



A Trauma-and Violence-Informed Care (TVIC) Approach to COVID-19 Vaccination Delivery

Canada's COVID-19 Immunization Plan¹ indicates that clinics and outreach models established for the provision and delivery of immunizations embed trauma-informed approaches within the care and services provided. This resource summarizes how TVIC principles can be adapted for this context.

1

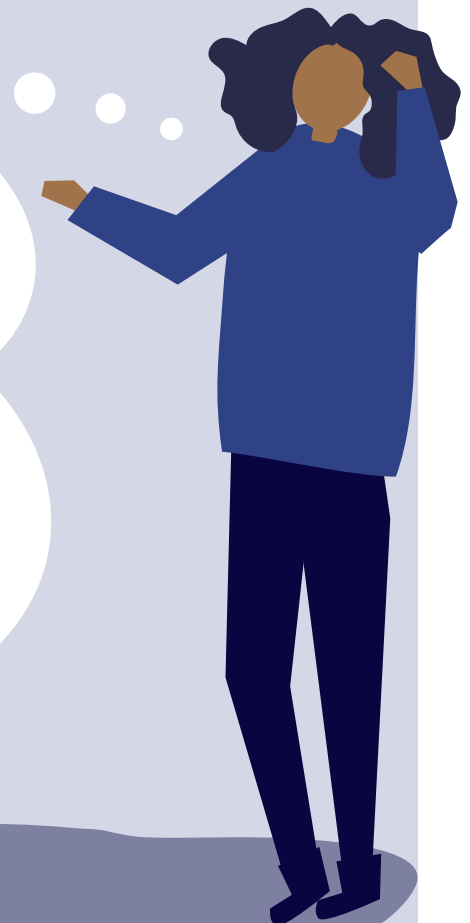
TVIC Principle: Understand that experiences of trauma and violence impact an individual's health and how they feel, think, and behave.

What to Know

Previous trauma, violence, painful medical procedures (including fear of needles), or experiences of stigma, racism and discrimination in health care settings may be why some clients are angry, anxious, hesitant, or frustrated in their interactions with vaccine providers.

What to Do

Re-frame thinking from: *"What is wrong with this person?"* to: *"What has happened, or is still happening, to this person that may be impacting them right now?"* and then: *"What makes them strong?"*



2

TVIC Principle: Prioritize creating culturally, emotionally, and physically safe environments for clients, staff, and volunteers.

What to Know

During the COVID-19 pandemic, clients and staff may be:

- experiencing rapid change and uncertainty.
- processing evolving information about vaccines.
- delivering or receiving vaccinations in unfamiliar settings.



What to Do

To enhance emotional safety:

At every stage of vaccine administration:

- provide clear expectations on “what will happen next”.
- provide opportunities for people to ask questions, express concerns, and seek clarification.
- ensure staff and volunteers are clearly identifiable to make help-seeking easier.
- acknowledge that some people don’t feel safe when they are seeking medical care or getting vaccinations, and ask if anything is needed for them to feel safer.
- respect and use preferred pronouns.

To enhance physical safety:

- identify opportunities for increasing privacy (e.g., preference to receive vaccination not in view of public); always offer choice in this situation as an individual may also not feel safe in a separate area.
- ask for permission before touching people.
- explain when and how they will be touched.
- provide clear and comprehensive signage.

To enhance cultural safety:

- understand and be able to communicate key information about vaccine contents and production.
- take an explicitly anti-racist/anti-oppressive stance, recognizing that some communities have justified fears about vaccination.
- acknowledge and apologize immediately when you become aware of words or actions that may negatively impact cultural safety.
- strive to have staff and volunteers from groups that are representative of the diverse populations seeking vaccination (e.g., BIPOC, various ages and abilities, LGBTQ2S+, etc.)
- ensure informational materials, signage, etc. are available in the predominate languages of those being vaccinated.

3

TVIC Principle: Foster opportunities to connect, collaborate, and offer meaningful choices.

What to Know

- When people are treated with kindness and respect, trust and engagement with members of the vaccination team is facilitated.
- Recognize that the choice to be vaccinated can be difficult for many.

Recognize that a person's choice to not receive the vaccine may actually be a 'not yet' choice – maintaining respect, autonomy, and dignity for a person and their choice may keep the door open to a later change of mind.



What to Do

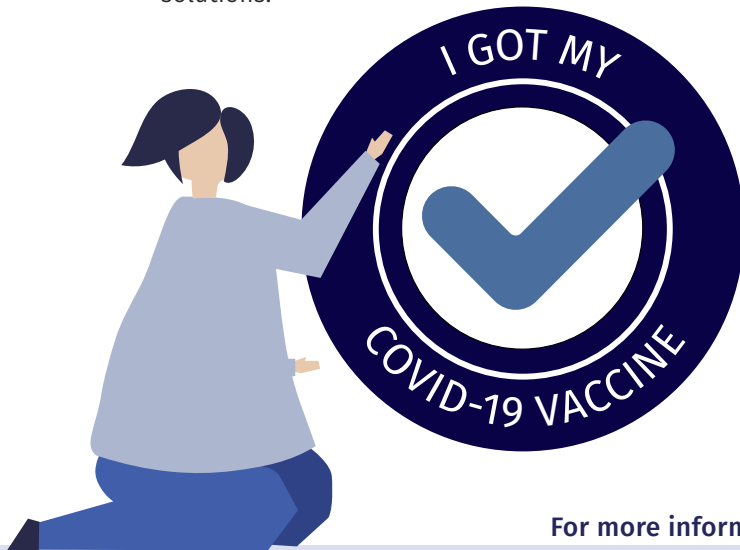
- In every encounter (phone, virtual, or in-person) be non-judgmental and welcoming.
- In mass immunization clinics, ensure people don't feel they are 'just a number.'
- Remove physical, technological, and other barriers to accessing vaccines.
- Utilize a mobile clinic model to provide immunizations to priority and/or marginalized populations.
- Acknowledge and validate the person's choice regarding vaccination.

4

TVIC Principle: Use a strengths-based and capacity building approach to support staff and clients.

What to Know

- By identifying and building upon a person's strengths, we become less focused on "fixing" a problem and more engaged in working collaboratively to identify solutions.



What to Do

- Build confidence by listening to, validating, and addressing concerns – do not dismiss or minimize concerns/questions.
- If an individual is "afraid of needles" – ask them to describe strategies that made it easier for them in the past or offer options for comfort (e.g., distraction, pretending to blow bubbles).
- Use terms such as **vaccine uptake** rather than vaccine hesitancy/resistance/refusal (which express judgment; places blame on individual rather than conditions that create barriers to uptake); or discuss *vaccine confidence*/barriers to vaccine confidence.
- Thank individuals for getting vaccinated and for their individual contribution to COVID-19 prevention efforts.
- Hand out stickers/pins!

For more information on TVIC, please visit <https://GTVIncubator.uwo.ca/>

¹ Government of Canada (2020). Canada's COVID-19 Immunization Plan: Saving lives and livelihoods. <https://bit.ly/38rVvbu>

Citation: Jack, S.M., Wathen, C.N., & Lokko, H. on behalf of the PHN-PREP Project Team (2021) Trauma-and violence-informed care approach to COVID-19 vaccination delivery [<https://phnprep.ca/resources/tvic-covid-19-vaccination-delivery>]. School of Nursing, McMaster University.

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