

Trauma-informed Service Framework

Trauma

One-off incidents such as natural disasters, road accidents, physical and sexual assault and rape are deemed traumatic on account of their fear inducing qualities and the heightened emotional and physiological response people experience in their immediate aftermath. With care, treatment and a period of recuperation and appropriate support, recovery from what is called Type 1 trauma is possible. Exposure to repeated, prolonged and frightening events such as those which occur during military combat, enforced captivity, child and domestic abuse, rape and sexual abuse occur within a more pervasive climate of fear and induce similar responses. However these forms of abuse and violence are sustained in a context from which there is often little chance of escape. Domestic abuse, rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation (including involvement in prostitution), child abuse and child sexual abuse and forced marriage rely on a constellation of abuses which create conditions similar to captivity. Life under such conditions often results in people experiencing Type 2 trauma. Recovery cannot begin without the person being removed completely from the source of actual or threatened danger, harm or abuse.

| Type 1 trauma | Type 2 or Complex trauma |
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| Sudden and unexpected events which are experienced as isolated incidents such as road traffic accidents, rapes or terrorist attacks. This can happen in childhood or adulthood. | This term refers to traumatic events which are repeated, interpersonal and often (although not always) occur in childhood. This includes all forms of childhood abuse which is chronic and cumulative such as childhood sexual abuse, childhood physical abuse, witnessing domestic abuse and neglect. Domestic abuse and prolonged exposure to sexual violence are the most common experiences of complex trauma in adulthood. |

Judith Herman identifies disempowerment, disconnection and isolation from relationships and the wider community as key features of traumatic experiences. She maintains that recovery depends on a context where safe, trusting and positive relationships can grow and facilitate reconnection with community. From this work, Herman developed a framework of therapeutic interventions to support trauma recovery through a three-stage process.

The three stages of post-traumatic recovery can provide a basis for effective interventions as follows:

Stage 1: Crisis intervention, safety planning and symptom management

Stage 2: Intermediate and/or therapeutic solutions, working with traumatic memory, processing and healing

Stage 3: Long-term outcomes, moving on, reconnecting with community and reducing isolation, finding a survivor mission (Herman 1997: 156¹).

The first stage requires the traumatised person to be safe from harm and to have received any necessary crisis intervention or treatment for any physical or emotional symptoms and for these symptoms to have had time to stabilise. In the second stage therapeutic interventions such as counselling can help the survivor begin to reflect and speak about their experiences, to process traumatic memory and build resilience to any ongoing symptoms; by stage three the survivor may involve resettlement in a safer environment, growing confidence to rebuild their lives, reconnect with the wider community and social networks and bring an end to the physical and emotional isolation common to those who have experienced gender-based violence. At this stage survivors can recover their sense of personal agency. Overcoming the silences which can be central to traumatic relationships and experiences and finding a voice can be central to recovery.

Herman notes also that Stage three can also include the development of post-traumatic growth as a result of increased personal agency and empowerment and the adoption of a 'survivor mission'. This model forms the basis of a trauma-informed coordinated community service framework in the provision of many specialist VAW support services in Scotland ².

Empowerment and the resumption of personal agency can take time. Many people need timely access to services and justice during a crisis when their ability to advocate on their own behalf is often constrained. For those surviving domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, rebuilding relationships in an atmosphere of trust can play a crucial role in their recovery.

Advocacy/Support Services

- Individual advocacy/support – provides one-to-one information and support and act as a liaison between women and various agencies and organizations where required.
- Structural Advocacy – takes collective issues forward to create legislative and policy changes to enhance the safety and well-being of women and children.

Counselling Services

¹ Judith Herman (1997), Trauma and Recovery

² See <http://www.womenssupportproject.co.uk/content/directoryofsupportservices/179/>

The definition of the counselling task in relation to its service for adults, children and young people who have experienced forms of gender-based violence is as follows:

Counselling is a contractually agreed relationship that is voluntarily entered into by both the client and an appropriately trained and supervised counsellor. It is offered within clearly defined parameters and underpinned by a professional code of ethics and practice for counsellors. (COSCA 2004).

Counselling and psychotherapy can assist children and young people to address and overcome developmental challenges, psychological obstacles and traumatic life experiences. They can promote self-belief, enhance self-insight and build resilience. They offer a client-centred therapeutic dialogue within a non-judgemental relationship where the well-being of the young person is paramount and his/her agenda is central.

Trauma-informed Services – Placing survivors at the heart of care

Rape Crisis Scotland Blog:

<https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/news/blog/trauma-informed-services-placing-survivors-at-the-heart-of-care/>

National Trauma Training Framework

NHS Education for Scotland was commissioned to create a National Trauma Training Framework as part of the Scottish Government Survivor Scotland Strategic Outcomes and Priorities 2015-2017. The aim of the framework is to support the strategic planning and delivery of training for the Scottish Workforce who are working with survivors of trauma and complex trauma across different levels. More information on the Framework can be found here:

<http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-discipline/psychology/multiprofessional-psychology/national-trauma-training-framework.aspx>

| 3-STAGE TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICE FRAMEWORK IN AN HEI SETTING | | | |
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| | Interpersonal | Interdisciplinary | Agency |
| | Tasks | Departments, Services & Agencies involved | Departments, Service & Agencies with a role |
| Stage 1 | Crisis intervention Risk Assessment Safety planning Symptom management | First Responders Campus Security Services Student Services Student Union Residences Staff Rape Crisis Women's Aid Emergency services, NHS e.g. A&E, Police | Police, ASSIST, University Security, Housing/Accommodation Services, NHS (including GP Out of Hours, A and E) GP, Student Health Services, Student/Community Nurses, Rape Crisis Helpline/Crisis line, Archway, Women's Aid, |
| Stage 2 | Therapeutic work Telling the story Processing and healing | GBV Support/Advocacy/Counselling/Therapeutic services Support Worker Student Health Services, Staff and Employee Counselling services, CMHT, Some Social Work Services, Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Support Services. | GBV Support and Advocacy Services, Student Health Services, Staff and Employee Counselling services, CMHT, Some Social Work Services, Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Support Services; My Body Back Health Services |
| Stage 3 | Moving on Positive Change Connecting to community, resettlement, Reducing isolation | Advocate/ Counsellor Personal Tutor Student Services H.R. Services Occupational Health | Student Services (including Student Health Services, Counselling), HR (Including Occupational Health, Employee Counselling Services), Student Unions, Employee Trade Unions, Residences/ Accommodation services, VAW services, Academic Support/Personal Tutor, Support, University Careers service. Scottish Women's Rights Centre, |