

Trauma Informed Practice

Trauma-Informed Practice is a strengths-based approach, which seeks to understand and respond to the impact of trauma on people's lives. The approach emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone and aims to empower individuals to re-establish control of their lives.



Trauma can occur from events such as an accident, adverse childhood experiences, an assault or prolonged abuse. In most cases we are able to recover from events which trigger the stress response system. However trauma occurs when the stress response system is triggered again and again and a person rarely goes back to a resting state. We are able to overcome the adverse impact of traumatic events by practicing self care and having access to compassionate, trust worthy relationships. However for some individuals, they do not recover and this may impact on their behaviour, relationships and engagement with services.

By incorporating the 6 Trauma Informed Principles into our interactions we can help to prevent someone from feeling triggered and create psychological safety. The 6 principles are: Collaboration, Trust, Empowerment, Choice and Cultural Consideration. These principles support a genuine two-way conversation and a willingness to listen to new information and find solutions together.

The descriptions below also take into account the Team Wigan Behaviours; Positive, Accountable, Courageous and Kind and an Asset Based Approach.

Safety

- We prioritise physical, psychological and emotional safety by being **kind** and considerate
- People know they are safe or can say what they need to feel safe to prevent re-traumatisation
- We are fair and inclusive, everyone has the same opportunities and feels like they belong and are included.

Trustworthiness

- There is transparency in how we do things
- We explain what we are doing and why
- We are **accountable**, expectations are clear and we do not overpromise

Choice

- There is shared decision-making and **positive** goal setting to enable healing and recovery
- The needs and wishes of people are listened to and they have a voice
- Choices are clearly explained

Collaboration

- We involve people in improving systems and services
- We ask people what they need and talk about how we can do it
- We are **positive** and work alongside and actively involve people

Cultural consideration

- We are **courageous** and understand and challenge cultural stereotypes and biases
- We know our communities and can connect people with the things that matter to them
- We are person centred

Empowerment

- We are **kind**, validate feelings and show empathy
- We listen to what a person wants and needs
- We know everyone is unique and they are supported to make decisions, take action and know their individual assets

Trauma Responses

It is important that we consider the potential links between current difficulties and past experiences. Re-traumatisation can occur when a current experience triggers the same, or similar, emotional, psychological and/or physiological response as an original, traumatic experience. Trauma responses may be triggered when we do not understand how our interactions remind a person of a past trauma and may trigger a trauma response. When a person feels triggered, it may impact on their ability to communicate effectively.

Trauma Response	How people are perceived
Fight	<i>Challenging, disruptive, hostile, argumentative, or aggressive.</i>
Flight	<i>Difficult to engage, avoidant or evasive.</i>
Freeze	<i>Un-responsive, shows no emotion, or not interested.</i>
Flop	<i>Needs to take responsibility, in denial or unmotivated.</i>
Friend	<i>People pleaser or overly compliant.</i>

Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board is committed to incorporating a trauma responsive approach into all our learning and development and in supporting our partners in adopting this approach, into the services they provide in the borough. If you would like to find out more you may wish to attend our Trauma and Resilience training by visiting our [Learning and Development Brochure](#).

Learning from Adult Safeguarding Reviews- A key finding from Safeguarding Adult Reviews which have undertaken by WSAB has highlighted the need for professional curiosity. This is key in identifying different types of abuse, not taking things at face value and thinking 'What happened to you?', you can find further information [here](#).

"If a flower doesn't grow, you fix the environment in which the flower grows, not the flower"

Alexander Den Heijer

Further Resources

Perceived non engagement- WSAB Guidance

[UK Government Working Definition of Trauma Informed Practice](#)

[Trauma Informed Toolkit- Scottish Government](#)

[The Wisdom of Trauma- Gabor Mate](#)

[TED Talk- How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime, Dr Nadine Burke Harris](#)