



An Introduction to Trauma Informed Care

Resource Sheet 8 Respecting Diversity in all its Forms

Aged care clients come from a range of diverse backgrounds. Diversity is reflected in the religion, spirituality, sexuality, culture, socio-economic background, geographic spread and personal experiences of the older population.

The Australian Government has acknowledged that older people with diverse needs may face challenges when they attempt to access the aged care system. This can become more difficult when older people have a history of trauma in their lives. Trauma can be re-triggered when an older person has to retell their story as they move through the My Aged Care process and engage with aged care services. Rigid policies and processes can present major challenges when flexibility is needed for the system to sensitively respond to people affected by trauma. Older people may come into contact with screeners, assessors, planners, co-ordinators, support workers and volunteers who have little understanding of trauma and have not been trained in trauma informed practice.

The Aged Care Diversity Framework recognised 12 diverse groups within the aged care population that may experience barriers in accessing and in their journey through the aged care system. The groups include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; LGBTIQ+ elders; people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities; parents separated from their children by forced adoption and removal; care leavers including the Stolen Generations, people who grew up in orphanages and foster homes and unaccompanied child migrants; people who are financially and socially disadvantaged; veterans; people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; older people who have lived with disability

throughout their lives; older people who are cognitively impaired; older people with mental health issues; and older people living in rural and remote areas

While people with these characteristics experience various barriers in accessing the aged care system, one common factor is that many people from diverse backgrounds have experienced trauma in their lives.

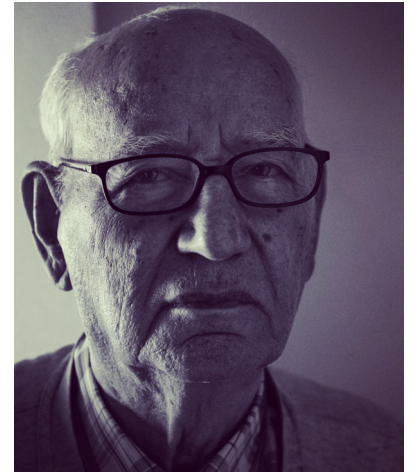
Further information
can be found in
Resource Sheet 11.

[continued]

An Introduction to Trauma Informed Care

At an organisational level, this means:

- a conscious and deliberate strategy to build internal expertise in understanding diversity (e.g. staff champions in delivering TIC) and how the different experiences of people from diverse groups can influence support delivery
- implementing and monitoring processes that actively involve clients, including those from diverse backgrounds in the design, running and evaluation of services at an individual and organisational level (e.g. consultations, client representation in planning)
- designing, implementing and reviewing systems (e.g. policies and procedures) that are sensitive to diversity and link to continuous quality improvement (e.g. Diversity Action Plans).



At an individual practice level, this means:

- participating in cultural competency training and refreshers
- learning about the additional and different needs of clients from each of the 12 diversity groups
- understanding how the diversity context influences the perception of and response to traumatic events and recovery from trauma.
- asking clients about needs and preferences arising from diversity
- challenging the system whenever insensitivity and responsiveness to trauma is lacking (e.g. asking to be referred to someone trained in TIC).

