

WHAT IS **TRAUMA**, AND HOW DOES IT IMPACT ON REFUGEES?

DEFINING TRAUMA

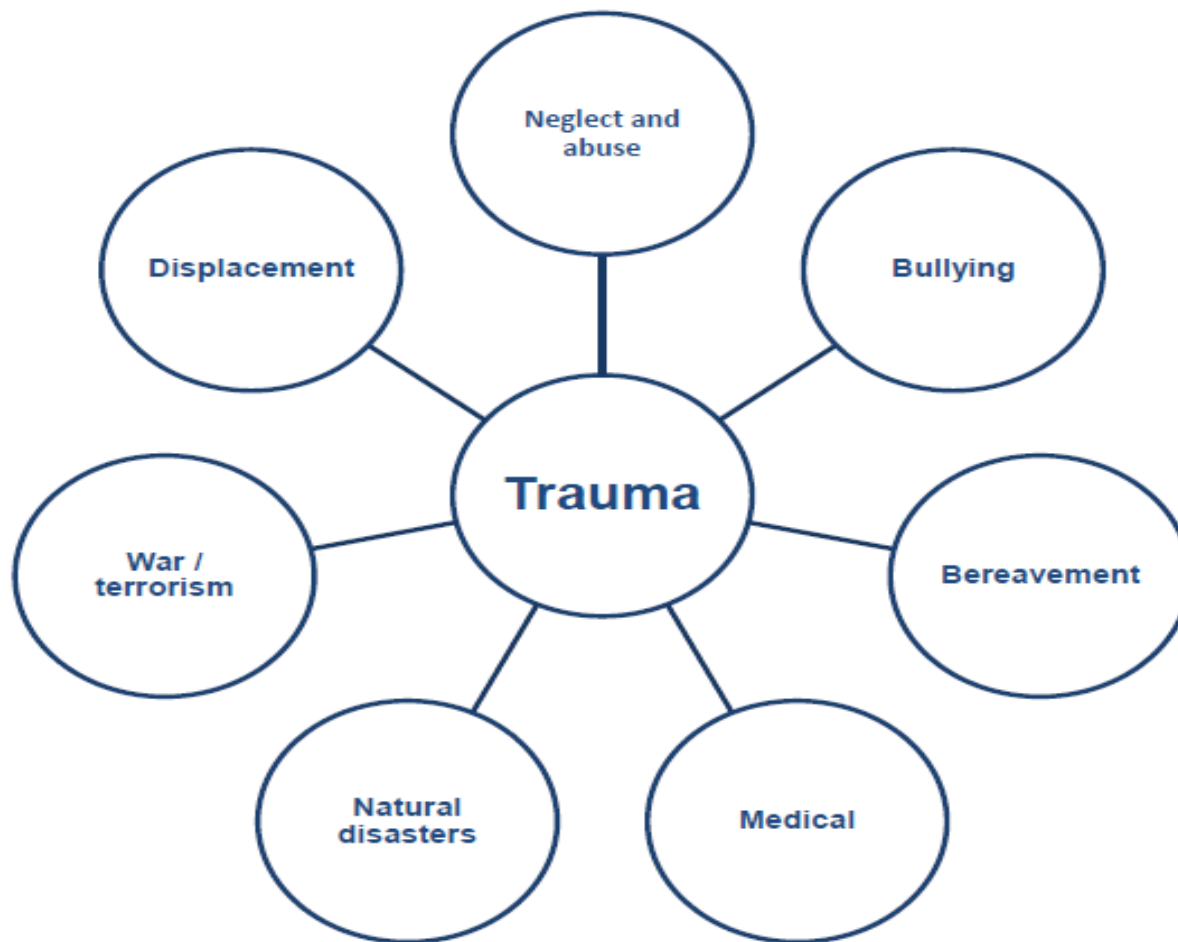
POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR
SUPPORT CONSULTANCY

(NOUN)

