



ADVOCACY • COLLABORATION • EDUCATION

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# Strategic Plan FY25-FY28

Mental Health Commission  
of  
Lyons Township

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# Strategic Summary

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WeHealUS has roots in the long-standing trauma and mental health reform movement in the United States and collaborates with experts in trauma, systemic change, and equity to meet the growing demand for mental health solutions. Our customized training and support empower organizations to become more trauma-informed and healing-centered, emphasizing the critical importance of being trauma-informed in today's world.

In 2023, WeHealUS partnered with the Lyons Township Mental Health Commission to develop a strategic plan for a trauma-informed and healing-centered future. The plan was created with national experts, tailored to the unique needs of Lyons Township.

**Mission:** The Mental Health Commission of Lyons Township cultivates holistic mental wellness, trauma-informed practices, and healing-centered communities.

**Vision:** To foster a trauma-informed and healing-centered township through community engagement, comprehensive programming, and educational resources addressing mental health, substance use disorder, and developmental disabilities.

Aligned with the national movement and through a trauma-informed and healing-centered lens, we are honored to present **The 2025-2028 Mental Health Commission of Lyons Township Strategic Plan** which **focuses on:**

- **Growth and Sustainability**
- **Adaptation to pandemic limitations**
- **Utilizing previous assessments and data**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not conduct a new needs assessment, recognizing that current needs are greater.

Thank you for your dedication to this vital cause and the belief that together, we can heal US.



# Our Approach

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## What is a Trauma-Informed Approach?

How an agency, program, organization, or community thinks about and responds to those who have experienced (or are at risk of experiencing) trauma.

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## What are the Three R's?

- 1. REALIZE** the prevalence of trauma 
- 2. RECOGNIZE** that trauma affects all individuals involved (including in the workforce) 
- 3. RESPOND** by putting this knowledge into practice 

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## Why? Key Statistics

**98%** Of individuals who have offended have experienced trauma or domestic violence.

**3X** People with unhealed trauma are 3 times more likely to use substances.

## What is a Trauma-Informed Approach?

"Trauma-informed" refers to an approach that recognizes the widespread impact of trauma on individuals and emphasizes creating environments that are sensitive and responsive to the needs of those who have experienced trauma. This approach is commonly applied in various settings, including healthcare, education, social services, and mental health.

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## What are the Eight Key Principles?

### **Safety**

*Ensuring physical and emotional safety for individuals who have experienced trauma.*

### **Trustworthiness and transparency**

*Building trust through transparent and honest communication, which helps individuals feel secure and understood.*

### **Peer support**

*Recognizing the importance of peer support and fostering connections with others who may have similar experiences.*

### **Collaboration and mutuality**

*Involving individuals in decision-making processes and treating them with respect and collaboration.*

### **Empowerment, voice and choice**

*Prioritizing the empowerment of individuals, giving them a voice in their own care and respecting choices.*

### **Cultural, historical and gender issues**

*Being aware of and addressing the cultural, historical and gender-specific needs and sensitivities of individuals.*

### **Strengths-based**

*Focusing on individual strengths and resilience rather than solely on deficits or pathology.*

### **Understanding the impact of trauma**

*Recognizing the potential effects of trauma on individuals' physical and mental well-being and understanding how it may influence behavior.*

## What are ACEs and why are they important?

**ACEs** stands for **Adverse Childhood Experiences**. ACEs are traumatic events that occur during childhood and can have a significant impact on a person's physical and mental health later in life. The concept of ACEs originated from a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente in the 1990s.

The study found a strong correlation between the number of ACEs a person experienced and their risk for various health problems later in life, such as heart disease, mental health issues, substance abuse, and more. The concept has since been widely used in public health and psychology to understand and address the long-term impact of childhood trauma on individuals and communities.

## Why? Key Statistics

# 4+ ACEs

**People with an ACE score of 4 or more are more likely to suffer from physical illness such as heart disease and cancer.**

**By prioritizing measurable and tangible goals, we can foster a collaborative work environment that promote mental health, wellness, and resilience.**

**#1**

Promote an inclusive, community-led approach to mental health advocacy within each Lyons Township municipality.

**#2**

Collaborate with community partners to promote trauma-informed approaches to increase resilience and empower our communities.

**#3**

Enhance knowledge of the intersection between Trauma, Mental Health, Substance Use Disorders, and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities across all communities.

**#4**

Advocate for accessibility to mental wellness services through a culturally responsive and linguistically competent lens.

**Promote an inclusive, community-led approach to mental health advocacy within each Lyons Township municipality by:**

## **Enhancing Community Engagement**

- Establish Community Advisory Boards in each municipality comprised of diverse stakeholders to provide input, feedback, and guidance on mental health initiatives and funding allocations.

