

Trauma - Grab Sheet 3 of 3

Introduction

This is the third of three simple grab sheets for anyone who would like to know more about trauma. Please see sheets 1 and 2 to learn what trauma is and how someone might think, feel and behave. Grab sheet 3 tells us what approaches can be used to support people who have experienced trauma.

How friends, family and paid staff can help:

- Provide a warm and nurturing space for people to feel cared for
- Let someone know you are there to talk, listen if they open up, believe them when they talk through their experience
- Do not judge or blame the person for their challenges
- Understand their behavior as a response to their distress, empathise with how difficult this must have been for them
- 'Sitting with' a person in their distress. This means listening, not interrupting, being available and responsive. Know that their feelings are valid, you do not need to change or fix them, and it is ok for them to cry. Just be with them.
- Offer undivided attention during sensitive conversations e.g. phone on silent
- Offer to get or suggest more help if they want, e.g. a professional referral
- Talk through triggers with people, and how to avoid and manage them in future
- Find out what helps a person to feel safe and build this into support approach
- Remind them that they are safe now, or you will work with them to help them feel as safe as possible
- Support the person to have self-soothe or coping strategies e.g. build a self-soothe box, having a good routine etc.
- Be a person of safety; be consistent, reliable, responsive, trustworthy and kind
- Normalise the person's difficult feelings "it's understandable you feel that way after what's happened; it makes sense your struggling, that sounds really hard"
- Think positive, teach new skills, help the person connect with the wider world
- Help the person feel in control of their life. Be person-centred and collaborative in decisions. Avoid the pull to 'wade in' to protect them, but instead work WITH them.

These approaches can be understood as trauma-informed care



Self-care strategies for people who have experienced trauma

- A healthy sleep routine, around 7-8 hours per night
- Rest and relaxation
- Eating regularly and healthily - drinking enough water 2 litres a day
- Talking about challenges in a safe environment with people they trust
- Spending time in a place where they feel happy and safe
- Engaging in enjoyable and meaningful activities that can build satisfaction, happiness, and sense of achievement
- Having structure and routine
- Calming the body and mind using relaxation and self-soothing techniques e.g. having a self-soothe box (see separate guidance on how to create a self-soothe box)
- Some people use Mindfulness to help calm thoughts, feelings and behaviours by following the breath, or using their senses to connect with the present moment. However, mindfulness can worsen trauma for some people if not applied carefully - this can be thought about with professionals such as therapists in health services.



If someone needs extra help you could suggest:

- The local doctor (GP) who can help arrange for the right treatment
- Referral to local mental health services or Community Learning Disability Team
- Call the NHS helpline 111
- Call the Samaritans on 116 123
- Call the following local helplines (please insert)

When should you get help?

Some people can process and heal from trauma with nurturing environments and trauma-informed care. Other people may need some professional support such as talking therapy. Professional support might be needed to explore if a person's difficulties are not getting any easier, and if their trauma experiences are impacting their ability to stay safe, healthy, connected to people, and engaged in day-to-day activities.

To find out more about Trauma and coping with difficult emotions:

<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/resources/>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/index.html>

<https://www.psychologytools.com/downloads/worksheets-exercises-guides-handouts/>

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/> - then click 'resources' at the top