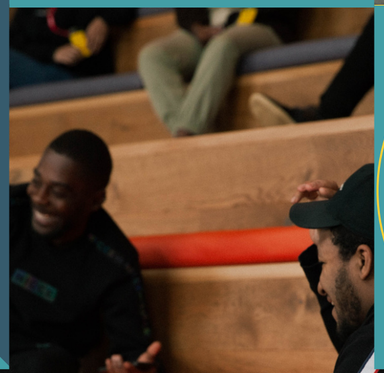






Trauma Informed Youth Engagement Toolkit

This Toolkit has been supported & funded by Trust for London.

Trust for London is an independent charitable foundation. They aim to tackle poverty and inequality in London and they do this by: funding voluntary and charity groups.

Trust for London

Tackling poverty and inequality

PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUNG LONDON

Partnership for Young London has three key objectives:

1. To build dynamic partnerships across organisations and networks which are responsive to the emerging needs of young people.
2. To develop a cohesive, cross-sector workforce that is skilled and competent to meet the holistic needs of diverse groups of young people.
3. To advocate and amplify the diverse voices of young Londoners, influencing policy, resourcing and delivery.

BARE RADICALS (FROM ENDZ)

Bare Radicals is a collective project of multi-disciplinary artists and producers that create artistic projects the lens of social justice.

They have an experiential approach to responding to systems of oppression through facilitating arts projects in social policy.

AUTHORS

who's this for?

This toolkit is an introduction to trauma informed approaches to youth engagement work. It is not intended as a replacement to formal training in trauma informed practice.

This document seeks to offer tips, guidance and checklists for those seeking to put trauma informed theory into practice.

The resource is for policy officers, campaigners, facilitators working with young people in youth-led projects and campaigns.

Contents

1. Our Experts
2. The Process
3. What are principles of trauma-informed practice
4. The 4 'r's
5. Trauma Informed in Practice.
6. Worksheets
7. References

Our Experienced Experts + Contributers

This resource is a collaborative project between Partnership for Young London, members of the bare radicals collective, and youth leaders who take part in participation projects, ambassador roles and campaigning



ANITA BHARDWAJ
(IN-ALIGN)
CONSULTANT,
TRAINER AND SOCIAL
JUSTICE ACTIVIST



STAFF AT PARTNERSHIP
FOR YOUNG LONDON

PARTNERSHIP FOR
YOUNG LONDON'S
TRAUMA INFORMED
YOUTH PRACTICE
ENGAGEMENT BOARD



LEAH FRANCIS

TRAINEE CLINICAL
PSYCHOLOGIST

Process

This document is a collaboration led by Partnership for Young London the regional youth policy infrastructure and campaigning organisation. Facilitated by bare radicals (from ends) a collective of self-identifying radical producers, facilitators, practioners and artists that seek to create work through the lens of social justice.

The project came to life through a focus group as part of the London GZ, a literature review on Gen Z. Many of the young people involved with the youth board expressed concerns that their involvement with engagement projects in London, have been respectively exploitative and over ambitious in terms of improving access to real world paid work experience in the youth sector in London.

Despite actively participating in paid, and unpaid experiences, such as youth boards and campaigns, they felt there is a disconnect between the work they do, and gaining recognition as active participants in the youth sector.

The creation of this resource took place over 3 months with engagement from various stakeholders from Partnership for Young London, and bare radicals' network. Additionally consultation was facilitated with 'experts of experience' members of various youth ambassador programmes, trustee boards and campaigners across London.

What is a Trauma Informed Approach?

A trauma informed approach/practise is a lens through which you can consider the work that you are doing. It is centring the skills you have that consider trauma and relationships. It can mean recognising that people will have experienced trauma and that aspects of a service can be experienced as traumatising. Trauma informed practise means evaluating your practises and policies to ensure that they promote trust, safety and actively seek to prevent re-traumatisation. Although this is a set of guidelines it is important to note that trauma informed practise is about improving the organisation you work in through trauma aware processes, approaches and values rather than a set of fixed procedures.

What is Trauma?

Going through very stressful, frightening or distressing events is sometimes called trauma. When we talk about emotional or psychological trauma, it might mean:

- situations or events we find traumatic - like experiencing predjudice.
- how we're affected by our developmental experiences.
- one-off or ongoing events
- being directly harmed
- systemic or organisational trauma
- witnessing harm - to someone else
- living in a traumatic atmosphere in the home, or in a war-torn country
- being affected by trauma in a family or community.

