



Trauma-Informed Primary Care: Fostering Resilience and Recovery



Introduction to Screening Script Template

This tool is a suggested script to use with patients before you introduce your trauma screening at their initial and subsequent appointments. It is strongly suggested that whomever performs this screening should sit down to talk with the patient in the exam room or other private area, as the questions are sensitive for most people and considering privacy and safety is a key part of a trauma-informed approach.

Script for First Appointment:

Hello, Mr./Mrs./Ms/Miss (last name). I am _____ the nurse (or other role) working with (PCP) today. What do you like to be called? (wait for patient response). Thank you. (make a note in the chart). I'm glad you are here today. I have some questions to ask you about your history. As medical providers we are becoming more and more aware of how past experiences can affect our health in the here and now. Sometimes knowing about difficult experiences in the past can help us to change our approach for you as a patient to make this practice a safe and comfortable place to be for your health care. How would you feel about answering a few brief questions about your personal and family history?

If yes, proceed with screen. Once screen is complete, state "Would you like to add anything else about yourself? (await their answer). Is there anything you would like to tell us about how we can make you more comfortable in our practice? (await their answer). Do you have any questions?" Note the questions and answer them if possible. If you do not know the answers, then tell the patient "I am not sure about that, but I will try to get the answer and let you know." If the question is complex, let them know they will receive a call back with an answer and then FOLLOW UP. Finish up with "Thank you for speaking with me today."

If no, put a note in the chart: Patient declines screen.

Please Note: People in recovery may not always be ready to tell the truth about the past at the first appointment, as it may be hard to face. Ensuring kindness and an "open door" makes a big difference, even if the disclosure does not come right away. Facing the events of the past is hard. Setting the tone in the practice is what is important to increase safety.

Script for Follow-up Appointments:

Hello, Mr./Mrs./Ms/Miss (last name). I know we've asked you before, but each year we like to check in about experiences in your life that might affect how we help you with your medical care. Would you be willing to look at this survey about your past experiences again and update our understanding of you as a person and how to help?