

Developing Trauma Informed Environments *(Part 1)*

A key part of taking a Trauma-Informed Approach is developing relationships through Safety, Trust, Choice, Collaboration and Empowerment.

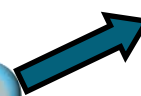
Together with the Youth Justice Team, we have worked to develop some useful ideas on what we could do to strengthen the principles of being Trauma informed, both in our relationships within work and with young people.

There were some really good ideas which we thought would be very useful to share with you. Over this series of documents we will look at each element in turn. In this documents we will look at Safety.

Feeling cared for?



What do you think of when you hear the word "Safety"?



Feeling protected?



Feeling loved?



or something else?

To feel safe, we not only need to be physically safe but also need to feel culturally, socially and emotionally safe. We also need to believe that others will respond appropriately to our discomfort or unease.

If we do not feel safe, our brains are primed to respond quickly with a fight, flight or freeze reaction.

How to create safety within your approach

Listen with acceptance and empathy.

Show that you can weather peoples' distress and maintain a relationship.

Take time to get to know the person.

Use curiosity to discover others' beliefs and values.

Provide predictability and consistency.

For us to grow, learn and have enjoyment in life, we must first feel safe.

The Multi-Dimensional Aspects of Safety

As well as working to create a general feeling of safety within your approach, it is important to consider specific types of safety. Lets look at each of these in turn and share some of the tips and advice, we developed.

Physical Safety

- Ensure that the environment around you is safe.
- Know who else is around.
- Support young people to create safety plans.
- Make sure you're aware of key contacts should there be any emergency in your working environment.

Cultural Safety

- Develop a work environment where background and experiences are respected and acknowledged as valid and important.
- Provide culturally safe interactions with other staff members and young people.

Social Safety

- Provide opportunities to experience positive and meaningful relationships with others.
- Be clear on what each session will involve, such as topics, duration and any other factors.
- Outline your role, confidentiality, responsibilities and boundaries.
- Find ways to support each other at work.



Emotional Safety

- Support people to feel safe to express their beliefs, values and thoughts.
- Ensure that we take a non-judgmental approach.
- Have ways where young people can leave or have a break when things get tough in a session.
- Recognise and respond to signs of discomfort.
- A young person may find it easier to discuss a difficult event in the third person.
- Find ways to reflect on your own emotions and feelings whilst working with YP.



Remember this is tricky to do and it isn't about getting it right every time. It's about noticing when it's not working for the young person and working together to change things.