

Position Statement:

Trauma informed care in the Psychology and Therapeutic Services

Summary

Trauma-informed care is an ever-evolving field which emphasises that trauma is a possibility in the lives of all individuals and communities, and that organisations have a responsibility to respond to this by offering a conscious trauma-reducing approach to care, as opposed to trauma inducing.

In this position statement we will summarise our activity in relation to trauma informed care and will explain our guiding principles in meeting the goal of being trauma-reducing in our everyday practice.

Purpose

P&TS has developed this position statement to affirm the importance of trauma-informed care (TIC) for psychologists and therapeutic practitioners. We advocate that TIC should be central to our offer for children, young people, families, and other professionals. TIC for the P&TS also includes looking inward to our own resilience as a service to ensure the best delivery of support to our clients, recognising diversity in trauma presentation, appreciating the unique experiences of particular communities, and practicing in a manner that supports recovery and limits risks of re-traumatisation.

Defining Trauma and Trauma informed care

We understand that the terminology around trauma may sometimes be unclear. We agree with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) who define trauma as the result of *“an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”* (2014)

It is important to understand that trauma and adversity are not the same thing, adverse experiences are not necessarily traumatic, and we do not subscribe to the idea that experiencing difficulties leads to trauma. Everyone will internalise and make sense of their experiences in different ways, and we hold hope that despite challenges the people we care for will not suffer with post-traumatic stress symptomology.

We understand that trauma-informed care must involve the following fundamental elements:

- ***Realise*** the widespread impact of trauma, stress and adversity and understands potential paths for healing and recovery.
- ***Recognise*** the signs and symptoms of trauma in staff, clients and all others involved in the system.
- Actively ***Resists*** re-traumatisation (committed to being trauma-reducing instead of trauma-inducing)
- ***Responds*** by fully and meaningfully integrating, embedding and infusing knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, language, culture, practices and settings
- We believe trauma informed services are also ***Reflective*** in their practice, which involves curiosity about ourselves in the work we do. With a fundamental focus on ***Relationships*** at the heart of our work.

The development of trauma informed care in the Psychology and Therapeutic Services

We have committed to developing trauma informed care in the following ways:

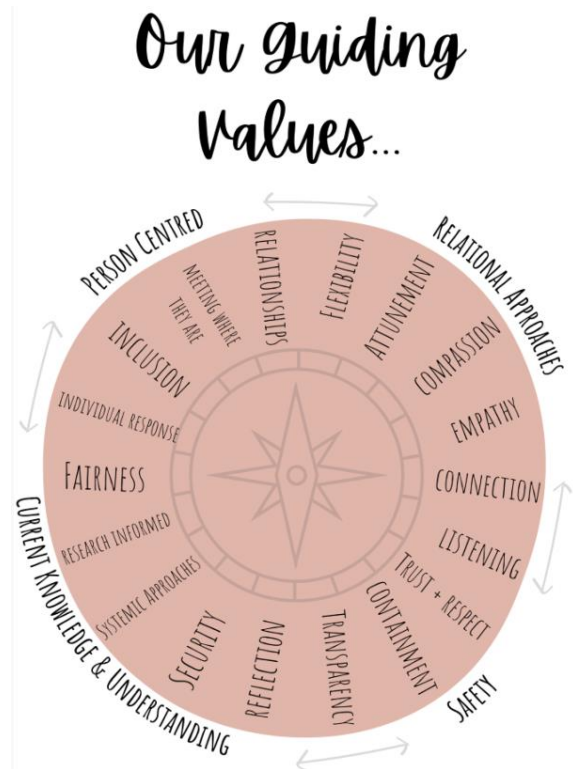
- Using an organisational approach, where we look to the issues and resilience factors within our own service to ensure staff, colleagues and professionals understand and embody our trauma-informed principles.
- Research into shared TIC values and principles, using a participatory approach across the P&TS. This research has informed our guiding principles compass.
- A specific working party to consider, reflect on and steer future TIC throughout the P&TS.
- Ongoing professional development opportunities around trauma informed care, including dissemination from trauma working party at service days.

Our guiding trauma-informed principles/values

These values were co-produced using a participatory research approach, gathering the views of members across the P&TS and incorporating these into our graphic. This compass means that we commit to:

- **Prioritise person centred approaches and safety.**
- **Utilise relational approaches.**
- **Ensure we build our knowledge and understanding.**

We feel our compass of guiding principles aligns with the fundamental elements of trauma-informed care described above. Please see the table below to illustrate this assertion.



Fundamental element	Our compass element	How they align	Some examples in practice
<i>Realise the widespread impact of trauma, stress and adversity and understands potential paths for healing and recovery.</i>	Prioritise person-centred approaches	By taking the time to understand individuals and hear their voices, we can identify adversity and their unique paths for recovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timelines, genograms • Person-centred formulation

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person-centred planning tools (i.e., PATH)
<i>Recognise the signs and symptoms of trauma in staff, clients and all others involved in the system.</i>	Utilise relational approaches	Through attunement, compassion, and empathy we can notice signs and symptoms of difficulty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathering information through assessment and observation Utilise psychologically informed frameworks
<i>Actively Resists re-traumatisation (committed to being trauma-reducing instead of trauma-inducing)</i>	Prioritise safety	We understand that safety is needed first to reduce the perception of threat and the potential for re-traumatisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider physical safety, relational safety, emotional safety of spaces/meetings
<i>Responds by fully and meaningfully integrating, embedding and infusing knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, language, culture, practices and settings</i>	Ensure we build our knowledge and understanding	We are committed to psychologically informed ways of working and ongoing systemic work to ensure of policy and practice aligns with trauma informed care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access CPD Engagement of trauma working party Sharing best practice

Key messages/elements

- Central to our understanding of trauma informed care is ensuring our own service is working from a place of safety in order to deliver effective trauma informed care.
- We respect the variety of methods and wealth of unique experiences our staff offer, all of which can be delivered within our trauma informed guiding principles and values. We hope our compass captures this breadth.
- We always aim to utilise psychologically informed, trauma sensitive care when working with children, young people, families, and other services. We have committed to developing this way of working by increasing knowledge, understanding and career development over time.
- Our overall position on trauma-informed care is that it is an ever-evolving area of research and literature and that we are committed to a journey that aligns with the latest knowledge and information.

Additional resources/signposting

Below we have listed some online resources that support our work and that we would recommend to others interested in trauma informed care.

[beaconhouse.org.uk/resources/
Safe Hands Thinking Minds | Relational and developmental trauma in children](https://beaconhouse.org.uk/resources/Safe_Hands_Thinking_Minds)
[UK Trauma Council](https://www.uktraumacouncil.org/)
[Addressing trauma and adversity | Resources | YoungMinds](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/Addressing_trauma_and_adversity)
[Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice)

References

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (2014). Trauma-informed care in behavioral health services.