## **Promoting Education and Awareness**

- Design an educational campaign to reduce stigma surrounding mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities that includes a minimum of three workshops and seminars on mental health literacy and self-care practices that are free of charge to all community members.

## **Enhancing Outreach Activities to Build Transparency, Trust, and Credibility Across all Municipalities**

- Develop a comprehensive communication strategy to disseminate information about available services, upcoming events, and educational resources that utilizes multiple communication channels (including social media, websites, newsletters, and community forums) to reach diverse audiences.

## **Developing a Trauma-Informed Framework for all Township Budget Activities**

- Review all budget policies and procedures to ensure transparency and accountability in budgetary decisions.
- Develop accessible funding mechanisms and grant application processes to ensure equitable distribution of resources among agencies and communities.

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**Collaborate with community partners to promote trauma-informed approaches to increase resilience and empower our communities by:**

## **Enhancing Community Engagement**

- Forge strategic partnerships with government agencies, non-profit organizations, healthcare providers, and educational institutions to leverage resources and expertise.
- Engage in ongoing advocacy efforts to raise awareness about mental health issues, advocate for policy changes, and mobilize community support for mental health initiatives.

## **Promoting Education and Awareness**

- Collaborate with experts in trauma-informed care to develop and implement policies and procedures that prioritize safety, empowerment, and collaboration across all municipalities.
- Provide 3-4 training and/or technical assistance consultancies for agencies to enhance their capacity to deliver trauma-informed care and evidence-based interventions throughout the township.

## **Enhancing Outreach Activities to Build Transparency, Trust, and Credibility Across all Municipalities**

- Conduct regular evaluations of programs and initiatives to assess their effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes.
- Solicit feedback from stakeholders and community members to identify areas for improvement and innovation.
- Use evaluation findings to refine strategies, reallocate resources, and adapt to changing community needs.

## **Developing a Trauma-Informed Framework for all Township Budget Activities**

- Allocate funds for program development, staff training and community outreach based on data from each municipality.
- Prioritize investments in evidence-based interventions and initiatives with the potential for long-term impact.

# Priority #3

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## **Enhance Knowledge of the Intersection between Trauma, Mental Health, Substance Use Disorders, and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Across all Communities by:**

### **Enhancing Community Engagement**

- Partner with community organizations and faith-based institutions to create safe spaces for healing, support groups, and peer-led initiatives.

### **Promoting Education and Awareness**

- Develop a public education campaign to raise awareness about mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities to reduce stigma associated with seeking help.
- Conduct comprehensive training programs for all stakeholders, including agency staff, volunteers, law enforcement, and community leaders, to understand trauma-informed care principles and practices.

### **Enhancing Outreach Activities to Build Transparency, Trust, and Credibility Across all Municipalities**

- Provide ongoing support and resources to agencies to ensure the consistent implementation of trauma-informed practices in service delivery, including trauma screening, assessment, and interventions.
- Organize community events, such as wellness fairs, mental health awareness campaigns, and cultural celebrations, to promote mental wellness and resilience-building activities.

### **Developing a Trauma-Informed Framework for all Township Budget Activities**

- Allocate funds for evidence-based therapeutic interventions, including counseling, art therapy, mindfulness practices, and peer support programs.

## **Advocate for accessibility to mental wellness services through a culturally responsive and linguistically competent lens by:**

### **Enhancing Community Engagement**

- Host annual town hall meetings and listening sessions gather feedback from community members and identify emerging needs and priorities.
- Develop targeted outreach programs and initiatives to engage marginalized and underserved communities, including immigrant populations, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities led by each municipalities Community Advisory Board.

### **Promoting Education and Awareness**

- Implement an educational campaign to reduce stigma surrounding mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities that includes a minimum of three workshops and seminars on mental health literacy and self-care practices that are free of charge for all community members including schools, workplaces, for-profit and 501c3 organizations and local government agencies.

### **Enhancing Outreach Activities to Build Transparency, Trust, and Credibility Across all Municipalities**

- Run 2-3 Focus Groups with individuals who have utilized MH, SUD, IDD services in each municipality to identify up to three gaps in services that exist.
- Increase funding allocations to agencies that will fill identified gaps by providing services that meet the needs of individuals with MH, SUD, and/or IDD needs.

### **Developing a Trauma-Informed Framework for all Township Budget Activities**

- Establish performance metrics and data collection systems to monitor the impact of funded programs on mental health and culturally competent programming to make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement.

# Our Approach

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## What is a Healing-Centered Community?

