

SA Collaborative Projects

Trauma Informed care

Notebook V2

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Background

Trauma-informed care recognises that most people, including adults may have experienced trauma during their lives. This approach ensures that care delivery considers the lifelong impact trauma can have on emotions, relationships and overall wellbeing.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety emphasised the importance of training of all aged care workers, especially those providing direct care, in trauma-informed care. The core principles include:

- **Safety** - Establishing a physically and emotionally safe environment.
- **Trustworthiness** - Building transparent honest relationships
- **Choice** - Offering control and decision-making power in care
- **Collaboration** - Engaging the individual, their family, and care providers in joint planning.
- **Empowerment** - Encouraging the individual strengths and fostering independence.
- **Trauma-Informed Care** and Aged Care Quality Standards

This notebook recognises that trauma is a part of many people's lives. Both clients and the staff and volunteers who support them may have lived experience of trauma, or may have been exposed to distressing stories and situations through their work. Such exposure can have real impacts, including vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and emotional strain. The resources, strategies, and links included in this notebook are provided to assist in promoting wellbeing, maintaining healthy boundaries, and fostering a culture of care for staff, volunteers, and clients alike.

Purpose

This guide brings together key trauma-informed care resources relevant to Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and Support at Home providers. It is designed to support:

- Person-centred, rights-based care
- Safe and inclusive service delivery
- Workforce capability development
- Organisational improvement and compliance

A checklist is provided as an appendix in this document that aims to assist individual services or organisations for continuous improvement purposes.

Standards

An outline of key Aged Care Quality standards that directly apply to the provision of

CHSP and connect to the delivery of trauma-informed care are provided.

Standard 1 – The Person: The strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards require providers to deliver person-centred care that respects each individual's history, identity, experiences and preferences, supporting a trauma-informed approach that promotes dignity, choice, cultural safety and emotional wellbeing.

Standard 3 – Care and Services: Trauma-informed care supports the delivery of safe, coordinated and responsive care and services that recognise how past experiences and trauma may affect a person's health, behaviours, communication and engagement.

Trauma-Informed Care in CHSP

Under Standard 3.2, trauma-informed care in CHSP involves adapting care practices to prevent re-traumatization and creating environments that feel safe and supportive. Key components include:

- Trauma-Informed Approach: Recognizing trauma's prevalence and promoting safety and empowerment in care interactions.
- Individualised Care: Developing care plans sensitive to each person's trauma history.
- Dignity and Respect: Ensuring care is delivered with compassion, understanding, and attention to potential triggers.
- Collaboration and Empowerment: Encouraging collaboration with the elderly person and their support system to promote resilience.
- Training and Awareness: Providing trauma-informed care training to staff to ensure they can recognize trauma's effects and adjust care accordingly.

Implementing Trauma-Informed Care

Aged care providers can implement trauma-informed care by integrating these principles into their services, training staff in trauma awareness and fostering an environment that prioritises safety, respect and collaboration. This holistic approach improves care outcomes and supports the emotional and psychological wellbeing of older people. The following provides an overview of key resources that can assist organisations to address essential aspects to ensure a trauma-informed approach.

Policy Contexts and Standards

These resources underpin expectations for trauma-informed, person-centred care in aged care.

- Aged Care Quality Standards – Standard 1: The Person

[Standard 1: The individual | Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission](#)

- Stress and Trauma in Australia (AIHW)
[Stress and trauma - Mental health - AIHW](#)
- Stolen Generations Data and Outcomes (AIHW)
[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations and descendants: numbers, demographic characteristics and selected outcomes, Overview - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)
- Trauma: Understanding and Treatment (Vic Health)
<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/trauma>
- Trauma and Disability support providers Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
- [Trauma informed service provision fact sheet – Disability Services and Inclusion Act 2023](#)

Practice and implementation

Trauma-Informed frameworks, guidelines and tools to embed trauma-informed care across organisations.

- Phoenix Australia – Trauma & Aged Care Hub
<https://www.phoenixaustralia.org/aged-care>
- Australian PTSD Guidelines
<https://www.phoenixaustralia.org/australian-guidelines>
- Mental Health Coordinating Council Trauma-Informed Care Toolkit (TICPOT)
<https://www.mhcc.org.au/resources/trauma-informed-care-and-practice-organisational-toolkit>
- Mental Health Coordinating Council Leadership Framework
<https://www.mhcc.org.au/resources/trauma-informed-leadership>
- Trauma-Informed Care Implementation Resource Center
<https://www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org>
- Anchor Excellence – TAHIC
<https://www.anchorexcellence.com/trauma-informed-care>
- Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA)
[Trauma Recovery Program information for hospitals | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)

Information for health providers about the DVA Trauma Recovery Programs (TRPs) for current serving members and veterans. Programs focus on helping veterans living with PTSD by supporting psychological growth and recovery.