Traumatic events can happen at any age and can cause long-lasting harm. Everyone has a different reaction to trauma, so you might notice everyone's response to a traumatic event is different.

Why Trauma Informed and Why Now?

The shared experience of the Coronavirus pandemic since 2020 has amplified the need to reflect on how organisations work around traumatic events, and diverse lived experiences. We know that some people will be dealing with multiple difficulties, like bereavement, illness, navigating lockdowns, cost of living pressures or they may have experienced other trauma during this time.

Although adverse childhood experiences and other types of trauma have pre-dated the experience of the pandemic, now the call for a trauma informed approach to youth policy work is heightened. Particularly as voluntary sector organisations, and statutory institutions are focused on public recovery and strategies.

Whilst advocates and organisations might use statistics to tell a story, often we rely on the testimonies or insight from our service users on advisory boards or ambassador roles to justify the work. At Partnership for Young London, experts on advisory boards have told us getting their voices heard is important, but they are also sceptical about how impactful sharing their personal stories is to both society and their personal lives. In order for practice to match Trauma informed principles, sharing the personal story must create a sense of control of the narrative, and aim to create real agency and change. Otherwise the process is extractive or worse - re-traumatising.

" Often, what is missed by organisations engaging 'Youth Experts' is understanding the complexity of engaging survivors of trauma, as equal partners in their service - with a full recognition of their strengths, resilience and expertise that is offered. Those involved in youth engagement, need to balance respecting the expertise of the lived experience, whilst understanding how to ensure that as a service, they are able to recognise and respond to any trauma symptoms, as well as resisting any form of re-traumatisation or replication of systems of harm, through any of the organisational activities. This needs to be done through developing processes of engagement that are built on reparation and healing. This looks like:- workshops that offer meaningful engagement where ‘Youth Experts’ are influencing systems and policy change; It means the creation of relationships that are built on equity, safety, mutuality and trust; and it is where leaders model transparency and continuously increase voice, choice and agency of not only ‘Youth Experts’ but staff and all those involved within the organisation.Ultimately, being trauma informed within a Youth Engagement Context, means that you are working towards creating spaces and places which provide healing, recovery and opportunities for individual’s to engage with social activism to transform systems of harm and injustice.”



ANITA BHARDWAJ
(IN-ALIGN)
CONSULTANT, TRAINER AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVIST

6 guiding principles of trauma informed practice.

Adapted from samhsas national centre for trauma informed care and cdc office for public health in the USA

Safety	Trust & Transparency	Peer Support	Collaboration & Mutuality	Empowerment Voice & Choice	Cultural and Historical Systems, Issues and Events
Do community members feel safe physically and emotionally?	Are peers being integegated in processes of the services intended for them?	Is power being shared equally?	Can we prioritize freedom & empowerment?	How do we acknowledge personal and systems of trauma?	

A TRAUMA INFORMED YOUTH ORGANSATION DOES THE 4 R'S ...

ADAPTED FROM SAMHSAS NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TRAUMA INFORMED CARE AND CDC OFFICE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE USA

REALISES the widespread impact of trauma and understands paths for recovery

RECOGNISES signs and symptoms of trauma in everyone involved with the system - young people, their families, guardians, other services they interact with.

RESPONDS by integrating knowledge about trauma informed and intersectional practice in its policies and procedures.

RESISTS re traumatisation seeks to actively resist retraumatizing of young people and staff.

Lived experience with trauma informed approaches

CASE STUDIES FROM PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUNG LONDON'S ADVISORY BOARD.

a



Partnership for Young London's Trauma informed Advisory Board

Antontio Ferriera: Mental Health Awareness Campaigner and Advocate

Dominic Norton: Founder Missing Black People

Gigi Kalisilira: Mayor of London Hustings Youth Advisory Board

Elena : Mayor of London Peer Outreach Team Member

Zhane Decembre : London's Children in Care Council

Tanya Qusham : TikTik Digital Health Ambassador

Maisha Sumah : Health and Wellbeing Coach and Domestic Violence Campaigner



Trauma informed toolkit as told by experts with experience:

Tips for recruitment .

