

Trauma-Informed & Culturally Safe Care & Practice

Information for Community Members





Trauma affects a person's thoughts, feelings and behaviours. It can affect their sense of safety and emotional wellbeing and make it difficult to cope with stress and connect with others. Trauma can affect a person for many years and in different ways. Common symptoms include feeling scared, anxious, powerless, isolated, sad, angry, numb, tired and confused. Trauma can result from a single event, or a series of events experienced directly, or from seeing or hearing about trauma from a loved one or community member.¹

Acknowledgements

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Individual Rights

The right to have control, choice and autonomy

You have the right to:

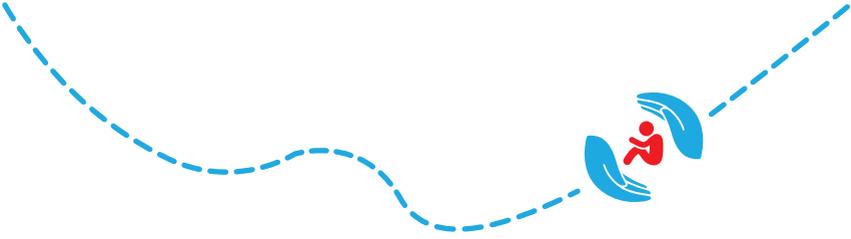
- ✔ Have your point of view heard, respected and valued.
- ✔ Make informed choices and meaningfully participate in developing your service, care and treatment plans.
- ✔ Be empowered and supported to make the best choices for you (and your family).
- ✔ Ask questions.
- ✔ Ask for a second opinion and seek alternate service, care or treatment.
- ✔ Be provided with interpreting and translation services that meet your specific needs and preferences.
- ✔ Access your personal information (e.g. medical records, legal documents).

Service Provider Responsibilities²

Support control, choice and autonomy

Service providers are responsible for:

- ✔ Understanding and respecting individual experiences of trauma and ways of coping and healing.
- ✔ Supporting you to make decisions and communicate your choices.
- ✔ Providing clear information and making time to answer your questions.
- ✔ Providing options that value and respect your individual experiences, knowledge and judgement.
- ✔ Asking permission before providing services or referring you to other services.
- ✔ Making information, forms and letters accessible and easy to understand.
- ✔ Providing appropriate translation and interpreting services when needed and free of charge.



Individual Rights

Service Provider Responsibilities

The right to feel physically and emotionally safe

Provide physically and emotionally safe spaces

You have the right to:

Service providers are responsible for:

- ✔ Feel physically and emotionally safe and be treated with respect, empathy and understanding.
- ✔ Receive services, care and treatment plans tailored to your needs and your cultural background, identity and lived experience.
- ✔ Stop and take a break at any time if you feel upset or uncomfortable.
- ✔ Have a trusted friend, family member or carer with you for support.

- ✔ Creating spaces that make you feel physically and emotionally safe to talk about your experiences.
- ✔ Noticing signs of trauma and getting your permission before discussing topics that may be upsetting.
- ✔ Really listening and ensuring that you feel comfortable, safe and supported.
- ✔ Letting you speak without interrupting and responding using respectful statements that acknowledge and validate your experiences and feelings.
- ✔ Promoting your healing and recovery by focusing on your strengths and abilities, setting forward-looking goals and connecting you with support services that best suit your needs.
- ✔ Ensuring that you have access to qualified and experienced staff with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

The right to receive integrated care

Provide and facilitate integrated care

You have the right to:

Service providers are responsible for:

- ✔ Receive comprehensive, holistic, person-centred and coordinated health and social services.

- ✔ Being responsive to all your needs (physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual) and connecting you with appropriate support and advocacy services when needed.
- ✔ Helping you navigate any systems or processes which are confusing.



Individual Rights

Service Provider Responsibilities

The right to seek help and make a complaint

You have the right to:

- ✓ Raise any concerns and have those concerns addressed meaningfully and quickly.
- ✓ Feel comfortable approaching staff when making a complaint.
- ✓ Feel respected, supported and safe throughout the complaints process and have a trusted support person involved.
- ✓ Be kept informed throughout the process.
- ✓ Seek help and/or make a formal complaint if you feel your concerns have not been properly heard or addressed by the service provider

Facilitate feedback and complaints processes

Service providers are responsible for:

- ✓ Ensuring that people accessing services and staff are made aware of complaints processes and that this information is easy to access and understand.
- ✓ Ensuring that you have access to support services if needed.
- ✓ Keeping your information private and ensuring that you feel safe (for example, by explaining that your complaint will not negatively impact the quality of care and services being provided).
- ✓ Reviewing your complaint in a way that is respectful, fair and impartial (or unbiased).
- ✓ Providing meaningful solutions and genuine remedy or compensation where appropriate.
- ✓ Ensuring that any actions and outcomes are clearly documented and shared promptly with you (and your trusted support person, if you choose).

