BACKGROUND
In 2013, the Boston Defending Childhood Initiative Collaborative identified youth workers as a key audience for trauma-informed training and capacity building. This is because youth workers are often “life-lines”: able to reach and support vulnerable young people when many traditional service providers cannot.

Boston DCI developed this training through a participatory and equitable process, beginning by conducting focus groups with youth, youth workers, and management to assess learning needs and strengths. Then, in partnership with the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, DCI convened a Community Advisory Committee to review learning objectives and develop content. In 2014, the first Training Institute was launched, and revisions were made to subsequent Institutes based on feedback and evaluation findings.

AUDIENCE
The audience for this training are youth workers, which DCI defines as anyone who works with youth 11-24. This could be afterschool providers, teachers, outreach workers, mentors, counselors, law enforcement, and medical providers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- Increase youth worker's knowledge of youth development, traumatic stress, and resilience
- Increase youth worker's self-awareness of their personal beliefs, strengths, and biases around working with youth, trauma, and self-care
- Increase youth worker's ability to identify and use strategies for resilience
- Increase youth worker's knowledge of how race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities can impact their own and youth's responses to trauma

DAY 1
- Creating a brave space through group agreements
- Understanding adolescent development
- Unpacking identity and factors that support youth resilience
- Defining trauma and resilience
- Identifying common trauma responses in youth
- Strategies for self-care

DAY 2
- Understanding trauma & the brain
- Samuel’s Backpack: recognizing the impact of trauma on youth and strategies to support resilience
- Trauma-informed crisis response: using the SEEK Tool
- The impact of stress and trauma exposure on youth workers

DAY 3
- Introduction to trauma-informed conversations about change
- Tools and strategies: stages of change, decisional balance Worksheet, and practicing the Trauma-Informed Conversation approach
- Trauma-informed accountability: exploring trauma-informed alternatives to typical discipline
- Trauma-informed programs: assessing our programs using the TIPPS Assessment and developing action plans

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Since 2014, approximately 4,000 youth workers serving approximately 80,000 youth have participated in the full Institute or adapted versions. Trainings have been delivered in Boston, throughout the state, and nationally with partners in Memphis, Tennessee and Portland, Maine.

The training has also been adapted through ongoing training partnerships with youth serving organizations such as the YMCA, Boston Transit Police, the Boys & Girls Club, and Partners for Youth with Disabilities. Three “Training-of-the-Trainers” for this Institute have also been implemented in order to build the capacity of youth workers to deliver this training in their agencies and communities.

Pre- and post-test survey questionnaires administered prior to and following the training have found an overall positive change in participant knowledge, skills, and frequency of youth worker utilization of trauma-informed strategies.

- **Knowledge** questions included asking whether participants could identify trauma responses in youth and in providers, and whether they knew of trauma resources.
- **Frequency** questions asked participants to consider how often they engaged in trauma-informed behaviors in the past two weeks, including how often they used grounding techniques, practiced self-care, interrupted bias or hate language, considered their own assumptions, and utilized a “warm referral.”