How an agency, program, organization, or community thinks about and responds to those who have experienced (or are at risk of experiencing) trauma.

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## Framework of a Healing-Centered Community

### **Cultural Competence**

*Understanding and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of community members and incorporating culturally competent practices in the healing process.*

### **Trauma-Informed Practices**

*Implementing trauma-informed approaches that consider the impact of trauma on individuals and create safe and supportive spaces.*

### **Collective Healing**

*Recognizing that healing is a collective and community-wide process, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of all community members.*

### **Empowerment**

*Empowering individuals within the community to be active participant in their own healing journey and encouraging a sense of agency and control.*

### **Social Justice**

*Addressing systematic issues and promoting social justice to create equitable and inclusive communities that support healing for everyone.*

### **Community Involvement**

*Involving community members in decision-making processes and program development to ensure that initiatives align with the community's needs and values.*

### **Holistic Well-Being**

*Taking a holistic approach to well-being that considers physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of health.*

### **Resilience-Building**

*Focusing on building individual and collective resilience to navigate challenges and adversity.*

## Pillars of Building Healing-Centered & Trauma-Informed Communities



<b>Promote Community Engagement</b>	<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Training and Education</b>	<b>Funding</b>
<p><i>Develop a comprehensive communication strategy</i></p> <p><i>Foster open communication and transparency by building trust and credibility</i></p>	<p><i>New branding and website</i></p> <p><i>Comprehensive user-friendly resource guide</i></p> <p><i>Capacity building with Community partners</i></p> <p><i>Healing-centered practices in Commission and Community</i></p>	<p><i>Sustainability and growth</i></p> <p><i>Establish trauma-informed approach to advocacy</i></p> <p><i>Relationship and Community wellness with equitable focused expansion</i></p>	<p><i>Expand programming and education for mental health, substance use disorder and developmental disabilities</i></p> <p><i>Strategic Training for Community</i></p>	<p><i>Evaluations for continuous improvement in equitable funding resources</i></p> <p><i>Pilot Programming</i></p> <p><i>Partnership innovation</i></p>

## *Phase 1*

### **Enhancing Community Engagement**

- Host annual town hall meetings and listening sessions gather feedback from community members and identify emerging needs and priorities.
- Develop targeted outreach programs and initiatives to engage marginalized and underserved communities, including immigrant populations, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities led by each municipalities Community Advisory Board.

### **Promoting Education and Awareness**

- Implement an educational campaign to reduce stigma surrounding mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities that includes a minimum of three workshops and seminars on mental health literacy and self-care practices that are free of charge for all community members including schools, workplaces, for-profit and 501c3 organizations and local government agencies.

### **Enhancing Outreach Activities to Build Transparency, Trust, and Credibility Across all Municipalities**

- Run 2-3 Focus Groups with individuals who have utilized MH, SUD, IDD services in each municipality to identify up to three gaps in services that exist.
- Increase funding allocations to agencies that will fill identified gaps by providing services that meet the needs of individuals with MH, SUD, and/or IDD needs.

### **Developing a Trauma-Informed Framework for all Township Budget Activities**

- Establish performance metrics and data collection systems to monitor the impact of funded programs on mental health and culturally competent programming to make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement.

## *Phase 2*

### **Enhancing Community Engagement**

- Hosting quarterly town hall meetings and listening sessions gather feedback from community members and identify emerging needs and priorities.
- Maintaining a workbook of partners within each municipality that includes community organizations and faith-based institutions to create safe spaces for healing, support groups, and peer-led initiatives.
- Maintaining strategic partnerships with government agencies, non-profit organizations, healthcare providers, and educational institutions to leverage resources and expertise by convening bi-monthly multidisciplinary meetings with identified partners.
- Developing targeted outreach programs and initiatives to engage marginalized and underserved communities, including immigrant populations, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities led by each municipalities Community Advisory Board (CAB).
- Engaging in ongoing advocacy efforts to raise awareness about mental health issues, advocate for policy changes, and mobilize community support for mental health initiatives at the direction of each CAB.

### **Promote Education and Awareness**

- Implementing an educational campaign to reduce stigma surrounding mental health, substance use disorder, and developmental disabilities that includes a minimum of 3 workshops and seminars on mental health literacy and self-care practices that are free of charge to all community members.
- Providing 3-4 training and/or technical assistance consultancies for agencies to enhance their capacity to deliver trauma-informed care and evidence-based interventions throughout the township.
- Conducting comprehensive training programs for all stakeholders, including agency staff, volunteers, law enforcement, and community leaders, to understand trauma-informed care principles and practices.

