

# NICOLA LESTER

## Session 4:

### Becoming trauma informed

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# AIMS OF THE SESSION

- Implementing a trauma informed approach in practice: process and challenges
- Learning from practice: making a commitment to a trauma informed approach
- Contributing to the development of a trauma informed organisation

# REVISITING TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

A trauma informed approach recognises the widespread impact of trauma and understands what is needed to facilitate resilience and recovery.

The two core ideas which underpin trauma informed practice are:

1. The understanding that anyone seeking services or support may have experienced trauma.
2. Any professionals or organisations which offer support or work with vulnerable people (of any age) need to recognise and understand the effect of trauma in order to facilitate recovery.

# TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

There are six key principles of being 'trauma-informed':

1. Safety
2. Choice (restoring choice and control)
3. Facilitating connections
4. Supporting coping
5. Responding to identity and context
6. Building strengths

# SAFETY (THIS INCLUDES BOTH PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY)

Creating emotional safety is achieved by drawing on the key components of effective communication skills:

- Being patient
- Being non judgmental
- Being kind
- Being consistent
- Being honest
- Being understanding
- Listening actively
- Bearing witness to distress

# CHOICE (RESTORING CHOICE AND CONTROL)

- It is important to try and give people as much choice and control as possible
- Remember that you are working in collaboration or partnership with the person
- Rather than thinking about doing things 'for' or 'to' someone, think of it as doing things with them.

# FACILITATING CONNECTIONS

- Taking the time to understand a person's networks of support and encouraging them to connect with them
- Developing a relationship based on reciprocity and trust

# SUPPORTING COPING

- Working within the person's level of tolerance and respecting their boundaries
- Prioritising their needs over what you need to do

# RESPONDING TO IDENTITY AND CONTEXT

It is important to think about who you are working with in terms of their:

- Gender
- Background and family
- Religious beliefs
- Political affiliations
- Circumstances

# BUILDING STRENGTHS

- People affected by trauma are extremely resilient
- It is essential to acknowledge their strength and courage and use this as a starting point for any engagement

# CONSULTATION EXERCISE 1: SHARING TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

In your breakout groups:

- Try to come up with examples from your practice of how you are already trauma informed or how you plan to be in the future
- Share these ideas with your group and write them on the chat function

Remember:

It's the little things that make the biggest impact

# BECOMING TRAUMA INFORMED

- The concept of being ‘trauma informed’ is increasing in popularity (valued by partners, commissioners and potential funders)
- A number of different training programmes have been established in recent years to assist organisations in becoming ‘trauma informed’
- There is the potential for the concept to become diluted and lose some of its meaning in practice
- Important to understand the evidence base and recommendations for best practice for implementation

# UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING TRAUMA INFORMED

Improvements to both beneficiaries and staff experiences by:

- Creating a proactive approach to safety
- Creating a safer physical and emotional environment for beneficiaries, their families and staff
- Creating and sustaining opportunities for choice, power and control through increased therapeutic interventions
- Reducing the possibility of re-traumatisation
- Improving the social environment in a way that improves our relationships
- Creating environments which care for and support staff
- Increasing the quality of services, reducing unnecessary interventions and reducing costs
- Reducing the number and types of negative encounters and events
- Creating a resiliency and strengths-based focus
- Increasing beneficiary and family satisfaction
- Increasing success and job satisfaction amongst staff

# EVIDENCE-BASED BENEFITS DOCUMENTED IN THE LITERATURE

- Reduction in trauma symptoms, drug use severity and mental health symptoms
- Increased effectiveness of services - in engagement, retention and outcomes
- Cost effective treatment
- Decreased use of acute care and crisis services
- Increased organisational outcomes such as:
  - enhanced staff skills and morale
  - more collaboration within and outside of the organisation
  - reduced vicarious trauma
  - fewer negative events

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE TRAUMA INFORMED?

- The key principles of a trauma informed approach need to be integrated into all aspects of service development and delivery
- This often requires a culture shift across the organisation to create and sustain a commitment to trauma informed practice
- All staff, receptionist, board member, caseworker, office manager etc, need to share a commitment to trauma informed practice

# THE PROCESS OF BECOMING TRAUMA INFORMED: ESTABLISHING THE STANDARDS

## 1. Becoming ‘trauma aware’

Training and educational programmes for all staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of the impact of trauma.

