

HB 2575 – Trauma Informed Practices Act

Trauma Informed Practices for Law Enforcement

Victims of a violent crime often experience a traumatic or high stress neurological response that inhibits the victim's ability to recount details of the incident. Law enforcement officers trained in trauma-informed interviewing techniques can help a victim process the experience and facilitate the collection of evidence.

This legislation will equip Oregon law enforcement agencies with tools to respond more effectively and more consistently with identified best practices when interacting with victims of violence.

The science of trauma:

Trauma, as defined by a combination of terror or horror and the actual or perceived loss of control, appears to impair the brain's ability to spontaneously and logically critically analyze what is happening and how to address it most effectively. As such, we are left with our instincts and habits when responding to trauma, often making it challenging for interviewers to understand a victim's reactions emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally. Trauma also appears to affect our ability to remember by challenging our ability to independently control what we focus on (called central details), and our ability to sequence memory.

Training on the neurobiology of trauma can help interviewers and investigators understand victim reactions, leading to more effective investigations.

Race and culture have a particular impact on how a person experiences trauma. Understanding this intersectionality is necessary to ensure effective and trauma-informed law-enforcement response.

Proposed legislation will:

1. Require the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, in consultation with the Department of Justice, to develop trauma-informed best practices for use when a victim has been subject to a violent crime, including sexual assault and domestic violence. Best practices must take into account the impact of structural racism and other forms of historical trauma. The Law enforcement agencies will adopt the best practices, change them to fit specific needs of their community or develop their own approach.
2. Establish 3-4 pilot programs in diverse areas of the state to provide cross-sector trauma-informed training for interviewing victims of violence. Community-focused trainings will ensure that all professionals employ consistent and reinforcing practices.
3. Ensure that best practices are reflected in the curriculum provided to new recruits at the Public Safety Academy.

For more information, contact:

Rep Pam Marsh - Rep.PamMarsh@oregonlegislature.gov