



# Moving SNAP E&T Programs in a Trauma-Informed and Anti-Racist Direction

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# Reimagining SNAP E&T Programs

## Our Task

- Acknowledge the racist roots of work requirements
- Identify strategies for creating a program that is centered on the goals and aspirations of participants
- Recognize the role of trauma in people's lives (including staff)

## Plan for Today

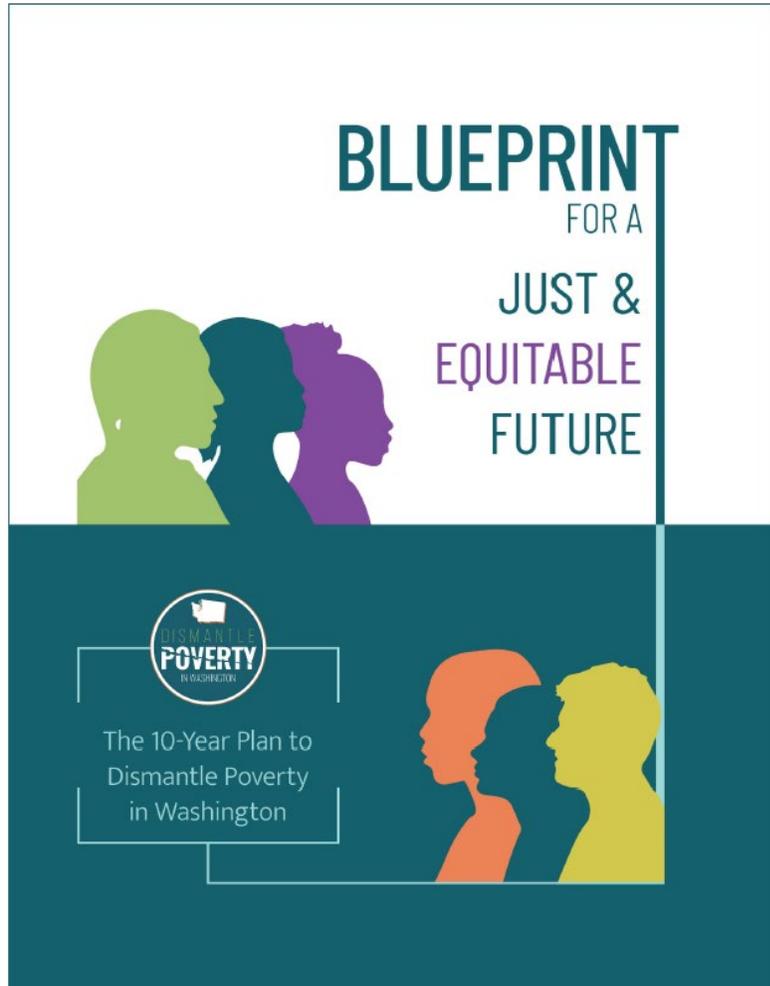
- Hear about Washington State's efforts to create a blueprint for a just and equitable future
- Learn about toxic stress and why it is so important to address
- Hear about innovations in TANF work programs