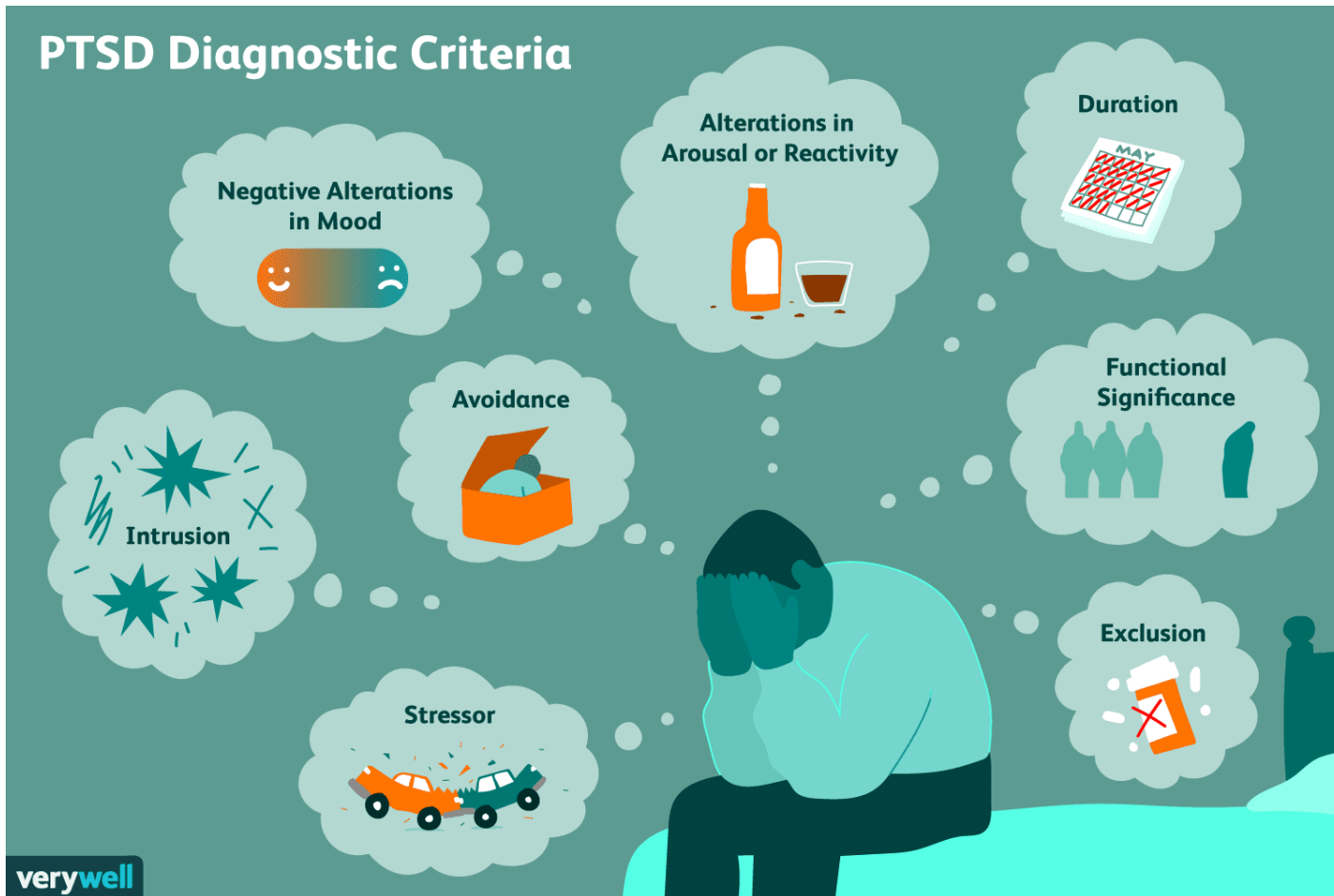
A deeply distressing or disturbing experience
Emotional shock following a stressful event or a
physical injury, which may lead to long-term
neurosis.

A traumatic event is an incident that causes **physical**, **emotional**, **spiritual**, or **psychological** harm. The person experiencing the distressing event may feel threatened, anxious, or frightened as a result. In some cases, they may not know how to respond, or may be in denial about the effect such an event has had.