## 2. ‘Developing Trauma Informed Practice’

Tailored training workshops which focus on developing trauma informed practice across specific contexts

## 3. ‘Committed to Trauma Informed Practice’

Advanced training workshops which focus on identifying and addressing challenges to sustaining a trauma informed approach in practice, continuing professional development and reflective practice.

## 4. Becoming ‘A Trauma Informed Organisation’

Support to map current practice and to identify areas for development.

# BECOMING TRAUMA INFORMED

- It is not a ‘quick fix’ (i.e. it cannot be achieved with a single training workshop)
- It requires theoretical as well as practical knowledge and understanding to support implementation
- It needs commitment and support from the whole organisation
- It needs to be recognised as an ongoing process requiring a continued commitment

# CONSULTATION EXERCISE 2: BARRIERS TO BECOMING TRAUMA INFORMED

In your breakout groups:

- Discuss what you think might be some of barriers to integrating a trauma informed approach to practice
- Share these ideas with your group and write them on the chat function

# BARRIERS TO TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

- Limited resources for training and service development
- Lack of investment from senior management/wider organisation
- Lack of understanding about the approach
- Misconceptions about trauma informed practice (i.e. concerns about the level of resources required to implement and sustain the approach)

# EXAMPLES OF TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

'As things stand, we ask that you attend this appointment **alone**. Partners or other companions must wait outside the hospital. When lockdown rules are eased, this policy may change. Check the hospital website or phone us on 01904 725666 to query the latest rules.'

(word count: 44)

# EXAMPLES OF TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

‘We are incredibly sorry but patients are unable to bring partners or other companions to this appointment. We hope that when the lockdown rules are eased this policy will change. For further information please check the hospital website or phone us on 01904 725666.’

(word count: 44)

# EXAMPLES OF TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

'We are incredibly sorry but due to the current pandemic patients are unable to bring partners or other companions to this appointment. We hope that when the lockdown rules are eased this policy will change. We understand that this restriction may cause disappointment or additional anxiety for some patients and, although we ask that you attend this appointment alone, if your partner or companion has specific questions they wish to ask we would encourage you to write these down and bring them to discuss with the midwife who will allow extra time to go through these and provide information for you to pass on to them. Please note that due to the current circumstances we are waiving our fee for scan photographs so that you share these with your family after your appointment.

If you have any concerns regarding the appointment or feel that you may require additional support, please feel free to contact us beforehand to discuss further.

We look forward to seeing you at the clinic'.

# OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO DEVELOPING TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

- Becoming trauma informed doesn't have to be expensive or time consuming or change the rules
- Organisations can be creative and innovative in their approaches
- Knowledge doesn't always need to be generated from expensive training programmes
- Organisations can take the lead to start this process for themselves
- Remember that many organisations are already practicing and delivering services in a trauma informed way

# RESOURCES FOR TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

- Handbook for developing trauma informed practice
- Website and journal articles provide advice and guidance for best practice
- YouTube videos and other freely available online resources
- Motivation, enthusiasm and commitment are the key qualities needed to create a trauma informed organisation

# CONTRIBUTING TO BECOMING A TRAUMA INFORMED ORGANISATION

1. Establishing ‘Ambassadors for Trauma Informed Practice’ to lead on the development, dissemination and implementation of trauma informed practice across the organisation
  - Staff representing different groups (i.e. delivery staff, trustees, board members, administrative and support staff)
  - Staff who are motivated, enthusiastic and committed to the concept
  - Staff who are able to demonstrate understanding and knowledge

# CONTRIBUTING TO BECOMING A TRAUMA INFORMED ORGANISATION

## 2. Initiating trauma informed reflective practice

- Can be implemented formally or informally (i.e. monthly individual or group sessions)
- Supports the organisation to develop case studies to demonstrate a commitment to practice
- Opportunities to share and disseminate best practice
- Enables a focus on self-care and peer support

# CONTRIBUTING TO BECOMING A TRAUMA INFORMED ORGANISATION

## 3. Self-assessment and mapping trauma informed practice

- Using a series of mapping tools to focus on the experiences of beneficiaries and staff
- Mapping the 6 principles of being trauma informed against individual and organisational practices can be a useful way of identifying areas of achievement and to create ideas for change and enhancement

