

## Gold Level: Creating a commitment to Trauma Informed Practice

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### Facilitation guide

Whilst the gold level training video can be accessed individually, some organisations may prefer to participate in a group, either in person or online. The below provides a brief guide to facilitators to promote engagement and enhance opportunities for discussion and sharing learning.

#### BREAKS

We would recommend scheduling a break every 25-35 minutes due to the nature and intensity of the content. The training is broken down into three chapters each lasting approximately 25-35 minutes and so hopefully this offers a natural point to break.

#### ACCESSIBILITY

The training is designed to be flexible. If you are facing limitations in terms of time, you may consider dividing the training into its respective chapters so that they can be accessed on a weekly or even monthly basis (we would recommend no longer than monthly intervals between the respective chapters for each level). These could be integrated into regular team meetings or as short CPD sessions. Do be mindful of whether a group is in their 'window of tolerance' as this will impact on their capacity to engage with the training. It is important that the training itself does not become another source of stress and pressure. Where possible, you may wish to seek preferences from the group about when and how the training should be accessed, this in turn will likely increase engagement and help to identify what people may need to participate more fully.

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## SAFETY

It is important to be mindful of the content of the training. Whilst the title and outline of the chapters provide an indication of the topics which will be discussed, it is always worth creating a 'safety' message to be delivered at the start of each level to remind participants of the importance of self-care and giving them the permission to pay attention to their own needs. I often reassure participants that if they are 'triggered' by any of the content (such as feeling distressed or overwhelmed), they should feel able to take a break and do what they need to do to feel safe and supported. During online sessions, I suggest that if they do take a break, they let the facilitator know so that they have the option to catch up on any missed material and to ensure that they are aware of their need for support so that they can check in with them. No matter what our level of experience and knowledge or in what capacity we access the training, discussions about trauma can be heart-breaking and harrowing; a trauma informed approach starts by making a commitment to look after ourselves.

## QUESTIONS

Whilst there is no 'live' facility for asking questions, Nicola can be contacted directly with feedback and questions and so we advise creating a platform for generating questions such as using post-it notes, a whiteboard or flipchart paper if the session is being facilitated in person, or the chat function if it is online and downloading it after the session so that it can be shared with the group. We would also encourage you to discuss these questions and to generate your own suggestions. This will offer a useful opportunity to share knowledge and learning. It will be important to reassure participants that this is a confidential space, free from judgement so that they feel safe and supported in sharing their experiences and ideas.

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## POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

At the gold level the focus is on making a commitment to and exploring the barriers to a trauma informed approach. Several practical learning activities have been integrated into the training video. The first suggests taking the time to re-write the letter presented in chapter 6 to reflect the six principles of trauma informed practice. We would encourage you to pause the video and allocate the time to both complete and discuss this task before moving on. Changing practice is challenging and this offers a useful opportunity to explore thinking and approaches as well as to learn from each other. The second activity in chapter 7, asks you to identify or reconnect with your two core values. You may wish to share these in a group and consider how they both complement and conflict with those of your colleagues. Knowing your own and each other's values can be beneficial in creating relationships based on trust, mutual respect and understanding. The third activity, also in chapter 7, focuses on self-compassion and the importance of turning those qualities of 'reconnection' inward to offer ourselves the same compassion and kindness that we extend to those we support. In addition to the guided activity, you may wish to invite participants to share their messages of kindness and to offer the space and time to consider the challenge of applying self-compassion in practice; all too often we regard ourselves with self-judgement and self-criticism. You may also use this opportunity to discuss how your organisation can promote self-compassion and what might be needed to create this shift in culture.

In addition to these activities, you may wish to consider the following questions:

- i. How does your organisation integrate a trauma informed approach to practice?
- ii. Which characteristics of 'trauma' show up in your organisation? How do they impact on your practice?
- iii. How does, or how could, your organisation support your wellbeing?
- iv. How do your two core values underpin your practice?
- v. How do you know 'what's okay' and 'what's not okay'? You may wish to create a list, individually and as a group.

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## FEEDBACK

A reminder that we would very much welcome your feedback, both formally by encouraging you to complete the evaluation questions and informally, if you wish to contact Nicola directly. Our intention is to create a training programme which provides you with the knowledge and supports you to develop the skills needed to integrate this learning into your practice. In particular, we would love to see your decorated 'gifts' of reconnection.

## CONTINUED LEARNING

Each level includes a reference list which provides recommendations for further reading. References annotated with an asterisk could be used for continuing professional development journal/book clubs (an initiative outlined at the gold level).

## A TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH

Most importantly, the training should be an opportunity to generate discussions, share ideas, create connections, reflect on practice and validate your work. We encourage you to make it more enjoyable, by baking or buying cakes for the breaks, sourcing good quality tea and coffee and even offering lunch, if you can. For those organisations who have a training budget, you may also consider using this to create self-care kits for your staff to deliver alongside the training; this will ensure that they feel valued and appreciated, in addition to promoting engagement with the training. Ideas for self-care kits for all budgets are included in the toolkit.

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