Workforce Education and Training

Accessible training options to build staff and volunteer capability.

- Dementia Support Australia
[Understanding the Impact of Trauma and Stress for LGBTI People with Dementia](#)
- Dementia Support Australia
[Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Dementia Care](#)
- Dementia Training Australia
[An introduction to trauma-informed dementia care | Dementia Training Australia \(DTA\)](#)
- Helping Hand Training (or clients who experienced childhood trauma in care)
[Trauma Training – Helping Hand](#)
- Helping Hand Training (Trauma-Informed Conversations: Older Adults)
[Sensitive Intake Conversations – Helping Hand](#)
- Mental Health Coordinating Council
[Trauma-Informed Language Tips - Mental Health Coordinating Council](#)
- Older Persons Advocacy Network. Diversity training resources
[Common barriers - OPAN](#)
- University of Tasmania, trauma informed care modules
[Equip Aged Care Learning](#)

Vicarious Trauma and Worker Wellbeing

Frontline staff working with people who have experienced trauma are often exposed to personal trauma. Over time, this exposure to trauma and the emotional input required from workers can contribute to vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout if workers are not adequately supported.

- Blue Knot Foundation Professional Wellbeing Resources.
[Blue Knot Foundation Trauma-Informed Practice & Vicarious Trauma](#)

[Blue Knot Professional Community](#)

[Blue Knot Helpline and Redress Support Service](#)

- Phoenix Australia – Occupational Trauma and Stress

[Phoenix Australia – Stress and Trauma in the Workplace](#)

[Phoenix Australia – Occupational Trauma and Stress](#)

- SA Department of Human Services

Practical South Australian resources specifically addressing vicarious trauma, supervision, workforce responsibilities, organisational culture, reflective practice and staff support.

[SA Department of Human Services – Trauma-Informed Workforce Management Resource](#)

- Beyond Blue

Provides practical information on workplace mental health, burnout, resilience, psychologically safe workplaces, mental health conversations, and self-care. Accessible language that works well for frontline CHSP staff.

- Beyond Blue – Work and Mental Health

[Heads Up – Mentally Healthy Workplaces](#)

If needing immediate support

- [Lifeline Australia](#) (13 11 14)
- [Beyond Blue Support Service](#) (1300 22 4636)
- [RESPECT's](#) information, counselling/support service (1800 737 732 (24/7))

Specialist Trauma Support and Guidance

Resources and services for complex trauma and recovery.

- Blue Knot Foundation <https://blueknot.org.au>

Information and support for anyone who is affected by complex trauma, including, violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation experienced as a child, young person and adult. Also, series of fact sheets including Plain English, Easy Read and fact sheets in other languages

- Open Arm <https://www.openarms.gov.au>

Free and confidential support is available for veterans and their families. Counselling, treatment programs, online options and moderated online forums.

- Department of Veteran Affairs [Your mental wellbeing | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)

Free mental health care for veterans and counselling and support for families. We also offer resources to help you monitor and manage your wellbeing.

Priority Populations and Lived Experience

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

- Healing Foundation <https://healingfoundation.org.au>

The Healing portal includes information and a range of resources that focus on trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and provides community selfcare resources, culturally appropriate information, education materials and the latest research. Including:

Coping with the impacts of trauma brochure.

[coping-with-the-impacts-of-trauma-brochure-aer-web.pdf](#)

Intergenerational Trauma video  Intergenerational Trauma Animation

- National Leadership body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health in Australia NACCHO

<https://www.naccho.org.au>

- Transforming Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing (IMHWB)

<https://timhwb.org.au>

[Fact sheet on wellbeing TIMHWB - Full Doc - Final3](#)

Refugees and Migrants

- Foundation House. Integrated trauma recovery service model. Advancing the health, wellbeing and human rights of people of refugee backgrounds who have experienced torture or other traumatic events.

