



Trauma Informed Support Films: Facilitator's Guide



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Much of the content of these films was based on the [Taking Time Framework](#) - A Trauma Informed Framework for Supporting People with Intellectual Disability. (Jackson & Waters, 2015).

About the NDS Zero Tolerance Initiative

Zero Tolerance is an initiative led by National Disability Services (NDS) in partnership with the disability sector. Using a human rights approach, *Zero Tolerance* outlines actions for service providers to improve prevention, early intervention and responses to abuse, neglect and violence experienced by people with disability. Put simply, **Zero Tolerance means abuse is never OK**. It asks service providers to focus on rights and target abuse to create safer, more empowering environments for people they provide services to.

An expanding range of Zero Tolerance tools and resources for the disability sector is available to support safeguarding approaches for people with a disability. See the NDS website for more information: <https://www.nds.org.au/resources/zero-tolerance>.

Additional Support

Some of the things that are talked about in these films or that you talk about with others might bring up certain feelings. This may be because of things you have experienced or seen in your work or personal life. Please talk to someone you trust if you need to discuss any of the issues covered in these films. This may include a family member or friend, or a supervisor or manager.

You can also call Lifeline on **13 11 14** for confidential 24-hour telephone crisis support or Beyond Blue on **1300 224 636**.

Your organisation's Employee Assistance Program will also be able to provide support if needed.

Introducing the Trauma Informed Support Films

Trauma Informed Support is a contemporary, evidence-based approach to supporting people who may have experienced trauma in their lives.

These 5 films have been developed to assist support workers, providers, people with disability and their families to understand what trauma is, the impact it can have, and ways in which everyone in an organisation can provide trauma-informed support.



About this guide

This facilitator's guide accompanies the Trauma Informed Support films and supports facilitators to navigate the sensitive conversations that may occur after watching each film in a group setting. The films can be watched in sequential order with opportunities for reflection and discussion in between each film. Alternatively, if there is a particular topic of interest, each film can be watched on its own.

The titles of the films are as follows:

1. Understanding Trauma
2. What is Trauma Informed Support?
3. A Trauma Informed Approach to Positive Behaviour Support
4. How can organisations embed a Trauma Informed approach?
5. Building Networks of Support and Recognising Vicarious Trauma

There are questions at the end of each film and throughout this guide to help to assist with discussions about different aspects of Trauma Informed Support. Use them to start the conversation about what people have seen. A good way to start the conversation is to ask people what stood out for them in each film.

Important tips for facilitators

- Consider who is most suitable to facilitate the conversation and ensure they have read this guide prior to facilitating the discussion.
- Think about where and when you will have the conversation so that everyone is comfortable and free from distraction.
- Remember to create a safe space and ensure people know where to get support if needed. (See **Getting the Support You Need** – page 4).
- A good way of establishing a safe space is by asking people what they need to ensure they feel safe throughout the discussion. Write these responses on a whiteboard or a large piece of paper on the wall so that everyone understands and agrees what each other needs.
- Let people know that they can participate in the conversation in whatever way feels comfortable and supportive to them and that sharing personal experiences is not necessary.
- Make sure you allow enough time so that everyone has the opportunity to speak and be heard.
- Ensure people know that they can leave the conversation at any point. If someone does leave the conversation, discreetly check in with them a little later to see if they are ok.
- Think about what follow-up might be needed with individual participants after the conversation.
- Let people know where they can get support if needed.

Film 1. Understanding Trauma

This film lays the foundation for understanding trauma and how it can affect people differently throughout their lives. Exploring the impact of trauma on the brain and the physiological responses it can prompt, this film aims to build understanding about human behaviour that supports a safer, more sensitive approach to supporting people who may have experienced trauma.

Watch the film together and answer these two reflection questions:

- 1) Take some time to discuss your understanding of trauma
- 2) What are some ways a person's experience of trauma might affect their lives?

Consider the following when facilitating this discussion:

- Be aware that trauma can affect all of us. All conversations about trauma need to be approached sensitively.
- Ensure that adequate follow up is provided to participants if required. (See page 5 for additional facilitation tips)

Questions that might come up after watching this film:

What is Trauma?