Complaints pathways can vary depending on the type of complaint and the individual or organisation you wish to make a complaint about. Tech4Justice provides a list of national, state and territory-based complaints pathways, advocacy organisations and useful links for different types of complaints (for example, health care, discrimination, disability, NDIS, policing etc.). For more information, visit www.tech4justice.org.au/.



COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES TO TRAUMA-INFORMED & CULTURALLY SAFE CARE & PRACTICE

Some community groups, including First Nations Peoples, people living with disability, refugees and people seeking asylum and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, often experience overlapping and intersecting (or multiple) forms of racism and discrimination when accessing human services. When accessing services, you have the right to the highest standard of care that is trauma-informed and culturally safe. Because trauma and crisis often go hand in hand, service providers are responsible for interacting with you in a way that reduces the possibilities of re-traumatisation and harm and support your healing and recovery journey.





Service providers are responsible for:

- ✔ Creating a safe, respectful, inclusive, and accessible space – for example by:
 - ✔ Displaying signs that list the different translation and interpreting services available
 - ✔ Displaying signs that reflect people from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences
 - ✔ Responding to your language and communication needs and addressing any physical and/or environmental barriers
 - ✔ Providing community-led training for staff on disability awareness, cultural competency and trauma-informed practice, and
 - ✔ Hiring staff with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences.
- ✔ Ensuring that appropriate interpreting and translation services are made available when needed. This includes:
 - ✔ Asking you the right questions before booking interpreting services – for example, preferred language (including Auslan/English, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and international sign languages), gender, ethnicity, cultural background, or other identity of the interpreter.
 - ✔ Ensuring that services are respectful of community and cultural sensitivities.
 - ✔ Where possible, providing essential information and forms in other languages and ensuring that the information is current and translations are sector-specific and community-led and -reviewed.
 - ✔ Ensuring that any online resources and electronic communications are accessible and compatible with assistive technology.
- ✔ Ensuring that you receive services, care and treatment tailored to your needs, cultural background, identity and lived experiences.
- ✔ Understanding and respecting different cultures and incorporating traditional practices where possible (for example, First Nations cultural and traditional healing practices, Traditional Chinese Medicine).
- ✔ Ensuring that you have access to qualified and experienced staff with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences.

Service providers should not:

- ⊗ Make assumptions about your needs, literacy level (including health literacy), age, disability (or ability) or cultural or other identity.
- ⊗ Make assumptions about your language preferences, stage of healing, who your trusted support person is or who you would like your information shared with.
- ⊗ Use deficit (or non-strength-based) language.
- ⊗ Dismiss your feelings or experiences and their impact (for example, 'move on' or 'be positive').
- ⊗ Use technical terms or acronyms.³
- ⊗ Ask your family member to act as your interpreter.





Support Services

Helplines

13YARN: Call 13 92 76 or visit www.13yarn.org.au

BeyondBlue: Call 1300 22 46 36 or visit www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support

Kids Helpline: Call 1800 55 1800 or visit www.kidshelp.com.au

Lifeline: Call 13 11 14 or visit www.lifeline.org.au

MensLine Australia: Call 1300 78 99 78 or visit <https://mensline.org.au/>

National Disability Abuse & Neglect Hotline: Call 1800 880 052 or visit www.jobaccess.gov.au/service-providers/making-complaint-and-reporting-abuse-and-neglect

Sexual assault, family & domestic violence Line: Call 1800 424 017 or visit www.1800respect.org.au

Advocacy & Support Services

Australian Patients Association provides patient advocacy, information and support: Call 03 9274 0788 or visit www.patients.org.au

Berry Street (Vic) provides trauma services to children, young people and their families in Victoria: Call 03 9429 9266 (or for National Relay Service, call 03 9450 4700) or visit www.berrystreet.org.au/what-we-do/trauma-services

Disability Gateway assists people with disability, their families and carers to locate and access services across Australia: Call 1800 643 787 or visit www.disabilitygateway.org.au

Disability Housing Advocacy Service provides advocacy services for people in supported accommodation: Call 1800 843 929 or visit <https://pwd.org.au/get-help/housing-and-accommodation/disability-housing-advocacy-service/>

Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association provides individual advocacy for people from non-English speaking backgrounds with disability in NSW: Call 1800 629 072 or visit <http://mdaa.org.au/>