WHAT COULD HAPPEN

- People that might want to get involved with the project will research online or through friends. This means young people that are already in existing networks or involved with projects or civically 'active' are more likely to sign up

"I went to a youth club after getting invited by a friend and wanted to get involved."

- Typically they'd have to know what they are looking for.

- People sign up to relevant newsletters and will have to keep checking these to see if a relevant experience comes up they would want to be a part of. Programmes are more accessible to those with constant access to the internet.

A TRAUMA INFORMED ALTERNATIVE

- Consider alternative methods of recruitment outside of email notifications and mailing lists.

- Check-in with people that are signing up to programmes outside of explanation logistics - get an idea of their access needs and introduce them to the programme leaders and contact details of who is offering pastoral support before the programme starts.

- Track progress of of who is signing up - if the project is aimed of all young people, how to make sure you have a group reflective of the area it is in.

Trauma informed toolkit as told by experts with experience:



Tips for Workshop Prep .

WHAT COULD HAPPEN

- Budgets are usually predetermined before the projects begin, and are often tied to proposals in funding applications.
- Sometimes there is a trade off for producing high quality content, that can take resource away from access needs.
- For events and workshops, practitioners source refreshments, venues and other services from various suppliers.
- There is an agenda set for engagement projects with a rough idea of what information is wanted from young people.

A TRAUMA INFORMED ALTERNATIVE

In our focus group, experts suggest sourcing suppliers that are reflective of the demographic that organisations either support or recognise are part of communities that are often at an economic disadvantage.

"I'm a baker by trade and I have a registered business, when [a charitable organisation] that I was a member of order from my business for their party, it helped generate more work, combining my private business with my volunteering on their youth board felt like a genuine real-world opportunity. "

"When the organisation paid for a video commissioned by a guy we all know in my area, more regular people found out about it."

Incorporate budgets that support access needs, and added value for the expert information you will gain from your project. (see appendix)

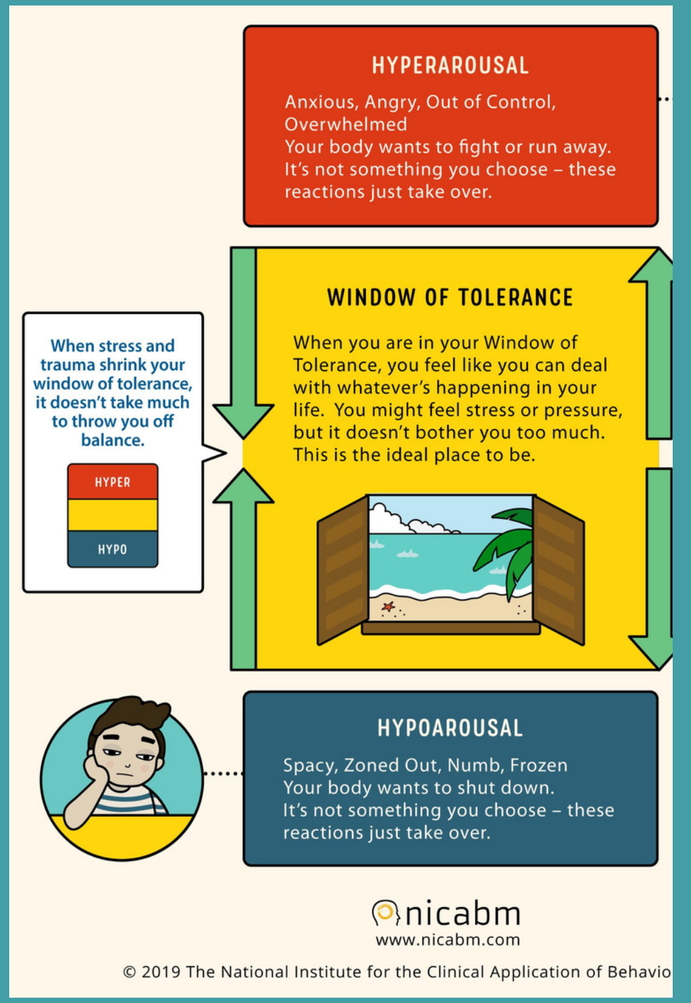
In a project with sustained engagement there should be a programme of a variety of activities. Team building and activities that are not just focus groups will encourage trust and community building for both the participants and organisation.

