

Trauma Informed Care: Theory to Practice

Homelessness NSW 2018 Conference

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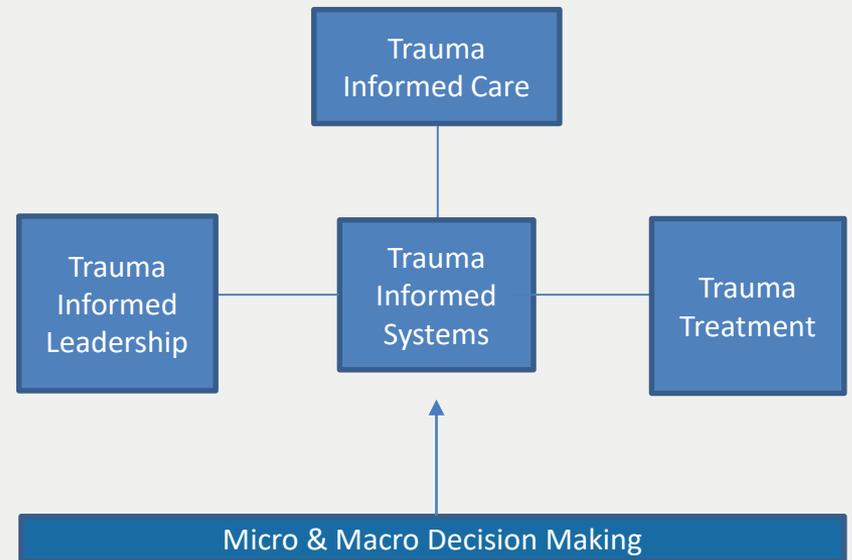


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The Systems Approach to Trauma Informed Care

- Trauma does not happen in a vacuum
- Every aspect of service delivery has the potential to create a re-traumatising environment
- Systems govern the ‘what’ and the ‘how’
- A trauma-informed lens must be applied to decision making about the ‘what’ and the ‘how’



At the heart of trauma healing are the systems that govern not just what we do, but how we do it.



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Key Principles

- Understand trauma and its impact
- Understand vicarious trauma and its impact
- Promote safety
- Ensure cultural humility
- Support client control, choice and autonomy
- Share power and governance
- Create a holistic system of care
- Develop caring and supportive relationships
- Engage in ongoing boundary analysis
- Believe that recovery is possible

Adapted from the Headington Institute, 2010

“Every individual has his or her own power, and it is a matter of working, taking time and defining what power is”
-Jill Scott



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What do we mean when we say, Trauma Informed Care?

“Psychological trauma is an affiliation of the powerless. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force. When the force is that of nature, we speak of disasters. When the force is that of other human beings, we speak of atrocities. Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning...Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe”

Herman (1992)

What’s the significance?
The acknowledgement of the layers of impact that traumatic experiences have—form the backbone of trauma-informed care.



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‘Trauma is about loss of connection—to ourselves, to our bodies, to our families, to others and to the world around us. This loss of connection is often hard to recognise, because it doesn’t happen all at once. It can happen slowly, over time, and we adapt these subtle changes sometimes without even noticing them...we may simply sense that we do not feel quite right without ever becoming fully aware of what is taking place; that is, the gradual undermining of our self-esteem, self-confidence, feelings of wellbeing and connection to life’

Levine (2008)



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Crisis—the first stage of intervention? Or?

1. Crisis is often the breaking point where an individual's vulnerability has been exposed...we often fail to recognise that often the individual has been living with the events that have caused the 'crisis' for some time and are rich with their own resources and skills
2. Why do we wait until the point of crisis before interventions are targeted?



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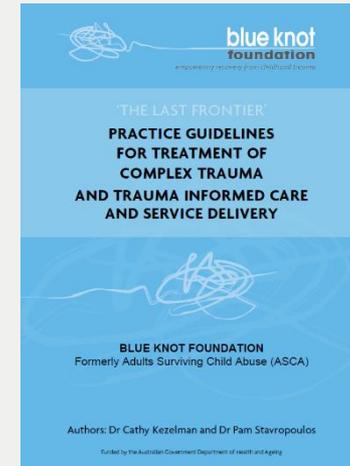
Tools for Implementing Trauma Informed Care

Blue Knot Foundation: Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery

Being trauma informed means:

1. Promoting coordination between and among systems of care
2. Revising all policies and procedures to incorporate trauma informed principles
3. Involve consumers in all systems and articulate and uphold trauma informed rights
4. Review education and training (ongoing) to incorporate trauma informed principles
5. Promote education on trauma
6. Promote respect for diversity

www.blueknot.org.au/about-us/ourdocuments/publications/practice-guidelines



**“Without such a shift in both perspective and practice, the dictum to ‘do no harm’ is compromised, recipients of mental health services are hurt and re-traumatised, recovery and healing are prevented, and the transformation of mental health care...will remain a vision with no substance in reality”
-Jennings (2004)**

