



# TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH INFORMATION SHEET

WORKING IN COMMUNITY

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The Trauma-Informed Approach Information Sheet provides general guidelines for a trauma-informed approach in delivering the Moreton Bay Disaster Preparedness course for people that do not have trauma-informed approach training.

The Information Sheet aims to assist with maintaining the wellbeing of employed and volunteer staff, and the communities they work with by highlighting the importance of self-awareness and the awareness of others when providing and delivering sensitive content, such as disaster management preparedness within CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) and other community groups.

## To do this, the information sheet:

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# Five key points in relation to trauma-informed approach and trauma

## 1. What is trauma-informed?

- Acknowledging that people have their own histories and lived experiences which may include trauma, abuse, violence, and other hardships.
- Provides a safe environment for trainers and trainees to reduce the risk of re-traumatisation (the sense of re-living the trauma) and create opportunities that rebuild sense of control and empowerment.

## 2. The purpose of trauma-informed approach

- To provide awareness that trainers and trainees can be negatively affected by teaching content.
- Provide general guidelines for ways to appropriately respond and support trainers and trainees who may be affected by teaching content.
- Contribute to learning and post-traumatic growth in a structured, predictable, and safe environment.

## 3. What is trauma?

- Any event resulting in a lasting negative effect on the person (Krupnik, 2019). The lasting negative effect is context dependent with individual differences in experience and response. This means that some people can become traumatised by events, and some people will not.

## 4. Types of traumas

- Complex trauma: interpersonal (between people), repeated and ongoing abuse, neglect or other negative events which usually occurs in childhood, or from repeated violence as an adult.
- Burnout: the cumulative effect of exposure to other's trauma characterised by feelings of hopelessness and impaired ability to function at work. Fatigue, anxiety, depression, and insomnia are commonly experienced.

- Compassion fatigue: frustration and loss of empathy for others because of burnout.
- Re-traumatisation: sense of reliving the traumatic event which occurs from reminders and includes feeling agitated or numb, and having negative thoughts and moods.
- Secondary Traumatic Stress: feelings of avoidance, hyper arousal, and intrusion from working with and listening to survivor's descriptions of violence, sexual assault, and child abuse.
- Vicarious trauma: specific cognitive changes in one's sense of self or worldview.

## 5. Examples of the way trauma can be experienced

- Mild to severe and persistent emotional problems e.g., mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, personality disorders.
- A decline in cognitive functioning e.g., difficulties in learning new information, changes in memory and response to stress.
- Increased health risk behaviours e.g., overuse of drugs and alcohol, eating disorders, risk-taking behaviour.
- Any relationship changes including disconnection from social groups, friends, and family.
- Overall sense of hopelessness e.g., no aspect of one's life is good.

### Remember:

No two people are the same; the characteristics of the traumatic event, whether it was singular or ongoing, how it was interpreted by the individual and what sociocultural factors or supports were provided will affect how the person experiences trauma.

# General trainer guidelines including what to do if someone appears distressed

1. Remember people have different lived histories relating to negative childhood experiences, oppression, violence, disconnection and isolation from culture and community, defence services veterans, and impacts by natural disasters (e.g., floods, fires, droughts).
2. Having self-awareness, knowledge of the learning material and the ability to manage your own responses and reactivity can help create an environment of empathy and openness when exploring what could be interpreted as difficult content (e.g., disaster management).
3. Be respectful and understanding that positive interactions are crucial.
4. Acknowledge the content may be difficult, though may not necessarily lead to a trauma response and recommend self-care and care of others.
5. Develop safety by checking in with people and ask how they are going emotionally.
  - You can do this by expressing your concern, in private (out of the classroom environment), by simply asking “Are you ok?”
  - Listen mindfully and remain calm.
  - Keep an open mind, without agreeing or disagreeing. Try not to be critical or judgemental. Remember that you do not need to solve the problem.
  - Rather, you can provide support by advising the person to seek crisis support from the list below.
6. Relating to one another in a trauma-informed manner “does no harm” and highlights the way we treat each other as human beings.

# Collective-care and Self-care for trainers and community

**Collective-care** refers to meeting the training outcomes whilst caring for the health of staff and community (e.g., checking in with staff and offering time for self-care).

**Self-care** refers to undertaking certain activities with the intention of enhancing one's welfare to reduce stress and restore mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

Everyone is different and developing a unique self-care regime may require some guidance from a health care professional who can work with you to identify and increase aspects of your life that provide joy and decrease aspects that may be harmful.

Mindfulness, as a self-care approach, is encouraged in different work and education settings and can be useful for people who have experienced trauma.

Effective mindfulness strategies include:

- Meditation (quiet sitting or lying down with intention).
- Guided meditations (Apps such as 'Calm' and 'Headspace' provide short and longer guided meditations).
- Walking safely in nature (can calm the nervous system).
- Breathwork (focussing on the breath for a few minutes at a time).
- Understanding your own emotions and managing them (emotional regulation).
- If you are reacting to someone, think about what your own experiences may be that you are reacting to and take a step back from the situation. Ask a colleague for help if needed.

## Remember:

Practicing relaxation techniques regularly will create good routines that shape your self-care. Eat foods that are good for you, drink adequate water (6-8 glasses a day), develop sleep habits that allow for 7 hours sleep (by avoiding excessive alcohol and caffeine), and exercise safely (walking outside in a park with a friend or family member is great exercise when feeling stressed or overwhelmed). Importantly, where possible, spend quality time with people who genuinely care about and who you care about.

# Local and National support services for trainers and community

## LIFELINE - 13 11 14

National charity providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

## 1800 RESPECT - 1800 737 732

24-hour confidential, counselling and support service for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

## BEYOND BLUE - 1300 224636

Mental health and wellbeing support organisation who provide support programs to address issues related to depression, suicide, anxiety disorders and other related mental illnesses.

## BLUEKNOT - 1300 657 380

National Centre of Excellence for Complex Trauma  
Monday - Sunday, 9am-5pm AEST [helpline@blueknot.org.au](mailto:helpline@blueknot.org.au)

## BLUEKNOT - Disability Service - 1800421 468

Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm

## WORLD WELLNESS GROUP - 1300 079 020

Multicultural health and wellbeing service for marginalised migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum.

Monday - Friday, 9am- 4.30pm

## THE QUEENSLAND PROGRAM OF ASSISTANCE TO SURVIVORS OF TORTURE AND TRAUMA (QPASST) - 07 3391 6677

Provides therapeutic services to individuals, families, and communities from refugee background. Including individual and family counselling to support people recover from the refugee-related trauma, therapeutic group work (including social groups with therapeutic focus) and other community engagement activities and initiatives that support healing (e.g., youth activities, family fun days, mental health literacy workshops).

Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm

## QUEENSLAND TRANSCULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE

(QTMHC) - 1800 188 189 or 07 33171234

Provides statewide specialist mental health consultation services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds across all ages. We conduct mental health assessment and brief interventions and support service providers to work more effectively with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Monday - Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm

## OWN HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

### Further training:

The Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASST)

Deliver training to service providers on topics related to refugee-related trauma, wellbeing, healing, and recovery.

Call: 07 3391 6677

Email: [qpasst\\_training@qpasst.org.au](mailto:qpasst_training@qpasst.org.au)

### References:

Blue Knot Foundation: [blueknot.org.au](http://blueknot.org.au)

[Everymind.org.au](http://Everymind.org.au)

Krupnik, V. (2019). Trauma or adversity? *Traumatology*, 25(4), 256-261.

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