

Lenawee County understanding impacts of trauma

By Lynne Punnett

Lenawee County is taking huge strides in understanding and responding to the impact of trauma. Any experience that leaves a person hopeless or helpless can be traumatic and the lasting influences of these experiences are at the center of the Lenawee Collective Impact Core's work.

In February, I wrote about how the Collective Impact Core, in cooperation with the One Lenawee county-wide visioning process, was rolling out a countywide, trauma-informed organizational assessment plan. Using a tool created by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, agencies could determine their strengths, identify opportunities for growth and coordinate with the

Collective Impact Core on strategies for improvement.

In just over six months, more than a dozen agencies and organizations have expressed interest in joining this initiative. Using a true collective impact model, groups across Lenawee County are preparing to collect and share data, communicate best practices and support each other's improvement activities.

Leading the way are Community Action Agency and the Lenawee Community Mental Health Authority. Both organizations have completed the organizational assessment, asking their staff to rank them on practices like "Our organization makes decisions with transparency by documenting the values and rationale behind decisions" and "We promote community connections for the people we serve." With

this information in hand, internal teams are developing priorities and improvement strategies. In one year, they will re-evaluate.

Becoming trauma-informed is a process and requires an ongoing commitment.

Lenawee County organizations are making the commitment to change the culture of how they do business and interact with the communities they serve.

If you are interested in learning more about trauma or conducting an assessment at your organization, please contact Jackie Bradley at jbradley@lcmha.org. Jackie Bradley is the community outreach coordinator for the Lenawee Community Mental Health Authority.

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