

Trauma Informed Care



The more adverse events a child experiences in his or her life the greater the chances are that they will have health problems, mental health concerns, or experience a substance use disorder.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study identifies multiple categories of childhood trauma.

- Physical abuse by a parent
- Emotional abuse by a parent
- Sexual abuse by anyone
- Growing up with an alcohol and/or drug abuser in the household
- Domestic violence
- Experiencing the imprisonment of a household member
- Living with a family member experiencing mental illness
- Loss of a parent
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect

The more negative experiences a child has, the more negative thoughts they may have about themselves and the world.

'The world is an unsafe place to live.'
'Other people are unsafe and can't be trusted.'
'My own thoughts and feelings are unsafe.'
'I expect crisis, danger, and loss.'
'I have no self-worth and no abilities.'



Viewpoint questionnaires open the dialogue with children

Active listening encourages young people to:

- explore their responses in more detail
- develop their understanding of their experiences and circumstances
- **consider desired changes and outcomes**
- **and together with practitioners consider ways to achieve these**

In working with young people who have experienced trauma, it is important to be aware of the **'Five Guiding Principles'** of Trauma Informed Care.

- Safety**
 - Safe and feel safe
- Trustworthiness**
 - previous experiences impact on their engagement
- Choice**
 - Participation in decision-making
- Collaboration**
 - respect for individuals being the expert on their own lives
- Empowerment**
 - Ensuring individuals have a voice in planning, supporting strengths and talents

The Viewpoint methodology supports Trauma Informed Care practice.

Viewpoint self-assessments **empower** young people to identify their strengths, what is working well and where there need to be improvements.

The young person's conversation with their worker about their responses encourages **collaboration** and a sense of **choice**.

A young person's experiences of trust impact on their engagement with their worker.

Communication is an important factor in **building trust**, and listening closely to young people's views, wishes and feelings establishes a personal connection. By addressing the detail in the Viewpoint responses, genuine concern and respect for the young person is demonstrated. Agreeing desired changes and supporting young people to achieve these helps build trust.

It is important that young people **feel safe**.

Viewpoint questions about 'feeling safe and settled' are particularly important, and practitioners are encouraged to pay careful attention to any young person who indicates they are not completely safe.

'The Viewpoint process provided a space where it was acceptable to encourage discussion about positive and not so positive aspects of life for the children...which made it easier for the child to focus on sensitive topics with less awkwardness or defensiveness. Information came out that was 'new information'. Senior Consultant Psychologist.