TRAUMATIC EVENTS



PTSD



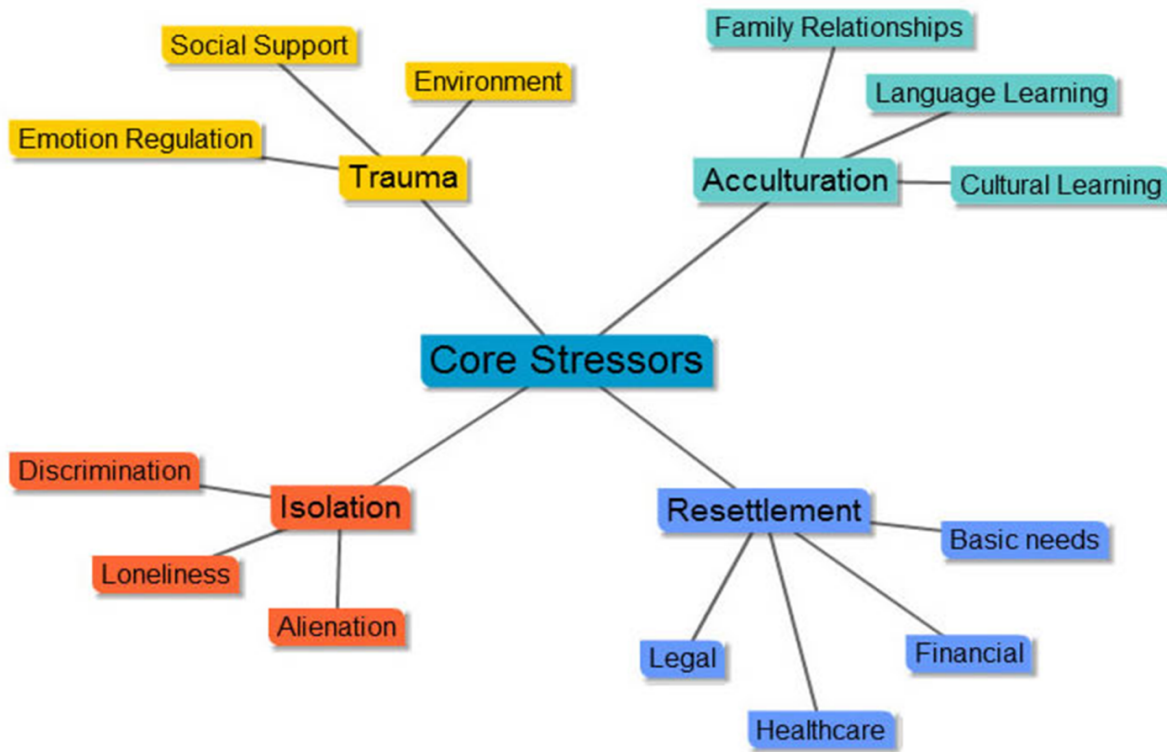
DEFINING TRAUMA BEHAVIOURALLY

- Trauma fundamentally changes the structure of the brain and the behaviours emitted
- Functions of behaviour may be
 - Avoidance
 - Escape
 - Attention
 - Tangible
 - Sensory
- Maladaptive coping strategies are the result
- Dysregulation feels more familiar and safer than safety – **chaos seeking!**

Trauma can be one major “big T” event, or it might be a number of “smaller t” events affecting an individual over a period of time. Examples of “smaller t” incidents might include feeling different, feeling unaccepted and not part of a group, and being unable to do what others can do. All trauma is stressful, but not all stress is traumatic. When stress is managed effectively, it is part of the means by which successful learning and adjustment to what happened occurs. Response to stress is individual and what is traumatic for one person may not be for another. Resilience, the ability to positively cope with stress and catastrophe, is individual.

– *How Trauma Affects People with Learning Disabilities – The Arc (2011)*

TRAUMA IN RELATION TO FLEEING WAR



It is impossible to imagine the trauma those who you are hosting have encountered