# Washington State



# 10-Year Plan 8 Strategies | 60 Recommendations



## 8 STRATEGIES POVERTY REDUCTION

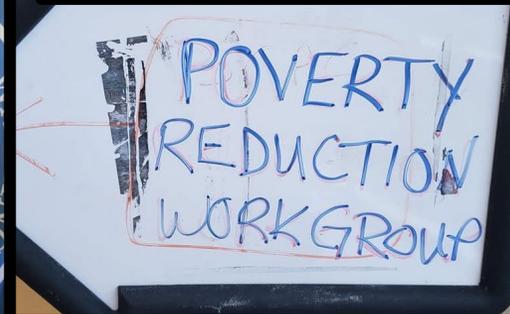
ROOT CAUSES & BEYOND



- 1 UNDO STRUCTURAL RACISM**  
Understand structural racism and historical trauma and take action to undo how they manifest in state policy, program, and practice.
- 2 BALANCE POWER**  
Make equal space in decision-making for people and communities most affected by poverty and inequality.
- 3 INCREASE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**  
Target equitable income growth and wealth-building among people with low incomes.
- 4 ENSURE FOUNDATIONAL WELL-BEING**  
Strengthen health supports across the life span to promote the intergenerational well-being of families.
- 5 PRIORITIZE URGENT NEEDS**  
Prioritize the urgent needs of people experiencing homelessness, mental illness, or addiction.
- 6 BUILD A HOLISTIC CONTINUUM OF CARE**  
Build an integrated human service continuum of care that addresses the holistic needs of children, adults, and families.
- 7 DECRIMINALIZE POVERTY**  
Decriminalize poverty and reduce reliance on the child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice systems.
- 8 PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK**  
Ensure a just transition to the future of work.



# Steering Committee of Experts with Lived Experience



Mental Health System Challenge - dear link between poverty & mental health

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES make IT hard to navigate social programs causing client to give up in frustration giving rise for the need of client navigation

MENTAL HEALTH FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS ASSISTANCE IS ABOUT NOW

TO GET SERVICES. (But folks might be old, unemployed for mental health reasons, etc.)

a letter to get things done

care of children (when ppl are removed/in facility of the name)

of Mental Health through systems (CPS, DSHS, etc.)

stigmatized/pathologizing "Poverty (My reality not than your reality)

we're angry, you got issues (demonization)

Health cannot be separated from services received

network to get 50+ stress

Mental Health options for low-income regular state health care expanded + more

Supervision for Medications example: phone app - More DBT classes - better evaluations - in-depth

# Defining the Problem



“As soon as I take a breath and have a second to just sit and play with my kids on the floor and not worry about how I am going to get dinner on the table tonight or how to pay the rent ... the rug gets pulled out from underneath me.

**It's like a game of Chutes & Ladders** ... I climb up, just to fall back down repeatedly, and getting to the top seems dependent on a lucky roll of the dice.”



“Most of the time I am like, **what's the secret handshake?**  
How do I navigate this to get what I need?”



“I live with a disability and chronic illness. I have a Master's degree and am attending law school, but I live in my van because my insurance does not cover the basic medical care I need, and I cannot afford rent. People ask me, 'What does 'being healthy' look like to you?' and I respond, '**Being healthy basically looks like being rich.**'”

