

Trauma-Informed Practice Reflection

Kim Barthel provides six principles for trauma-informed practice to guide how we support each other in the work we do and the way we are in our daily lives.

This worksheet is meant to provide an opportunity to reflect on how these trauma-informed principles show up in our lives and where we can deepen our learning and practice.

Please use these questions in the way that works best for you. It will be different for everyone. Whatever way you choose to use this reflection, we encourage you to surround yourself with people who support you in this reflective process. Using the trauma-informed lens can be challenging; it requires great self-compassion.

We wish you well on this worthwhile endeavor of deepening your trauma-informed practice.

- Relationship Matters Team

1. There is always a reason for the behaviour (get curious!)

- How can I look at this person and situation with curiosity?
- Is anything stopping me from being curious?
- How can I get more curious so that I can work from a place of support?
- What is happening for me in this moment?
 - In my body...
 - In my thoughts...
 - In my feelings...
- How can I better understand the reason for this behaviour (either consciously or unconsciously)?
 - Is it neurologically based? What is it that you see that makes you think this?
 - Is it coming from a place of trauma? What is that you see that makes you think this?
 - What might be the specific elements directly impacting this person such as environmental, physical, sensory, or relational influences?

Something to keep reminding ourselves:

This is about a mindset and approach rather than a prompt to create a "story" about the person. We may never know the specific reason, and it may not be appropriate or warranted, but rather staying open and getting curious is the main focus in our connection with each person we support and work with.

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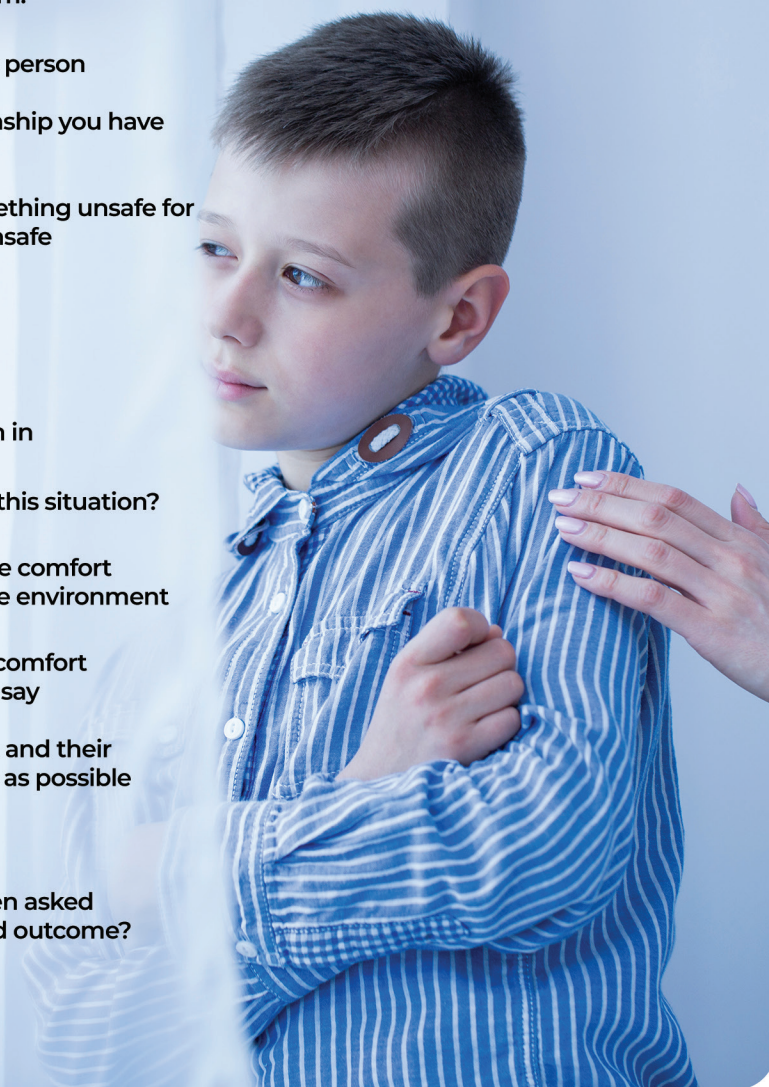
2. Promoting a culture of safety and comfort

Safety

- Does this person feel safe? How do you know?
- Do I feel safe?
- What can I do to increase safety for this person?
- What can I do to increase safety for me in order to support this person?
- It is the perception of safety from the other person's perspective that matters here, not necessarily our own perception or understanding of safety for them.
 - Environment
 - Scan for indications of danger or safety for this person
 - Relationship
 - Reflect on the nature and status of the relationship you have with this person
 - Task
 - Review if this person is being asked to do something unsafe for them, or too challenging so that it may feel unsafe

Comfort

- How comfortable is this person in this situation?
- How comfortable am I in this situation?
- How can I increase the comfort level of this person in this situation?
- How can I increase the comfort level for myself in this situation?
 - Environment
 - Scan for factors that could increase or decrease comfort for this person such as sensory inputs from the environment
 - Relationship
 - Look for non-verbals indicating comfort or discomfort
 - Listen to the person's words and the way they say something to you
 - Think about what you know about this person and their past can help you make them as comfortable as possible
 - Task
 - Review what is being asked of this person
 - Ask yourself some questions about the task - Is the task new? is it something they have been asked before? is it challenging? What is the intended outcome? Is it something they want to do?



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3. Recognizing situations that are potentially re-traumatizing

- How might this environment, task, and relationship re-traumatize the person I am working with?
 - Environment
 - What about the environment might trigger the person you are supporting?
 - Relationship
 - What role do I have that might trigger the person?
 - Task
 - What am I asking of this person that might be triggering for this person?



4. Reinforcing training for all staff to create a culture of compassion

- How do I define compassion? What does it look like?
- What training can I draw from to help create a culture of compassion?
- What training would I personally like to have?
- What supports and network do I have around me that I can access to better create a culture of compassion around myself?
- How can I build, access, and nurture this network to create a culture of compassion in my work?
- How am I looking after myself and nurturing self-compassion?
- What do I need for myself to be in a position to better to contribute to a culture of compassion with others around me?



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5. Transforming language used to describe behaviour

- What language am I using to describe a situation or relationship that I am challenged by?
- Do I actively reflect on the words I use in my own self-talk when thinking about a situation or relationship?
 - Is there kindness?
 - Is there compassion?
 - Are there judgements undiscovered?
- Do my words match my feelings? Am I being authentic?
- Are my words and the language I use understandable to those around me? Are they appropriate and respectful?



6. Recognizing the role of relationships as a healing force

- What is my relationship like with this person I am working to support?

Reflect on:

- Expectations (of the other person and yourself)
 - Empathy
 - Boundaries
- What relationships are most healing for me?
How am I supporting and nurturing those relationships?