Trauma is a psychological and physiological response to a deeply distressing event or experience. It occurs when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with external threat, and is characterised by an individual's **experience** of an event, rather than the event itself. Traumatization is something that can affect all of us, and its impacts can be different for everyone. (van der Kolk, 1989; van der Kolk & McFarlane, 1996).

What is meant by attachment with primary caregivers?

Attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space. (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1969)

Research has shown that trauma involving caregivers may significantly disrupt caregiver-child attachment and interfere with the child's ability to form a secure attachment.

If a primary caregiver does not provide sufficient safety and protection to a child, it may lead to problems with cognition, attention, learning, systems of meaning (e.g., doubting life's meaning, questioning one's spiritual or religious beliefs), and relationships.

For more information about the impact of trauma on attachment, see the Teach Trauma website.

<http://www.teachtrauma.com/information-about-trauma/traumas-impact-on-attachment/>

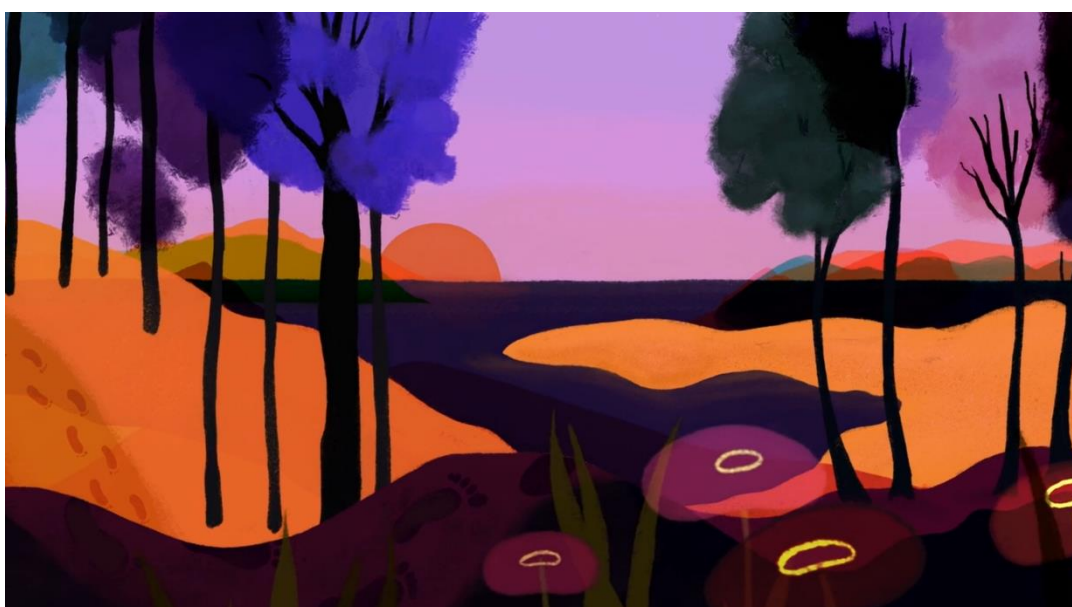
What is complex trauma?

- Complex trauma can occur when a child is exposed to multiple traumatic events of an invasive and personal nature, such as abuse or profound neglect. The term, complex trauma, describes both the exposure to the traumatic events and the long-term effects of this exposure.
- It is particularly harmful if it occurs in childhood and where the source of trauma is a person who has a caregiving and trusting relationship, and is meant to be a source of safety. (Mental Health Coordinating Council [MHCC], 2013).
- Key features of complex trauma include a more complex and tenacious set of symptoms, major personality changes and greater risk of further harm.

How does trauma move through generations?

- In some cases, trauma is passed down from the first generation of survivors who directly experienced or witnessed traumatic events to future generations. This is referred to as intergenerational trauma.
- Trauma can be passed on through parenting practices, behavioural problems, violence, harmful substance use and mental health issues.