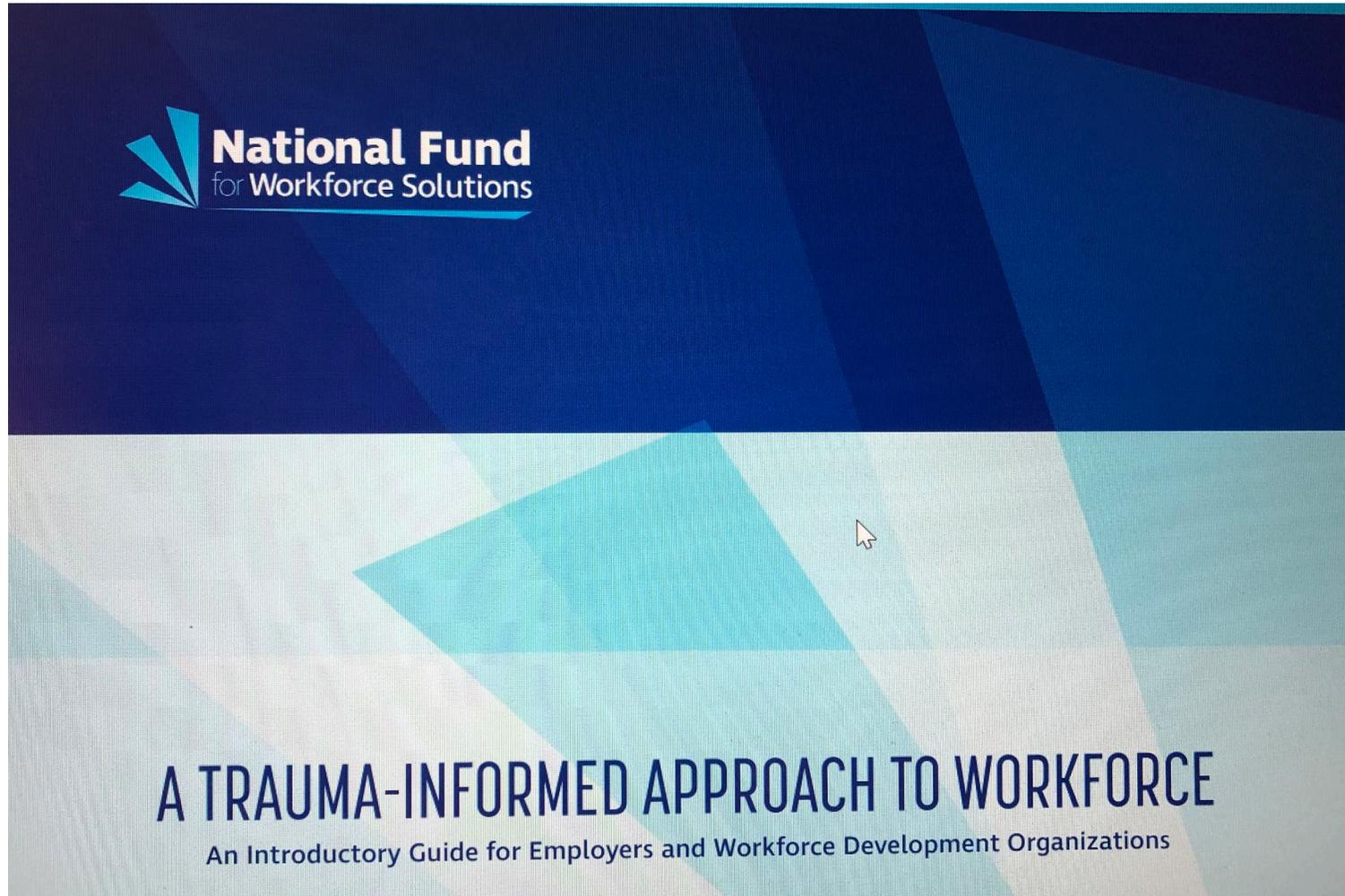


“Programs do not communicate with one another. I have to tell my story 20 times, each time reliving the trauma of it. **It's exhausting.**”