## *Phase 2*

### **Enhance Outreach Activities to Build Transparency, Trust, and Credibility Across all Municipalities**

- Conducting quarterly evaluations of programs and initiatives to assess their effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes.
- Soliciting quarterly feedback from stakeholders and community members to identify areas for improvement and innovation.
- Using evaluation findings to refine strategies, reallocate resources, and adapt to changing community needs.
- Developing a calendar of 2026-2027 community events, such as wellness fairs, mental health awareness campaigns, and cultural celebrations to promote mental wellness and resilience-building activities.

### **Developing a Trauma-Informed Framework for all Township Budget Activities**

- Allocating funds for program development, staff training and community outreach based on data from each municipality.
- Prioritizing investments in evidence-based interventions and initiatives with the potential for long-term impact.
- Establishing performance metrics and data collection systems to monitor the impact of funded programs on mental health and culturally competent programming to make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement.

## *Phase 3*

### **Enhancing Community Engagement**

- Hosting quarterly town hall meetings and listening sessions gather feedback from community members and identify emerging needs and priorities.
- Maintaining a workbook of partners within each municipality that includes community organizations and faith-based institutions to create safe spaces for healing, support groups, and peer-led initiatives.
- Maintaining strategic partnerships with government agencies, non-profit organizations, healthcare providers, and educational institutions to leverage resources and expertise by convening bi-monthly multidisciplinary meetings with identified partners.
- Implementing targeted outreach programs and initiatives to engage marginalized and underserved communities, including immigrant populations, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities led by each municipalities Community Advisory Board (CAB).
- Engaging in ongoing advocacy efforts to raise awareness about mental health issues, advocate for policy changes, and mobilize community support for mental health initiatives at the direction of each CAB.

### **Promote Education and Awareness**

- Implementing an updated educational campaign to reduce stigma surrounding mental health, substance use disorder, and developmental disabilities that includes a minimum of 3 workshops and seminars on mental health literacy and self-care practices that are free of charge for all community members based on data/feedback from previous years campaign.
- Providing 3-4 training and/or technical assistance consultancies for agencies to enhance their capacity to deliver trauma-informed care and evidence-based interventions throughout the township.
- Conducting comprehensive training programs for all stakeholders, including agency staff, volunteers, law enforcement, and community leaders, to understand trauma-informed care principles and practices.

## *Phase 3*

### **Enhance Outreach Activities to Build Transparency, Trust, and Credibility Across all Municipalities**

- Conducting regular evaluations of programs and initiatives to assess their effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes.
- Soliciting feedback from stakeholders and community members to identify areas for improvement and innovation.
- Using evaluation findings to refine strategies, reallocate resources, and adapt to changing community needs.
- Developing a 2027-2028 calendar of community events, such as wellness fairs, mental health awareness campaigns, and cultural celebrations to promote mental wellness and resilience-building activities.

### **Developing a Trauma-Informed Framework for all Township Budget Activities**

- Analyzing performance metrics and data collection systems to determine the impact of funded programs on mental health and culturally competent programming to make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement.
- Utilizing the data analysis to make informed decisions related to:
- Allocating funds for 2028 program development, staff training and community outreach based on data from each municipality.
- Prioritizing investments in impactful interventions and initiatives for 2028 and beyond.

# Acknowledgments

WeHealUS recognizes the commitment of the Mental Health Commission of Lyons Township to developing evidenced-based strategies to create trauma-informed communities. The strategic planning process in itself was inclusive and healing-centered, drawing on national best practices the field of mental health and trauma prevention.

This strategic plan was designed to capture the discussions of Commission leaders and community stakeholders to generate actionable steps for appropriate committees, departments, elected officers, and community members at large.

The communities supported through the implementation of this strategy will benefit from an ongoing dialogue and exchange of ideas/perspectives while moving through the continuum of becoming trauma-informed to a healing-centered community.

WeHealUS thanks its partners, and nationally renowned experts for their insight and dedication to developing the 2025-2028 Mental Health Commission of Lyons Township Strategic Plan.



# About WeHealUS

WeHealUS was founded in Greater Chicago as a result of decades of trauma and mental health reform efforts in Illinois. Building on a series of successful, healing-centered initiatives and with support from partners across the nation, we proudly launched our inaugural May Mental Health and Trauma Awareness Campaign.

In response to the growing demand for mental health solutions, WeHealUS partners with leading experts in trauma, systemic change, and equity to offer tailored training and support.

To get involved or learn more about our mission, please visit [WeHealUS](#) or contact us via [email](#).

WeHealUS is deeply committed to this essential cause, driven by the belief that together, we can heal US.

