




A. Intro: The Need for Trauma-informed Financial Education






Economic Empowerment Project



Major Obstacle:
Financial dependence/
Financial insecurity



Economic Empowerment Project



Empowering Survivors \$
=
Financial Literacy?




Economic Empowerment Project



Lessons learned:

- Not useful for people experiencing trauma.
- No acknowledgment of role of trauma in victims' relationship to \$.
- No acknowledgement of trauma undercutting financial wellness.



What's the problem with (non-TI) Financial Literacy?

"For decades now, the pervasive mindset across the country has been that, if poor people just had the knowledge to make sound financial decisions, they could lift themselves out of their financial despair. The idea was that, with knowledge, low-income people and people of color would be motivated, have an "a-ha" moment about how to change their 'destructive' behaviors."

Prosperity Now's [Financial Coaching Program Design Guide: A Participant-Centered Approach](#)




“Even if someone attends all the financial literacy courses in town...

- *if they are living below the minimum wage,*
- *if they are unable to afford safe housing,*
- *if they are unseen by financial institutions, and*
- *if larger structural barriers – such as policies that deter saving, lack of affordable housing stock, discriminatory practices in lending and neighborhood segregation – continue to be at play...*

... They will not be able to overcome barriers that impede their ability to thrive financially and accumulate wealth.”

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What's the problem
with (non-TI) Financial
Literacy?

EMBEDDED LEGACIES

Denies the impact of systems of oppression.



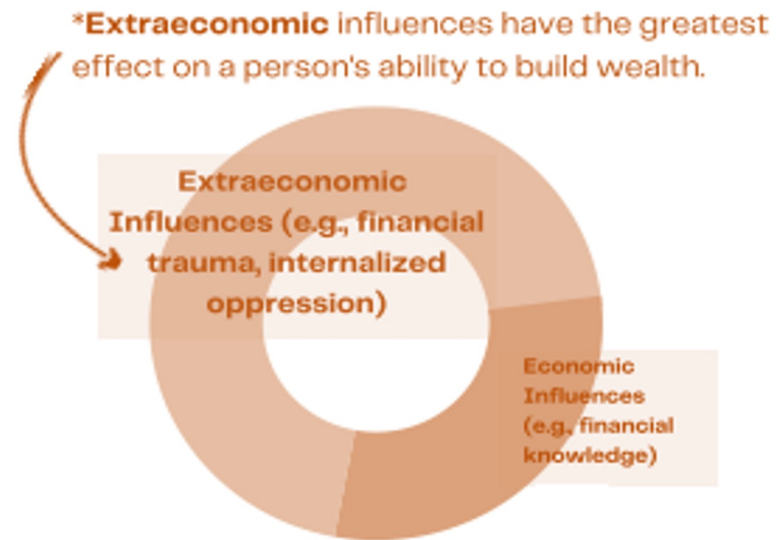
Emphasizes *individual behavior* over *oppressive systems*.



Normalizes economic violence.



Why Does this Matter?



McKenzie, C (in press) Broadening our understanding of wealth-building capability: A briefing paper. The Center for Financial Trauma and Wealth Justice.

Re-imagining the Meaning of Financial Empowerment

- Survivor-centered
- No more victim-blaming frameworks
- Prioritize healing





Becoming Trauma-Informed

Understanding role of trauma
in client's recovery.



Promotes safety, trust, and
compassion.



Knowledge about trauma
belongs to everyone.