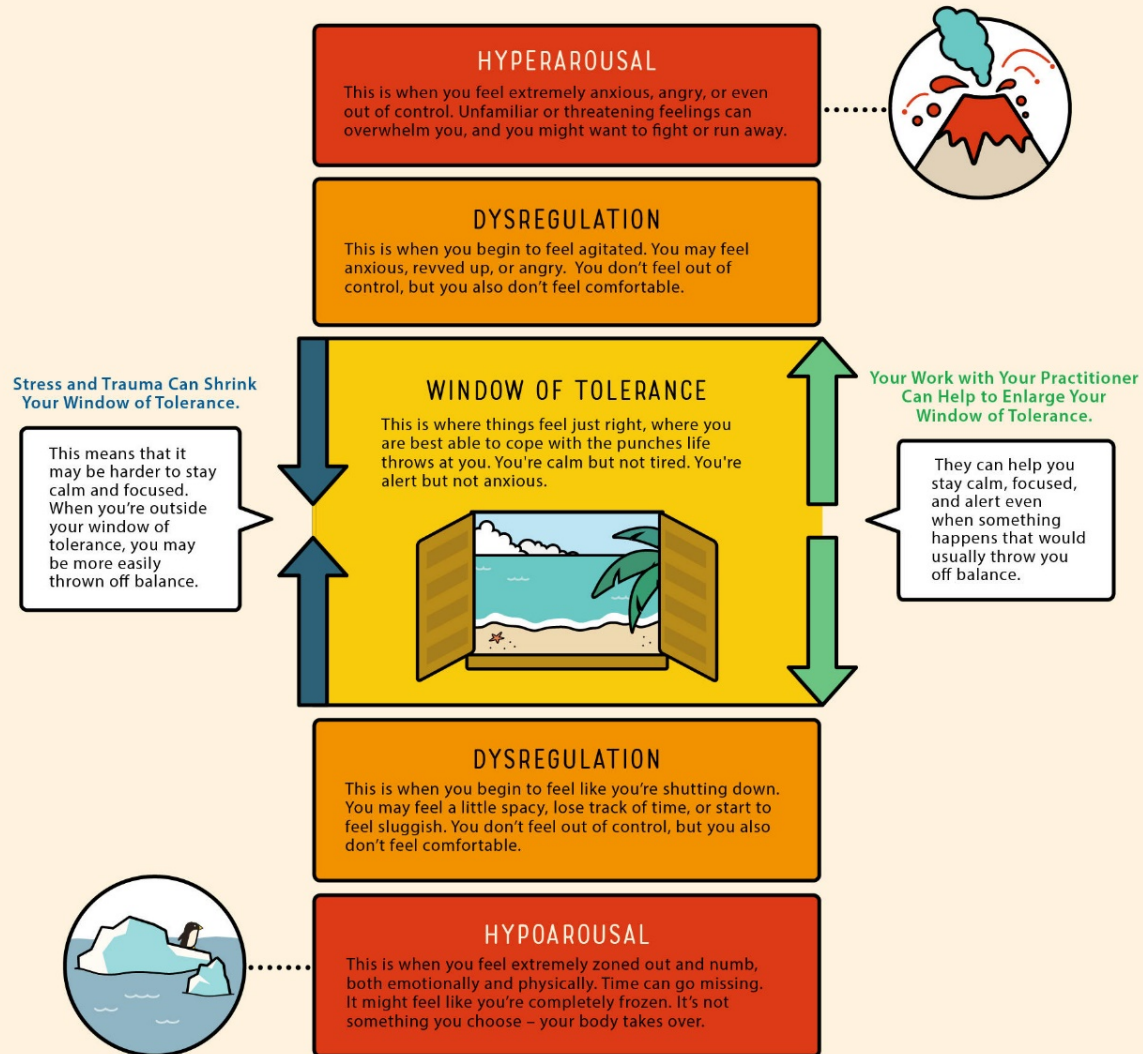
Making your home and community feel safe – physically, emotionally, psychologically – is essential

ensure those you are hosting have spaces they feel they have control of, and that they are not going to be disturbed in

