Oregon Continues to Grapple With Addiction and Mental Health Crisis

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A new clinical resource addressing trauma-informed care and its role in substance use disorder recovery has been published by Serenity Lane, an Oregon-based non-profit addiction treatment provider. The resource explains what trauma-informed care actually is and how it works in practice. It also discusses why it matters for Oregonians who are navigating addiction alongside unresolved trauma. This comes as Oregon continues to face one of the most significant behavioral health crises in the country, with demand for integrated trauma and addiction services far outpacing available resources statewide.

The resource opens with a clear and direct statement of why this approach matters in addiction treatment: "Trauma is not required for someone to develop a substance use disorder. But it is common. Research consistently shows that a large majority of individuals entering addiction treatment report histories of abuse, neglect, violence, or other significant trauma." That framing positions trauma not as a complication of addiction recovery, but as a central factor in understanding it ? and one that treatment programs can no longer afford to overlook.

For anyone navigating substance use disorder alongside unresolved trauma, understanding what

trauma-informed care actually looks like in practice can be a meaningful first step. Treatment programs that are able to integrate trauma awareness into their clinical assessments, group settings, and individual care planning tend to be able to create safer conditions where people feel comfortable enough to do the deeper work of recovery. That sense of safety, research increasingly suggests, is not incidental to outcomes ? it is foundational to them.

The resource goes on to address one of the most important clinical reframes in modern addiction treatment ? the question providers ask when trauma is present. Historically, addiction has been framed as a failure of willpower or character. Trauma-informed care challenges that frame directly. Rather than asking what is wrong with a person, it asks what happened to them instead. It recognizes that substance use can oftentimes develop as a nervous system response to unresolved pain, not as a moral failing.

As the behavioral health field continues to move toward integrated, whole-person care models, the gap between what research supports and what treatment programs can actually deliver remains a pressing concern. Programs that address the substance use ? but forget to account for any underlying traumas ? take the risk of treating the symptoms alone and leaving the root causes still intact. This dynamic contributes to relapse, treatment dropout, and long-term instability. Oregon's ongoing behavioral health crisis, compounded by years of underfunding and workforce shortages, makes the publication of resources like this one timely. The broader question for providers across the state is no longer whether trauma-informed care is best practice ? the evidence on that is well established. The question is how quickly it becomes standard practice, and what that shift will mean for the thousands of Oregonians who need more than a single-axis approach to recovery.

About Serenity Lane: Serenity Lane has been helping people overcome substance and alcohol use disorders since 1973. All of the programs they offer have been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). They have introduced many new programs in Oregon, such as residential step-down and outpatient programs that integrate residential and outpatient services. They have also been the provider of Oregon's only Addiction Counselor Training Program. Some of their graduates are now offering their services through various treatment programs nationwide.

Serenity Lane: Finding Serenity in Long-Term Recovery

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Serenity Lane Bend Outpatient Treatment

Serenity Lane was established as a private, non-profit addiction treatment center for alcoholism and drug use in 1973. We have programs throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington. We believe that recovery from addiction is possible.

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