

# Trauma-informed principles

How you can talk to people with trauma

Easy Read fact sheet



## How to use this fact sheet



Blue Knot Foundation wrote this fact sheet.  
When you see the word 'we', it means  
Blue Knot Foundation.



We wrote this information in an easy to read way.  
We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Normal  
**Bold**

We have written some words in **bold**.  
This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.  
There is a list of these words on page 22.



This Easy Read fact sheet is a summary of another  
fact sheet. This means it only includes the most  
important ideas.



You can find the other fact sheet on our website at  
[www.blueknot.org.au](http://www.blueknot.org.au)



You can ask for help to read this fact sheet.  
A friend, family member or support person  
may be able to help you.

## Support for you



In this fact sheet, we talk about things that might upset some people.



If you get upset and need support, we have services you can contact.



We offer free **counselling support** to people with disability and trauma.



Counselling support is when you:

- talk to someone about how you feel
- talk about ways to help you feel better.



You can contact us by phone.

**1800 421 468**



We are open every day.

We are open between 9am and 6pm AEST  
between Monday and Friday.



We are open between 9am and 5pm  
on Saturday and Sunday.



You can also contact us by webchat.

[www.blueknot.org.au/Training-  
Services/Counselling-and-Referral-Service](http://www.blueknot.org.au/Training-Services/Counselling-and-Referral-Service)



You can contact us by email

[ncrscounsellors@blueknot.org.au](mailto:ncrscounsellors@blueknot.org.au)

## What's in this fact sheet?

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## What is trauma?

**Trauma** is something bad that happens to you that can make you feel:



- sad



- scared



- stressed



- worried.



Trauma can affect:



- how you think



- how you feel



- your body.

Trauma can happen:

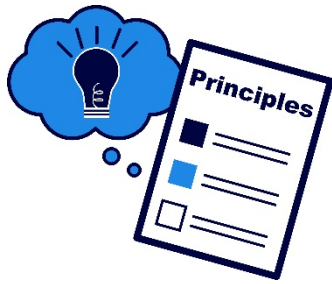


- once
- more than once.



Everyone deals with trauma in different ways.

## What are trauma-informed principles?



**Principles** are important ideas to think about.



**Trauma-informed principles** are important ideas to think about when we speak to other people.

They help us:



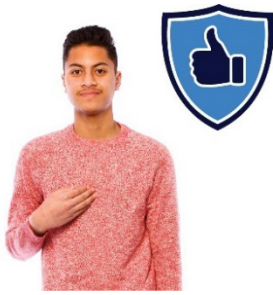
- support people with trauma in the best way



- talk to people with trauma in the right way.



There are 5 trauma-informed principles:



- Safety



- Trust



- Choice



- Working together



- Empowerment.

On the following pages, we explain how you can use these principles when you talk to someone who may have trauma.

## Safety



The Safety principle is about supporting a person with trauma to feel safe when you talk to them.

This includes feeling safe:



- to talk to you



- in the space where you talk



- to share their feelings.

## How you can support someone to feel physically safe

Make sure you talk to them in a space that is:



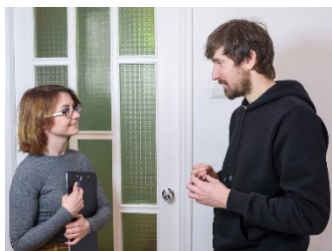
- safe



- private.



Ask the person with trauma how you can make the space more comfortable.



Make sure the person still feels physically safe when you stop talking to them.

## How you can support someone to feel emotionally safe



Ask the person with trauma what is a good time to talk to them.

Use body language that shows you are:



- listening



- supporting the person.

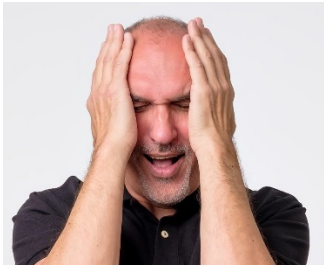


Try to keep eye contact with the person when they talk to you. But do not stare.



Look out for signs that the person feels stressed.

Signs can include:



- changes to their skin colour



- fidgeting



- taking long pauses between talking.



Tell the person to take their time speaking.



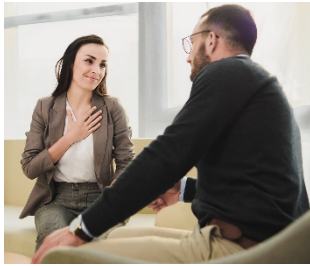
Ask the person if they need a break.



Make sure the person still feels emotionally safe when you stop talking to them.



## Trust



The Trust principle is about building trust between you and the person with trauma.



You can build trust when the person feels safe.



You can build trust when the person is comfortable when they talk to you.

You can build trust by:



- understanding the person's body language



- supporting the person to feel comfortable again.



You can build trust by being patient.



You can build trust by listening.



You can build trust by checking if the person is ok.

## Choice



The Choice principle is about giving people with trauma choices when you talk to them.

This includes choices about:



- when you talk to them



- where you talk to them



- what you talk about.



You should think about other ways to give the person with trauma more choice.

## Working together



The Working together principle is about how to work together with people with trauma.



People with trauma will connect better with you if you work together with them.



You should not do something for the person if they don't want you to.



You should also not do something to the person if they don't want you to.

You need to make sure the person has a:



- say about the things that affect them



- chance to make their own decisions.



Understand when the person might need extra help.

# Empowerment



**Empowerment** is when you gain the power to control your own life.



The Empowerment principle is about supporting people with trauma to have power in their lives.

When someone experiences trauma, they can feel:



- bad about themselves



- like they can't do anything



- like they don't have any power in their lives.





Helping someone have power is important for getting better from trauma.



There are ways you can talk to help someone have power.

When you talk to someone with trauma, you should:



- show them respect



- be patient



- make them feel included.



You should also find out what is the best way to talk to them.

## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this fact sheet mean.



### **Counselling support**

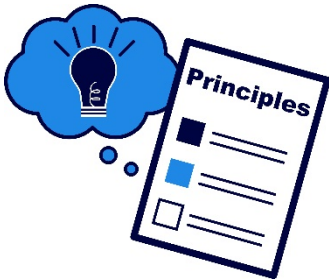
Counselling support is when you:

- talk to someone about how you feel
- talk about ways to help you feel better.



### **Empowerment**

Empowerment is when you gain the power to control your own life.



### **Principles**

Principles are important ideas to think about.

## Trauma

Trauma is something bad that happens to you that can make you feel:



- sad
- scared
- stressed
- worried.



## Trauma-informed principles

Trauma-informed principles are important ideas to think about when we support someone with trauma.

## Contact us



You can call the National Counselling and Referral Service (Disability).

**1800 421 468**



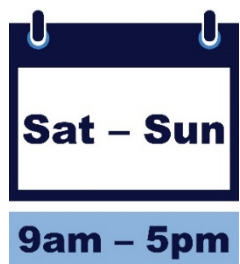
You can also send an email to

**[ncrscounsellors@blueknot.org.au](mailto:ncrscounsellors@blueknot.org.au)**



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