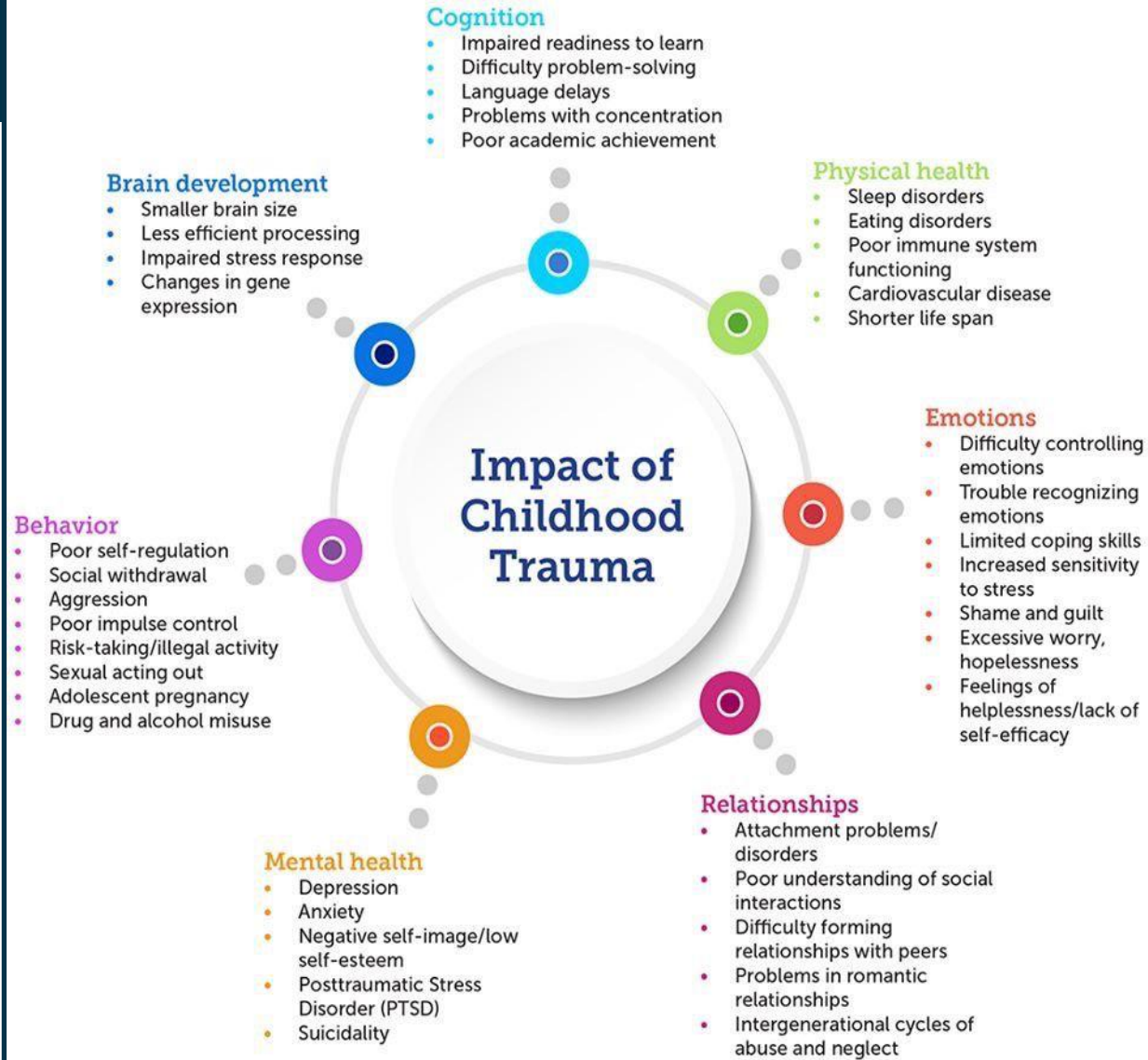
HOW TRAUMA AFFECTS A PERSON

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR
SUPPORT CONSULTANCY

How Trauma Can Affect Your Window of Tolerance



Impact of Childhood Trauma



Freeze



Why is *freezing* a helpful response to a threatening situation?

- ✓ Early stages of the trauma: gives us time to evaluate a situation, makes us less noticeable
- ✓ Later on: if it is not possible to escape or win then becoming unresponsive might be the best chance for survival

What happens in the body and mind?



(Early on) Thinking becomes quicker



(Early on) Attention is focused on escape routes



(Later on) Dissociation:
• 'Out of body' experiences
• Emotions become numb
• Unable to move

Appease



Why is *appeasing* a helpful response to a threatening situation?

- ✓ If the threat is another person (or people) then giving them what they want, placating them, begging, or submitting can reduce the danger...
- ✗ even if we say or do things that we later regret

What happens in the body and mind?



Your mind focuses on options that might reduce the immediate threat



You might not 'see' other options that seem obvious later



Adopt a submissive body posture:
• Body cringes to appear smaller
• Head bowed, eyes averted

Flight



Why is it helpful to *escape* from a threatening situation?

- ✓ A successful escape can mean survival, often with fewer costs than other options

What happens in the body and mind?



Body prepares for physical activity by:
• Releasing adrenaline
• Increasing heart rate
• Speeding up breathing rate
• Tensing muscles

Fight



Why can *fighting* be a helpful response to a threatening situation?