[INTEGRATED-TRAUMA-SERVICE-RECOVERY-MODEL cr.pdf](#)

- Ageing by Caring Resource

[Resource-Enhancing-the-Lives-of-Older-Refugees-2012.pdf](#)

Care Leavers / Forgotten Australians

- Helping Hand: Second Time Around

[Forgotten Australians – Helping Hand](#)

LGBTQIA+ Older People

- Vals Aged Care [Val's LGBTI Ageing & Aged Care - Victorian Pride Centre](#)
- LGBTQI+ Health Australia. Silver Rainbow Training [Silver Rainbow: LGBTQI+ aged care awareness training - LGBTQI+ Health Australia](#)
- Department of Social Services Forced Adoption Resources [Supporting people affected by forced adoptions - fact sheet | Department of Social Services](#)
- QLife (LGBTIQA+ peer support & referral) Primary national LGBTQIQA+ peer support service. <https://qlife.org.au> 1800 184 527 Supports:
 - Distress linked to discrimination, isolation, identity stress
 - Relationship breakdown and family rejection
 - Emotional impact of trauma and violence
 - Referrals to LGBTQIQA+-affirming counselling and crisis supports
- Rainbow Health Australia (LGBTIQ+ inclusive health + trauma-informed practice) The key national evidence and workforce development body for LGBTQI+ inclusive practice.
<https://rainbowhealthaustralia.org.au>
- Rainbow Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Services (Full Stop Australia) Specialist national service for:
 - LGBTQIQA+ domestic and family violence
 - Sexual violence trauma
 - Historical abuse and complex trauma
 - Safety planning and therapeutic support.
<https://fullstop.org.au/get-help/ourservices/rainbowviolenceandabusesupport>
- TransHub (ACON) – trauma-informed guidance for trans and gender diverse people
 - Family rejection and social isolation
 - Safety planning and healthcare navigation

- Inclusive service delivery for trans and gender diverse people

<https://www.transhub.org.au>

Consumer, Carer and Advocacy Resources

- Older Persons Advocacy Network <https://opan.org.au>

Advocacy, information and community connection

- Relationships Australia Tasmania <https://www.relationships.org.au>

Resources that discuss trauma and counselling. (includes brochures, easy to read resources and videos).

- Neami National <https://www.neaminational.org.au>

Neami National is a community-based mental health and psychosocial support organisation providing non-clinical, recovery-oriented services for people experiencing mental health challenges, psychological distress, or complex life stressors. Includes:

- Post-crisis support and navigation into services
- Psychosocial support for clients with complex needs impacting engagement with services
- Referral pathway for clients experiencing distress impacting daily functioning or service participation



CHECKLIST

1. Person-Centred & Safe Practice

- ☐ We prioritise the person's voice, choice and control
- ☐ We avoid re-traumatisation (language, processes, environments)
- ☐ We recognise behaviours as possible responses to trauma
- ☐ We support dignity, privacy and emotional safety at all times

2. Workforce Capability

- ☐ Staff and volunteers receive trauma-informed training
- ☐ Staff understand how trauma presents in older people
- ☐ Staff use trauma-informed communication (respectful, non-judgemental)
- ☐ Staff know how to respond to distress or disclosure

3. Safe Environments

- ☐ Physical spaces feel safe, calm and culturally appropriate
- ☐ Intake and assessment processes are sensitive and paced
- ☐ Clients are not required to repeatedly retell traumatic experiences
- ☐ Privacy and confidentiality are consistently maintained

4. Organisational Systems

- ☐ Policies reflect trauma-informed principles
- ☐ Leadership promotes a trauma-informed culture
- ☐ Continuous improvement includes trauma-informed practice
- ☐ Feedback mechanisms are safe and accessible

5. Priority Populations

- ☐ Services are culturally safe for AATSI and CALD people
- ☐ Staff understand impacts of intergenerational trauma
- ☐ Services are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ older people
- ☐ Staff recognise experiences of refugees, care leavers and veterans

6. Collaboration & Referral

- ☐ Staff know when and how to refer to specialist services
- ☐ Partnerships exist with trauma and mental health services
- ☐ Carers and families are appropriately supported

7. Consumer Rights & Advocacy

- ☐ Clients are informed of their rights
- ☐ Advocacy services are promoted
- ☐ Complaints processes feel safe and accessible

8. Continuous Improvement

- ☐ Trauma-informed care is reviewed regularly
- ☐ Staff reflect on practice and receive supervision
- ☐ Consumer feedback informs service improvements