# A FINAL REMINDER

‘Being trauma informed starts with looking after you’

- Take the time to look after yourselves
- Prioritise your physical and emotional wellbeing
- Engage in activities that you enjoy
- Be kind to yourself

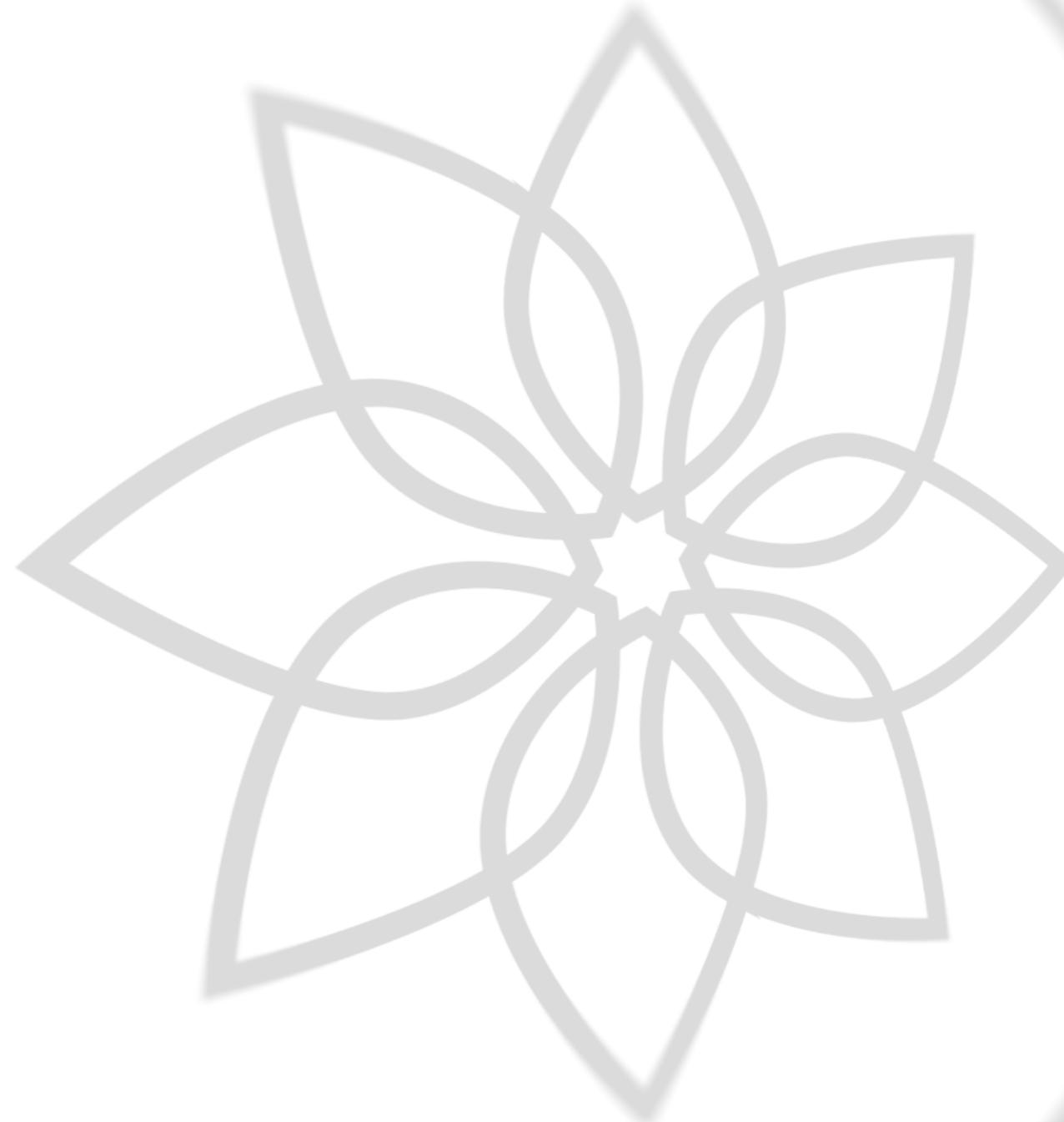


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# QUESTIONS



THANK YOU



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