Mothers and Trauma-Informed Research

Many mothers with mental health and substance use conditions have had traumatic experiences. Here are some tips for engaging them in research, keeping this in mind.

**Provide Choices.** Schedule sessions at mothers’ convenience, in modes they prefer (e.g., in-person, telephone, video conference).

**Be empathic.** Ensure that if mothers feel uncomfortable about questions, they can choose not to answer, take a break, or stop participating at any time.

**Be respectful.** Take a non-judgmental stance. Listen, but don’t make assumptions. A mother’s way of evaluating or making meaning of an experience may not be the same as yours.

**Offer privacy.** Ask about mothers’ preferred mode of communication. Is it OK to leave a voice or email message?

**Have resources identified.** Specify a safety plan in your protocol, and suggest follow-up resources, if warranted.

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