

# An Introduction to Trauma Informed Care

## Resource Sheet 10 Responding Appropriately to Disclosures of Trauma

### How to demonstrate trauma informed practice

A worker who is skilled in trauma informed practice will:

- understand the nature of trauma, its causes and range of effects on survivors
- feel comfortable in listening to disclosures of trauma
- listen and respond calmly and without judgment to the survivor's account of trauma
- affirm the survivor's strengths, abilities and achievements
- provide the survivor with empowerment tools that build self-esteem and self-confidence
- maintain confidentiality
- be truly interested in clients and work to engage them in their care and support through co-design processes
- encourage, welcome, understand and respond to input from trauma survivors throughout their aged care journey
- provide safe and supportive environments for the delivery of care and support
- be open, honest, willing to admit mistakes and to learn from them
- where appropriate, research what specific support is available for the trauma survivor. You can start by checking out the resources and links available through Phoenix Australia <https://www.phoenixaustralia.org/>
- when encountering a rigid system that is insensitive or unresponsive to trauma, challenge this and, where appropriate request referral to a person skilled in trauma informed practice.



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## What to do when trauma is disclosed

When trauma is disclosed, workers should:

- avoid interrogating the trauma survivor and flooding them with questions
- allow the person to tell their story and respect their right to only give details that they feel comfortable to disclose at that time
- avoid saying anything that the person could see as judgmental
- affirm that it is all right to tell someone about their experience with trauma
- understand that disclosure can be a positive step, reflecting high levels of trust with the worker
- if appropriate, ask if and how what happened in the past is related to what is happening for the person now
- check how the person feels after the disclosure
- check how safe the person feels
- ask if and what the person needs or wants after the disclosure
- offer support and resources appropriate for the specific situation
- offer to follow-up with the person later to check on ongoing safety
- get permission to take any further actions in response to the disclosure
- follow through on any undertakings they make during the exchange
- notice and attend to their own self-care needs as disclosures of trauma can trigger memories of their own personal experiences with trauma and/or feelings of professional powerlessness in challenging situations.

