

Competency 8.2 Field Evidence

Planned Field Activity: Trauma-Informed Volunteer Training Add-On for Chatter Camp

The following draft components represent a completed trauma-informed volunteer training add-on designed to support volunteers working with children who are nonverbal or partially verbal and use AAC. These tools draw from national best practices and macro-level strategies from organizations such as The Arc, the National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP), and the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination. The materials will be implemented during the next Chatter Camp cycle.

Evidence-Based Volunteer Tips

1. 1. Use co-regulation strategies such as breathing together, dimming lights, or offering sensory breaks rather than using commands or corrections.
2. 2. Always offer choices when redirecting behavior (e.g., 'Would you like to hold the blue or green toy?') to promote autonomy and self-direction.
3. 3. Narrate your actions and label emotions (e.g., 'I see you're feeling frustrated') to model emotional awareness and help children build vocabulary for internal states.
4. 4. Avoid physical prompting unless necessary for safety. When possible, model the behavior or use visual cues instead, and always request consent before physical interaction.
5. 5. Use strength-based language. Highlight what the child is doing well (e.g., 'You're a great helper!' instead of 'Don't do that'). Reinforce effort and persistence.
6. 6. Approach each interaction with curiosity rather than control. Ask yourself what the child may be trying to communicate through their behavior.
7. 7. Validate all forms of communication, including gestures, facial expressions, body language, and AAC devices. Respond as if every form is meaningful.
8. 8. Avoid judgmental or corrective tones. Redirect calmly and frame your language around shared goals and safety (e.g., 'Let's try something that feels better for your body.').

Scenario-Based Reflection Prompts

- Scenario 1:
A child becomes nonverbal and starts rocking and covering their ears after a loud noise. What are 2 trauma-informed ways you could support them in the moment?
- Scenario 2:
You are trying to transition campers to a new activity, but one child is fixated on a toy. How can you redirect them using strength-based and choice-oriented language?
- Scenario 3:
Another volunteer raises their voice out of frustration. How might you calmly intervene or support your peer in the moment, while modeling inclusive care?

- Scenario 4:
A camper appears overwhelmed and doesn't respond to your question. What are nonverbal ways you can show support and give them space to self-regulate?
- Scenario 5:
A camper hits another child during group play. How can you respond in a way that de-escalates the situation, protects both children, and maintains connection with the child who hit?
- Scenario 6:
A volunteer refers to a camper's AAC device as 'weird' in a joking tone. How can you correct this in a respectful way that reinforces inclusive language?

Implementation Plan

This trauma-informed training add-on will be implemented during the next cycle of Chatter Camp. It is designed to be delivered alongside the standard volunteer orientation and will be made accessible through printed handouts and optional QR code links. The training content is formatted for in-person or digital delivery, and includes a handbook insert and scenario-based reflection tool.

The goals of this training are to:

- Increase volunteer preparedness to support children with developmental and communication needs
- Reinforce consistency in trauma-informed engagement strategies
- Promote emotional regulation and inclusion throughout volunteer-camper interactions
- Align local practice with macro-level national standards for disability-informed volunteerism

References (APA Format)

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (n.d.). Trauma-informed care. <https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care>

National Service Inclusion Project. (n.d.). Disability inclusion resources. Institute for Community Inclusion. <https://www.serviceandinclusion.org/>

Office of Disability Integration and Coordination. (n.d.). Resources for integrating and coordinating emergency preparedness for people with disabilities. Federal Emergency Management Agency. <https://www.fema.gov/office-disability-integration>

The Arc. (n.d.). Volunteer and staff training materials. <https://thearc.org>