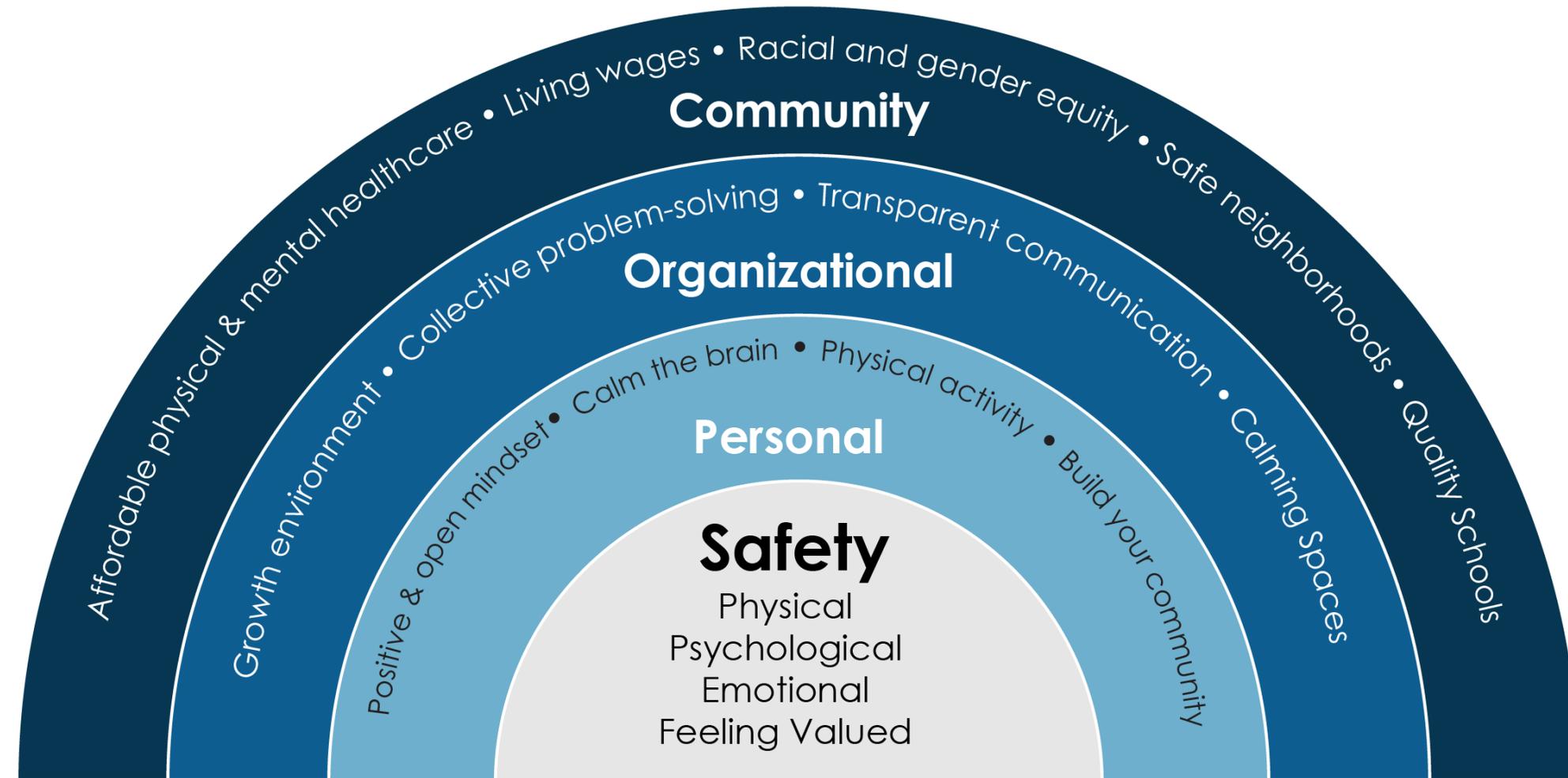


The burden of figuring out the system is on the people being served ... **it's a full-time job.**”

