



Trauma aware policy guidelines

The principles of being trauma aware are carried across into the policy that provides the structure for the whole organisation.

Safety:

- Policies should focus on both physical and psychological safety.
- The question of “safety for whom” should be asked, because policy can often privilege safety for one group at the expense of another.
- ‘No tolerance’ responses should instead focus on prevention and harm-reduction.

Trustworthiness:

- Policies should be understandable, explainable, and easily accessible by staff as well as children, young people, families, and carers.
- Intended goals of policies should be clearly stated so that actions in them are put into context.
- Where possible, objective criteria and guidance should be written into a policy to help create a clear overview and reduce bias.

Collaboration:

- Policies should be at least informed by, and at best created in collaboration with, the people who are going to be affected by the policy.
- Policies should have a relational focus, identifying lines of communication and where further guidance can be sought.
- Policies should show respect to the different expertise represented in the policy. This includes the expertise of staff, children, young people, families, and carers who have lived experience and are experts in their own lives.

Empowerment:

- Policies should communicate hope and a shared vision for positive change.
- Policies should provide guidance on best practice along with tools for daily practice.
- A systemic view should be included, acknowledging that people operate in systems that influence their resources and responses.

Choice:

- Choice should always be promoted to the greatest extent possible. This does not mean that the individual has the final say but it does mean that their input is maximised.
- The choices offered should be meaningful to the person making them rather than arbitrary.
- Where possible, there should be room for innovative solutions that can be tailored to the individual needs of staff, children, young people, families, and carers.

Culture:

- How visible is culture in your organisation? Do policies consistently reference culture?
- Is culture only framed as something experienced by 'others' or is it recognised as an aspect of everyone's identity?
- Is organisational culture recognised and promoted in policy?
- Is there reflection on how organisational culture may challenge or harm other cultural groups?

