sitting directly behind survivors as this can add to anxiety.
- Be present and avoid distractions. If there is an urgent matter or your boss needs your attention, inform the meeting participants before the meeting starts that you are on call and may need to look at your phone. Affirm that you are listening and thank them for sharing their experience.
- Practice empathy during the discussion.
- Limit your expectations on how much or little a survivor will share.
- Respond in a trauma-informed way to a survivor sharing their story, which includes open body posture and use positive, helpful language like "thank you for telling me" or "I'm sorry this happened to you" or "this was not your fault" or even "I believe you."
- Don't question the survivors' story with pointed questions that call into doubt the survivor's story or ask about hypotheticals like what they would do in another situation. Questions that doubt the validity of their experience can re-trigger trauma responses.

After the Meeting

- **Schedule time for yourself if experiencing retraumatization as a survivor. Contact the House Office of Employee Assistance at 202-225-2400 or the Senate Employee Assistance Program at 202-224-3902.**
- Communicate clearly with survivors how the information and perspective they provided will be used moving forward.