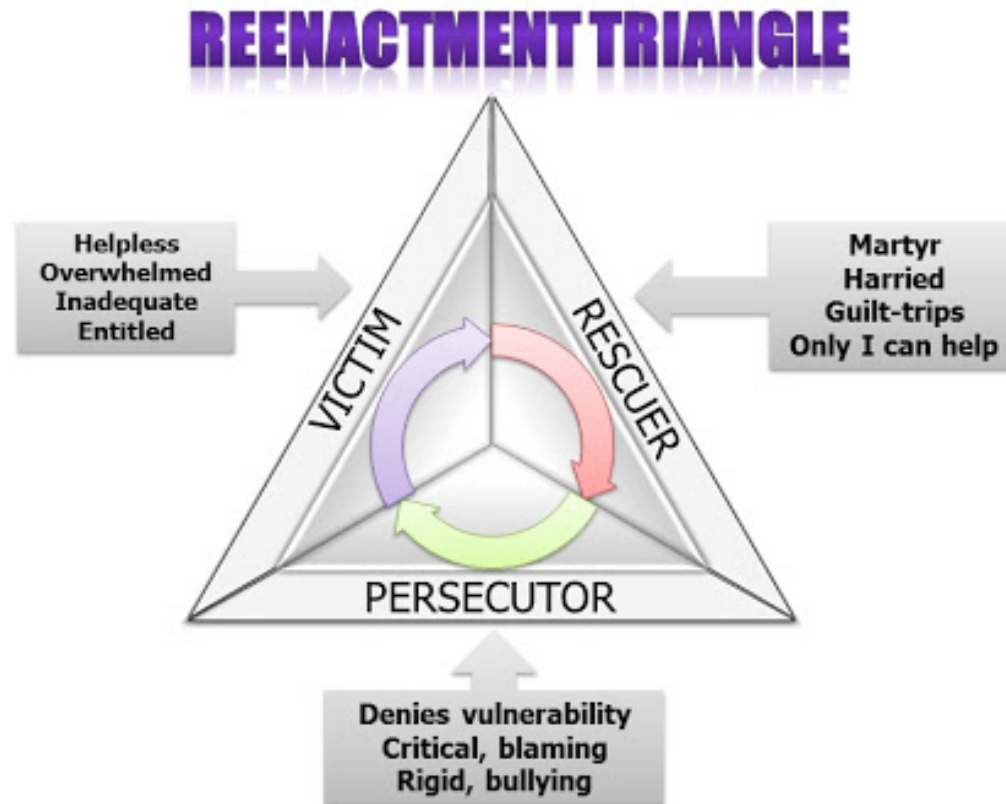
- ✗ Fighting comes with risks of injury, death, or other consequences ...
- ✓ ... but winning increases our chances of survival
- ✓ Sometimes looking aggressive can be enough to make an opponent back down

What happens in the body and mind?



Body prepares for physical activity by:
• Releasing adrenaline
• Increasing heart rate

RE ENACTMENT TRIANGLE



TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH

Trauma-Informed Values

1. **Safety:** We focus on clients' physical and emotional safety.
2. **Trustworthiness:** We maximize transparency, make tasks clear, and maintain appropriate boundaries.
3. **Choice:** Clients participate in shared decision making and goal-setting to determine the plan of action they need to heal.
4. **Collaboration:** We collaborate and share power with clients.
5. **Empowerment:** We recognize and build upon individuals' strengths, experiences, and internal personal power.

How to Support Someone Who Has Experienced Trauma



RESOURCES TO HELP

- https://uktraumacouncil.org/research_practice/refugee-asylum-seeking-resources
- <https://www.refugeewomenconnect.org.uk/blog/the-importance-of-providing-trauma-informed-holistic-mental-health-support-for-asylum-seekers-and-re>
- <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/our-work/mental-health-support-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/>
- <https://www.refugeetrauma.org/>
- <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/risks-and-protective-factors/vulnerable-children/refugee-asylum-seeker-children/>
- <https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/taking-refugees-into-your-home-heres-some-advice-7c556c01686c>
- <https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/refugee-trauma>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6721394/>

OTHER RESOURCES

Blogs

- <https://www.acesconnection.com/g/aces-in-education/blog/co-regulation-with-students-at-risk-calming-together>
-
- <http://www.missbehaviorblog.com/2019/01/why-co-regulation-is-so-important.html>
-
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0883035515304092>

Books

- https://www.amazon.co.uk/Trauma-informed-Care-Intellectual-Disability-Self-Study/dp/1912755793/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=trauma+informed+care&qid=1618242537&sr=8-2
- https://www.amazon.co.uk/Body-Keeps-Score-Transformation-Trauma/dp/0141978619/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3GVPMKFMSLD2A&dchild=1&keywords=the+body+keeps+the+score&qid=1618242483&sprefix=the+body+%2Caps%2C180&sr=8-1