National Counselling and Referral Service – Disability: Run by Blue Knot Foundation and provides short-term and trauma-informed counselling services: Call 1800 421 468 (or for National Relay Service, call 133 677 and give 02 6146 1468) or visit <https://blueknot.org.au/national-counselling-referral-service-disability/>

STARTTS (NSW) provides trauma-informed and culturally safe information, treatment and support for refugees and culturally and linguistically diverse communities in NSW: Call 02 9646 6700 or visit www.startts.org.au

Synapse provides support services for people who have been impacted by brain injury and disability: Call 1800 673 074 or visit <https://synapse.org.au/our-services/support-services/>

Links to Other Resources

Self-care & Wellbeing

BeyondBlue provides information about self-care and wellbeing tips and strategies: www.beyondblue.org.au/personal-best/pillar/wellbeing

Headspace provides young people aged between 12-25 information relating to general mental health, physical health, work and study and alcohol and other drugs: <https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/for-young-people/wellbeing/>

Healthtalk Australia provides self-care strategies and real-life patient, carer and health professional stories on film and audio: www.healthtalkaustralia.org/supported-decision-making/self-help-strategies/

ReachOut provides information about different mindfulness, coping and self-care strategies: <https://au.reachout.com/mental-wellbeing/self-care>

WellMob provides social, emotional and cultural wellbeing online resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: <https://wellmob.org.au/>



Other useful links

Children and Young People with Disability Australia provides webinars for parents and caregivers to learn how to navigate the system and support inclusion for young children with disability: <https://www.cyda.org.au/resource/videos>

Disability Advocacy Network Australia provides a list of advocacy organisations available in each state and territory: <https://www.dana.org.au/find-an-advocate/>

Inclusion Australia provides resources for people with intellectual disability and their families: <https://www.inclusionaustralia.org.au/resources/>; and real stories about discrimination, abuse and neglect faced by people with intellectual disability: <https://www.inclusionaustralia.org.au/intellectual-disability/real-stories/>

Tech4Justice provides a list of national, state and territory-based complaints pathways, advocacy organisations and useful links for different types of complaints (e.g. health care, discrimination, disability, NDIS, policing etc.): www.tech4justice.org.au/

Information About Trauma & Cultural Safety

Blue Knot Foundation provides a range of resources and information about trauma and trauma-informed practice: <https://blueknot.org.au>

- Plain English Fact Sheets:
<https://blueknot.org.au/resources/blue-knot-fact-sheets/plain-english/>.
- Easy Read Fact Sheets:
<https://blueknot.org.au/resources/blue-knot-fact-sheets/easy-read/>.
- Auslan Fact Sheets:
<https://blueknot.org.au/resources/blue-knot-fact-sheets/auslan-fact-sheets/>
- Other language Fact Sheets:
<https://blueknot.org.au/resources/blue-knot-fact-sheets/other-languages/>

Department of Health WA video – 'Journey of health and wellbeing': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDYGjkcjUdg>

Emerging Minds video – 'Explainer – what is trauma and adversity': <https://vimeo.com/243599162>

Healing Foundation video – 'Intergenerational Trauma': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlqx8EYvRbQ>

Healing Foundation video – 'Improving the social and emotional wellbeing of First Nations children': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUVgXxa3wK8>

Healing Foundation provides a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing words and their meanings: https://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2020/07/HF_Glossary_of_Healing_Terms_A3_Poster_Jul2020_V1.pdf

Mental Health Coordinating Council – 'Recovery Oriented Language Guide': <https://mhcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Recovery-Oriented-Language-Guide-Mental-Health-Coordinating-Council-2022.pdf>; and 'Recovery Oriented Language Guide: Quick Reference': <https://mhcc.org.au/2021/10/recovery-oriented-language-guide-quick-reference/>

End Notes

1. Healing Foundation, 'Glossary of Healing Terms <https://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2020/07/HF_Glossary_of_Healing_Terms_A3_Poster_Jul2020_V1.pdf>.
2. These guidelines are based on the Mental Health Coordinating Council's (MHCC) eight core values of trauma-informed care and practice: MHCC, 'Trauma-Informed Care and Practice Organisational Toolkit (TICPOT): An Organisational Change Process Resource, Stage 1 - Planning and Audit' (Report, 2018) <<http://www.mhcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TICPOT-Stage-1.pdf>>; MHCC, 'Recover Oriented Language Guide' (2022) <<https://mhcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Recovery-Oriented-Language-Guide-Mental-Health-Coordinating-Council-2022.pdf>>.
3. Healing Foundation, 'Working with Stolen Generations: Understanding trauma: Providing effective GP services to Stolen Generations survivors' (2019) <<https://healingfoundation.org.au/app/uploads/2019/12/Working-with-Stolen-Generations-GP-fact-sheet.pdf>>.

