

BEING TRAUMA INFORMED

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

- Often the result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope, or integrate emotions involved with that experience.
- Occurs from the interaction of three components - the **event**, the **experience** and the **effect**.
- Can happen at any age or development stage.

Experiences can be:

- **Direct** - experience of an event, eg. accident, assault, abuse, war
- **Indirect** - witnessing an event and seeing these events happen
- **Vicarious** - hearing about something traumatic or shocking, eg. a death, accident, crisis

Types of trauma:

- **Single incident** - exposure to an acute single incident
- **Chronic** - repeated and prolonged exposure
- **Complex** - varied and multiple events

75% of Australians are exposed to at least one traumatic event in their lifetime



Lasting effects on wellbeing:

- Functioning
- Mental
- Physical
- Social
- Emotional
- Spiritual

TRAUMA INFORMED PRINCIPLES



Safety: Ensure physical and emotional safety.



Trustworthiness: Be predictable and create routine. Expectations are known and boundaries are clear, consistent and transparent.



Choice: Choice and control are maximised where all available options are presented and explored.



Collaboration: Embedded at all levels to ensure the service in 'doing with' people rather than 'doing to' people.



Empowerment: Adaptive strengths are recognised and new knowledge awareness and skills are built through mutual learning.



Respect for diversity: Honour the diversity of history, gender and culture. Support individual, community and cultural identity.

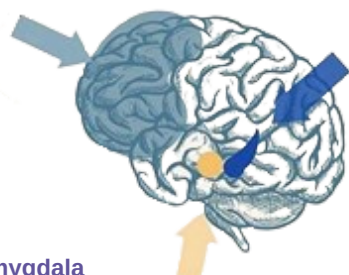
TRAUMA IN CHILDREN

- Childhood trauma is usually complex trauma, cumulative, underlying and interpersonally generated.
- If childhood trauma remains unprocessed, it can impact on a person's ability to parent - causing multigenerational impacts.

IMPACT ON THE BRAIN

Cortex front lobes

Rational thinking - regulates emotions such as fear responses from the amygdala - with PTSD this has a reduced volume.



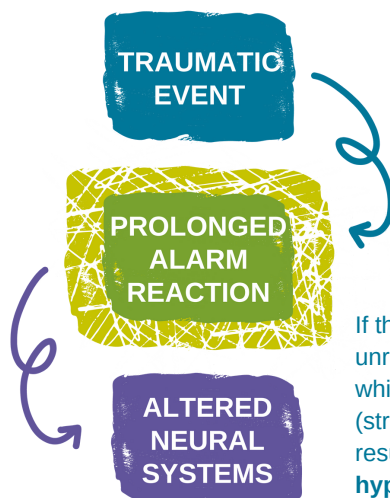
Hippocampus

Responsible for memory and differentiating between past & present - works to remember and make sense of the trauma. With consistent exposure to trauma, it shrinks.

Amygdala

Wired for survival, when active it is hard to think rationally. The more hyperactive the amygdala is, the more signs of PTSD are present.

TRAUMA RESPONSE



When an event occurs a person's survival mechanisms of the fight, flight, freeze, fawn (appease) stress response is activated. The body is in survival mode, but the brain's reasoning and language structures are shut down, causing an imprinted stress response and disrupts the person's ability to balance the nervous system.

If this acute adaptive state persists or is unresolved, it can become maladaptive traits which can cause the person's natural alarm (stress) system to be underactive or overactive, resulting in **hypoarousal** (avoidant) or **hyperarousal** (too stimulated).

HEALING FROM TRAUMA



Realise

Resist

re-traumatisation

THE 4 Rs OF TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

Recognise

Respond