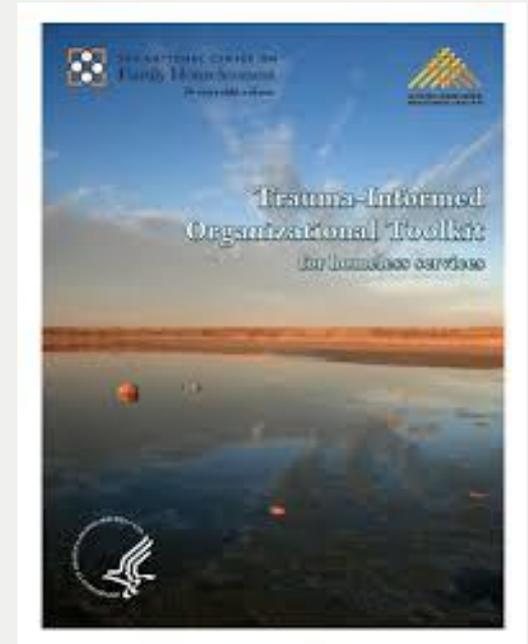


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National Center on Family Homelessness: Trauma Informed Organisational Toolkit

- Trauma informed organisational self-assessment is designed to help programs evaluate their practices and based on their findings adapt programs and practice to support recovery and healing among their clients
- Takes the principled approach of the Blue Knot Foundation and turns it into a practical 'how to' guide

<http://www.nada.org.au/media/14607/tictoolkitforhomelesservicesusa.pdf>

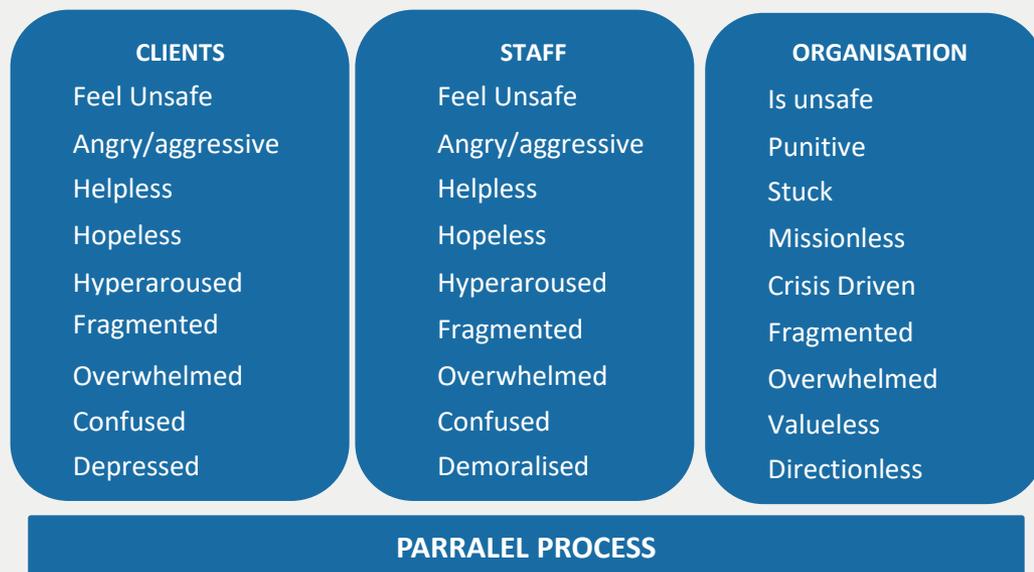


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Headington Institute: Understanding and Addressing Vicarious Trauma

- We must invest in the people that walk alongside those impacted by trauma, whilst acknowledging that they too may have experienced trauma
- Online training module that focuses on understanding the process of vicarious trauma, recognise the signs and learn strategies to address it
http://headington-institute.org/files/vtmoduletemplate2_ready_v2_85791.pdf



“Often as workers we forget how many traumatic experiences we have been exposed to in our lives—at home and at work. Often we assume that we become more resilient than the trauma we experience but this is not always necessarily the case”
Bennett (2015)

Bloom & Farragher (2010)



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Next Steps

- Do no harm
- Create safe and rights-based environments
- Promote the achievement of equality
- Create client-centred environments with individualise care plans
- Operate on empowerment principles, creating partnerships with service users and allowing service users to not just 'contribute' but take control over their lives and the service being offered to them
- Consider the severity and duration of trauma as a means to assess the impact of trauma
- Share information clearly and transparently
- Ensure all staff are trained in elements of trauma and are attuned to the way trauma can present explicitly and implicitly
- Introduce alternatives—'doing what you have always done, will result in getting what you have always got'
- Create culturally competent, sensitive and aware environments for people to process and learn to sit comfortably with their trauma
- Promote and engage in collaborative practice as a way of reducing the rate of re-traumatisation
- Value and respect your teams/colleagues. They deserve the same level of valuing, respect and care we give our clients.



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