Birmingham City Council

7-Minute Learning

Trauma-Informed Practice

BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

1 What is it?

A way of working that recognises the widespread impact of trauma, understands how it can affect people's behaviour, and responds with safety, empathy and support.

2 Why does it matter for VAWG?

- Many women and girls **may have experienced trauma**, sometimes multiple and long-term (e.g. abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation or discrimination).
- A trauma-informed approach can reduce harm, build trust, improve engagement and lead to better, safer outcomes.

3 What is trauma?

- A traumatic experience is an event or series of events that feel overwhelming, frightening or life-threatening.
- It can affect someone's emotional, physical and mental wellbeing, and how they feel, think and respond.

4 Common responses to trauma

- Heightened anxiety or fear.
- Difficulty with trust and relationships.
- Feeling overwhelmed or emotionally numb.
- Changes in behaviour (e.g. withdrawal, anger or avoiding support).
- Physical symptoms (e.g. poor sleep, fatigue, chronic pain).

5 The key principles of a trauma-informed approach

Safety
Create a safe, respectful environment.

Trust
Build and maintain trust.

Choice
Offer control and meaningful options.

Collaboration
Work with the person, not do things to or for them

Empowerment
Build on strengths and support recovery

Equality
Be inclusive, respectful and culturally competent.

6 What this means for professionals

- Be aware of the potential for trauma in those you support.
- Be curious, compassionate and non-judgemental.
- Adapt your communication and approach.
- Recognise your own responses and seek support if affected (vicarious trauma).

7 The impact

- Helps people feel safe, heard and believed.
- Improves access to support and recovery.
- Reduces the risk of re-traumatisation.
- Leads to more effective, person-centred and lasting change.





Working together to safeguard people and end violence against women and girls in Birmingham.