

Framework for trauma-informed practice

Practice domains

Trauma-informed practice supports the wellbeing of everyone, regardless of whether they are currently, or have previously, experienced trauma. The framework includes practice domains, which guide the identification of strengths and gaps in practice and should be used when:

- seeking to create safe spaces
- developing policies and procedures
- for reflective practice and supervision of practitioners.

Practice Domains

Knowledge and understanding – trauma-informed practice begins with the needs of people that have experienced trauma and of service providers having the knowledge, skills and confidence to respond to those needs in a manner that promotes safety, healing and recovery.

‘I assume that everyone may have experienced trauma at some point in their lives’

Safety – fundamental to our recovery from trauma and experience of wellbeing, is our sense of safety, including physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual and cultural safety. For a service to assist someone, attending to their safety is the first priority.

‘I trust that when I have a problem, someone will help, and something will be done’

Relationship based and collaborative – relationships are the basis of an effective service response. For people to receive a safe and helpful service, they must experience practitioners as authentic, attuned, empathic, trustworthy and non-judgemental.

‘We see relationships as the platform for wellbeing and healing and structure service offerings around this understanding’

Client voice – client involvement is an essential ingredient of a quality service system and aligns with human rights for participation. It is the main source of information about the safety, quality and effectiveness of services and should be a vital part of program and system design and evaluation.

‘I am visible, people listen to me and I feel understood’

Holistic approach – a holistic view means understanding and flexibly responding to a person’s culture, identity and context. This includes understanding a person’s unique lived experience and identifying a person’s strengths and resources for their recovery, along with the presenting problem (Schultz et al 2014).

‘Assessments in our service consider a person’s views, needs, preferences and developmental age and stage’

Focus on wellbeing – wellbeing is a complex mix of a person’s physical, mental, emotional and social health factors. Wellbeing is strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction. A focus on wellbeing means that services value and work towards the wellbeing of the people working within them as well as focusing on the wellbeing, healing and recovery of people using services.

‘All services implement strategies to prevent burnout and vicarious trauma’

Reflection – reflective practice is the foundation of professional development – it makes meaning from experience and transforms insights into practical strategies for learning, growth and organisational impact.

‘I understand that reflective practice is not a luxury. It is vital for a safe service, and it prevents mistakes that could harm people’



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