

**Pillars of Trauma-Informed Practice**

The six pillars of Trauma-informed Practice are:

**Safety - Trust - Choice - Collaboration,**

**Empowerment - Cultural Consideration**

A compassionate approach creates a calm, kind environment in which people can avoid triggers for their past trauma and in which they can thrive by learning to manage their emotions. Some ways that professionals may think/behave include:

* Active listening
* Reduce “them” and “us” attitudes
* No victim blaming
* Building relationships is a priority
* Understand that “irrational” behaviour shows unmet safety or connection needs
* Avoid triggers: no probing questions
* Be aware of signs of trauma in colleagues

**Trauma-Informed Organisations**

The 5 key pillars of trauma-informed practice should be infused throughout an organisation. This extends from how your organisation treats service users, to its systems, and relationships with staff.

Consider how your organisation holds on to ‘people’ at the centre … How you work in partnership, co-produce, or use the knowledge of ‘experts by experience?’

**What are ACES?**

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) are stressful or traumatic experiences that happen in childhood, such as:

* A parent/carer with mental ill health,
* Domestic violence
* Physical or sexual abuse
* Emotional and physical neglect
* Exploitation
* A parent/carer being incarcerated
* Critical illness, survivorship and bereavement

Studies have shown that approximately half of the population has experienced at least one traumatic or stressful event within childhood. This means that there is a large number of children and adults who are at risk of serious negative health outcomes across their life, and may struggle to trust professionals providing important services to them.

**What is Trauma-Informed Practice?**

**Trauma is** a response to anything that is overwhelming and that happens too much, too fast, too soon, or too long. **‘Trauma-informed’** means using a knowledge of psychological trauma and its potential effects to be kind, empathetic and compassionate. It is about recognising how common traumatic stress is, its potential impacts, and acting to avoid the possibility that people are ‘re-traumatised’ or unnecessarily stressed by interacting with you or your service.

**Further Reading & Resources**

E-learning: [ACEs (acesonlinelearning.com)](https://www.acesonlinelearning.com/)

[Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHgLYI9KZ-A)

[An Introduction to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma-Informed Practice - West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (westmidlands-vrp.org)](https://westmidlands-vrp.org/modules/introduction-to-aces/)

[Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice)

[Learning resources & events on trauma | Research in Practice](https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/topics/trauma/)

[Introduction - Trauma-informed practice: toolkit - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/trauma-informed-practice-toolkit-scotland/pages/4/)

[Brené Brown on Empathy - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw)

**Consider in your practice…**

* Think ‘What happened to you?’ Not ‘What’s wrong with you?
* Do you know how to recognise trauma?
* Do you know how to support someone displaying signs of trauma?
* How do you hold on to people at the centre of your practice?
* How do you show compassionate practice in your work?

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