

## Job-Driven Training Principle Three: Use the Data

### *Impact Services Corporation Spotlight on Service Case Study*

In 2014, the Federal government held a review of federal training programs in order to identify and implement steps to make these programs more “job-driven.” Job-driven training, defined as “training that is responsive to the needs of employers in order to effectively place ready-to-work Americans in jobs that are available now or train them in the skills needed for better jobs,” includes seven core principles.

#### Seven Core Principles of Job-Driven Training

- Principle One: Engage with Employers
- Principle Two: Earn and Learn
- **Principle Three: Use the Data**
- Principle Four: Measure Results
- Principle Five: Stepping Stones
- Principle Six: Opening Doors
- Principle Seven: Regional Partnerships

Principle Three, Use the Data, asks that employment and training programs use data to drive accountability and inform employer engagement strategies. For HVRP grantee agencies, using the data can help ensure services are informed by emerging promising and best practices, including trauma informed care.

For over 40 years, Impact Services Corporation (Impact) has served low-income residents of Philadelphia through employment and training, supportive housing, and community development services. Impact’s Veteran Services department provides comprehensive services to more than 300 veterans each year through a number of programs, including DOL-VETS’ Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP).

The success of Impact overall, and HVRP specifically, are in part the result of the agency’s reliance on data to make programmatic decisions. For example, Impact partners with a local community college to offer training and certificate programs in high-demand industries. Recently, however, Impact has taken its use of data and research to a new level – examining its operations through the lens of trauma-informed care (TIC, see insert).

#### An Innovative Approach to Using Data

According to the National Center for PTSD, 60 percent of men and 50 percent of women experience at least one trauma during their lifetimes. Based on life experiences – combat

#### Grantee Spotlight: Impact Services Corporation

HVRP grantee since: 1983

Current HVRP grants: HVRP and IVTP

Other grants/services: GPD Transitional Housing (4), HUD Grants for Veterans (2), SSVF

Job-driven training principle: Use the Data



*Steve Culbertson, Director of Housing Development and Veterans Services*

## What is Trauma-Informed Care?

Trauma-informed care (TIC) is a perspective that acknowledges the pervasive influence and impact of trauma on an individual, their provider, and the organization delivering case management and other supportive services.

--Dinnen, Kane & Cook, 2014

TIC is an organization-wide effort that requires the following core components:

- A basic awareness and understanding of trauma and its impact;
- A strength-based approach to services that provides emotional and environmental safety; and
- A shift in perspective from “what is wrong with you? and how do I fix you?” to “what happened to you? and what do you need?”

exposure, homelessness, mental health issues, among others – Impact surmised that the trauma rates among their veteran clients would be significantly higher. What would happen if Impact used research and data around trauma response to change how it provides necessary services to veterans?

Based on what we know about how the brain reacts to stress and trauma – the fight or flight response – Impact’s TIC approach attempts to prevent or block triggers and avoid re-traumatizing its clients. Before addressing client interaction, however, Impact needed to take a step back and educate all staff to ensure a basic understanding of trauma. The education and training of staff is an ongoing process that is being infused into the organization’s culture and includes staff examining their own triggers and reactions to better understand their clients. The next step was to being implementation of TIC at the management level, including discussions on how to operationalize TIC. The framework was then implemented within the Veterans Services department.

As Steve Culbertson, Director of Housing Development and Veterans Services explains, “TIC is not about strategies, but how we implement them...it’s changing the

how, not the what.” For example, before TIC training, case managers often employed a “tough love” approach when working with veterans and the residential program had a no tolerance policy regarding drug and alcohol use. Through TIC, those policies have become more flexible and client-focused within clear, established boundaries to better meet veterans where they are.

The process of moving towards trauma-informed care has brought its own challenges to the Veterans Services team. Some staff members were very experienced in the old model and resistant to the change, while others were early adopters. After witnessing the benefits of the new approach for veterans, however, most staff members embraced TIC. Lessons learned during this process will inform TIC implementation throughout Impact’s other programs.