“Trauma Informed Practice is not about the treatment of trauma or the symptoms, but rather a recognition that trauma experiences are a possibility for anyone.” (Kezelman & Stavropoulos, 2012)



Film 2. What is Trauma Informed Support?

Acknowledging the possibility of trauma for the people you support is the first step in providing trauma informed support. This film explores the six foundational values of Trauma Informed Support - an evidence based, therapeutic approach, which recognises signs and symptoms of trauma, enables pathways for recovery and actively seeks to avoid re-traumatisation.

Watch the film together and answer the reflection question:

- 1) How do you ensure the people you support feel safe?
 - Consider the five different types of safety. What might safety look like for a person you support in relation to each of the five types of safety?

Types of Safety	What might safety look like for a person you support?
Physical safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person is not exposed to violence • Feels safe in their home, school and work environment • Feels safe to play and have fun • Has a place they can call home that provides safety and comfort • Has any support needs effectively met • Knows who to talk to if feeling unsafe • Has health needs effectively met • Services utilised are physically accessible
Psychological safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy relationships which affirm self-esteem, value and belonging • Access to attachment figures and key relationships • Capacity to address discrimination and bullying with appropriate support if required
Social safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected to family, friends and community • Experiences belonging, respect and reciprocity • Feels welcome and accepted when engaging with services • Information is available in alternative formats to meet a range of communication and language needs
Moral safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged and supported to act according to own value base • Recognising the sense of reward from acting in accordance with belief systems • People with disabilities involved at every level of the organisation • Services support people with decision-making as required to maximise their participation, choice and control
Cultural safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is supported to explore, understand and identify with their culture • Supported to experience culture and connection as a source of protection, dignity and comfort

Jackson, A. L., & Waters, S. E. (2015).

Activity

Consider the six foundational values of Trauma Informed Support.

- **Safety:** Prioritising physical and emotional safety. “Safety is the foundational value on which all other principles depend. There is consensus that a trauma-informed approach must privilege safety.” (Jackson et al., 2015).
 - **Relationships and Trustworthiness:** Maximising trustworthiness through relationships, task clarity, consistency and interpersonal boundaries
 - **Collaboration:** Maximising collaboration through sharing power
 - **Choice:** Maximising choice and control
 - **Voice:** Prioritising the person’s voice being heard and heeded.
 - **Person Centred Practice:** Ensuring the person’s needs, goals and wishes drive practice.
- Take some time to reflect on these values (in pairs or groups) and consider how they are embedded into your practice.
 - Are there any areas for improvement?
 - Ask participants to write down any actions that they will take in relation to each foundational value.



Film 3. A Trauma Informed Approach to Positive Behaviour Support

Positive Behaviour Support is an approach, which views all behaviour as communication, and aims to improve a person's quality of life and build on their strengths. Understanding the impacts of trauma creates an opportunity to provide more effective positive behaviour support, as we are more attuned to a person's needs and can respond in a holistic manner. This film provides key practices for implementing positive behaviour support through a trauma informed lens.

Watch the film together and answer the reflection question:

- 1) How can Positive Behaviour Support be enhanced by taking a Trauma Informed approach?

Consider the following when facilitating this discussion:

- The importance of prioritising safety
- Strategies that minimise trauma-related triggers and setting events
- The development of coping skills
- Evidence-based therapeutic interventions occurring in parallel with Positive Behaviour Support plans
- Ethical response strategies that reduce the likelihood of re-traumatisation.
- Building trust and rapport and focussing on relationship-based support
- Person centred active support
- Maximising choice and control

What is Positive Behaviour Support?

Watch the Foundations of Positive Behaviour Support films – available on the [NDS Zero Tolerance website](#). Topics include:

- Film 1 – *What is Positive Behaviour Support?*
- Film 2 – *Quality of Life*
- Film 3 – *Listening and Communicating*
- Film 4 – *Being Aware of Sensory Needs and Preferences*
- Film 5 – *Self-Awareness*

Activity

In pairs or groups, consider how a trauma informed lens can be applied to all of the support provided to people.