# The Importance of Understanding Trauma



# Resilience Rainbow



# SAMHSA's 6 Key Principles



1. Safety



2. Trustworthiness  
& Transparency



3. Peer Support



4. Collaboration  
& Mutuality



5. Empowerment,  
Voice, & Choice



6. Cultural Humility  
& Responsiveness

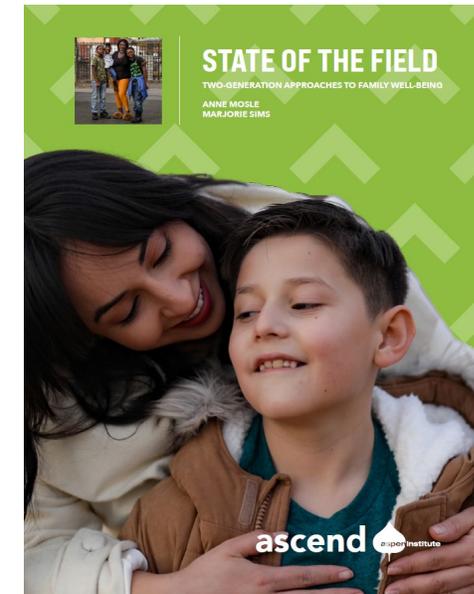
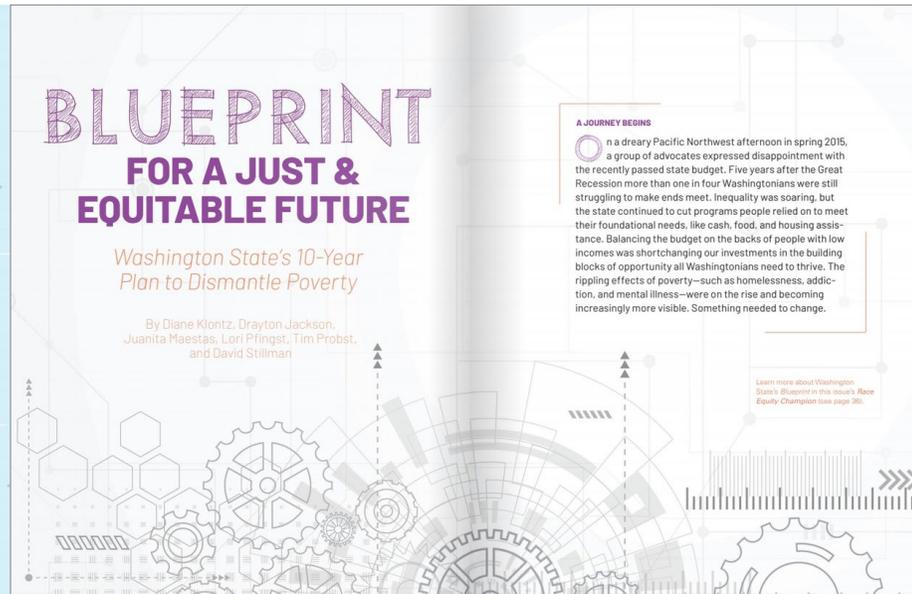
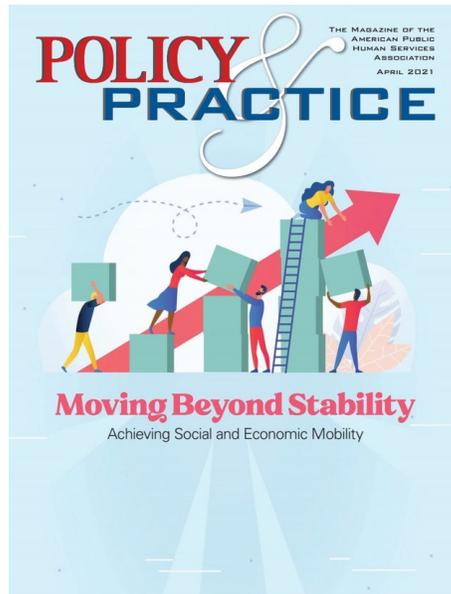
# Download the free Trauma & Resilience at Work Quick Guides



<https://skilledwork.org/what-we-do/trauma-resiliency-at-work/>

# Washington: Successes-to-Date (and counting)...

- **25** recommendations immediately acted upon in 2021 legislative session
- **\$1 billion invested** in poverty reduction and homelessness in 2022 session
- Washington state poverty reduction efforts recognized as **national best practice**
- New **Subcabinet on Intergenerational Poverty**
- State agencies are using 10-Year Plan in building 2023-25 budget and policy priorities



# Innovations in TANF Work Programs

## Change the narrative

- Focus on **goals and aspirations, not mandates**
- Affirm **dignity**
- Respect **choice**
- Build **agency**
- Ensure **safety**
- Create a sense of **belonging**

## Adopt program strategies that change lives

- Eliminate focus on **punishment**
- Create **opportunity**
- Increase **education and skills**
- Eliminate employment **barriers**
- Provide **support**