- Person Centred Active Support
- Personal Care
- Communication Support

Film 4. How Can Organisations Embed a Trauma Informed Approach?

Embedding trauma informed support into organisations begins with recognising that the people who use its services, their families and staff may all have experienced trauma at some point. Drawing on the work of the Taking Time Framework (Jackson and Waters 2015), this film offers practical suggestions for how all levels of an organisation can play a powerful role in building and sustaining a trauma informed culture.

Watch the film together and answer these two reflection questions:

- 1) What is your organisation doing to embed a trauma informed approach?
- 2) What can you do in your role to support a trauma informed approach within your organisation?

Consider the following when facilitating this discussion:

- Leadership is not only demonstrated by the most senior people in an organisation, people with personal or professional authority can demonstrate leadership at all levels of an organisation. Leaders at all levels can play a powerful role in building or sustaining – or undermining – a positive, trauma-informed organisational culture and championing organisational change. (Jackson and Waters 2015)
- We all have the ability to support a trauma informed approach – no matter what role we might have within an organisation.

Activity

In pairs or groups, consider the following questions:

- How does your organisation create opportunities for choice and for each person's voice to be heard?
- How does your organisation support person-centred planning and practice?
- Identify any areas for improvement.
- What actions can you start taking today to improve organisational culture?



Film 5. Building Networks of Support and Recognising Vicarious Trauma

An important part of providing effective trauma informed support is knowing when either you or the person you are supporting might need additional help. This film focusses on how we can build strong networks of support, and the ways in which individuals and organisations can recognise and respond to the signs and symptoms of vicarious trauma.

Watch the film together and answer these three reflection questions:

- 1) Who would you talk to if you felt that someone you are supporting may require additional support?
 - A manager
 - A colleague
 - A friend
 - A family member
 - Other?

- 2) What self-care activities do you engage in to ensure you are looking after yourself and able to provide the best possible support?
 - Healthy eating
 - Healthy sleep habits
 - Exercise
 - Mindfulness
 - Hobbies
 - Connection with friends/family
 - Other?

- 3) What are some of the ways you can seek support when you need it?
 - Talk to your manager
 - Professional supports (Counsellor or psychologist)
 - Lifeline or Beyond Blue
 - Employee Assistance Program



Questions that might come up after watching this film:

What is Vicarious Trauma?

- Vicarious trauma is the experience of trauma symptoms that can result from being repeatedly exposed to other people's trauma and their stories of traumatic events.
- May consist of short-term reactions or long-term effects that continue after the work has finished.
- Effects may parallel those of the trauma survivor and can lead to a person experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD).

(Jackson and Waters, 2015).

What is mindfulness?

- Mindfulness is the human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we are doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.
- Mindfulness is a quality that every human being already possesses; you just have to learn how to access it.
- Mindfulness can be cultivated through proven techniques such as meditation practices, short pauses we insert into everyday life; and merging meditation practice with other activities, such as yoga or sports.



Additional Resources:

[Taking Time Framework](#) - A Trauma Informed Framework for Supporting People with Intellectual Disability. (Jackson and Waters, 2015)

[Becoming Trauma Informed](#) – A short video for anyone in the workplace (Blue Knot Foundation)

[Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery](#). (Kezelman and Stavropoulos, 2012)

[Trauma Informed Practice – Blue Knot Foundation Fact Sheet for workers in diverse service settings](#)

[Blue Knot Foundation Fact sheet for managers](#)

[The Sanctuary Model®](#) - The Sanctuary Model® represents a theory-based, trauma-informed, trauma-responsive, evidence-supported, whole culture approach that has a clear and structured methodology for creating or changing an organisational culture.

[Teach Trauma](#) - This website provides information about psychological trauma. It also provides educational tools that enable educators and students to teach others about trauma, including discussions about current controversies related to trauma.

The Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) has developed a range of resources, which are available via their [website](#) including:

- Trauma Informed Leadership for Organisational Change: A framework
- Trauma Informed Care and Practice Organisational Toolkit
- Trauma Informed Events Checklist and Policy and Protocol
- Recovery Orientated Language Guide



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