RECOGNISES : the signs of trauma in our youth engagement workshops.

Not every workshop or session will automatically run smoothly with no points of conflict. Although no two experiences are the same, we might see similarities in events of tension.

"When interpersonal relationships in this scenario go wrong, they are not always addressed further unless (there is) a formal report."

When addressing these, it's worth considering such events in the escalation cycle and in the window of tolerance (see right)



RESPONDING TO TRAUMA THROUGH POLICY AND PROCEDURES - RENUMERATION.

It is vital that young people are valued for their job roles in your organisation where possible. Considering renumeration, is a trauma informed approach because it recognises the relationship, socio-economic disadvantage can have to trauma, and is responding to trauma through direct action. Key things to consider:

- Equity: Monetary payment for participation is important to balance the power relationship between the young people and paid staf, it is unfair to ask them to work for free when other members of the research team are paid.

- Perpetuates socio-economic disadvantage: Many young people from marginalised communities already face socio-economic discrimination and there is a danger that young people are engaged as 'experts by experience' and have their identities commodified all while being precariously employed or expected to volunteer.

There are different models of payment to consider, for more information about the legality and debate around paying young volunteers look at Partnership for Young London's Peer Research Toolkit.

Trauma informed toolkit as told by experts with experience:

Tips for consultation sessions and focus groups.

WHAT COULD HAPPEN

- Often there are intentions to the workshop or focus group being held, as per organisational priorities. These are sometimes presented to the group with minimal explanation. : "here is the topic" –
- Questions always go out to the whole group, without taking time out to address people individually. Sometimes other people's characters in the room can impact our ability to contribute.
- Members have been part of engagement programmes or projects for years. Despite being promoted inside and outside the organisation as transferable opportunities or work experience, some members suggest they do not see pathways from this work into paid sustained work.

A TRAUMA INFORMED ALTERNATIVE

Focus groups and feedback sessions should always be mutually beneficial.

Providing context to the focus group or workshop with statistics, theories and open forums to share idea's means that advisors can leave with new information, or tools to describe their personal stories strengthened by statistics.

" Being so close to the fold helps with finding and sharing information to the other groups I work with"

"I can surround myself with intentional like minded spaces and different perspectives to open my mind - nothing like the people I see every day at my office."

"Being close to funding processes has helped me know what I can and can't go for myself"

Trauma informed toolkit as told by experts with experience:

Tips for speaking engagements and external events.

WHAT COULD HAPPEN

- It's great when an organisation is inviting their board members to meetings and events. But sometimes It can feel exploitative

- Events and workshops often segregate young people from practitioners - which is confusing for a young person that is working for an organisation as an ambassador or trustee.

A TRAUMA INFORMED ALTERNATIVE

Periodically gain consent and agree with the expert of experience what information they want to share.

They love to reel off all my personal stories, even when I'm in formal work with them now. - but I've come far from my school offending days."

Trauma informed toolkit as told by experts with experience:

Tips for facilators

WHAT COULD HAPPEN

"When they put people from outside the community to ask our stories – it makes me uncomfortable. "

"Invasive questions and attaching my experience to statistics is so off-putting."

"Scenarios where I am not allowed to share my story of sexual assault"

"The facilitator is seen as separate from the group or unapproachable - this could be due to safeguarding restraints and professional boundaries. "

A TRAUMA INFORMED ALTERNATIVE

Where possible, look for ways to be transparent about the process. Having members of the groups facilitate sessions either in a workshop style or design focus group questions themselves so that we can do it in the way we feel safe

Consider recruitment for internal roles to reflect the communities you set out to engage with, with a special focus on who is collecting personal stories

Sharing a personal anecdote so people do not automatically share something personal that would be more than what was expected/required

Ask yourself: " Am I sitting in the present moment of the room?" - practising mindfulness will facilitate deeper levels of understanding and response to changing dynamics in the room.

See Intentional Spaces Checklist Appendix

Trauma informed toolkit as told by experts with experience:

Tips for follow up and sharing insights

WHAT COULD HAPPEN

"Sometimes I want to use my story to change minds, but sometimes after seeing these out there I change I mind."

"Sometimes workshops and projects finish abruptly with no follow up. It can trigger feelings of abandonment. "

A TRAUMA INFORMED ALTERNATIVE

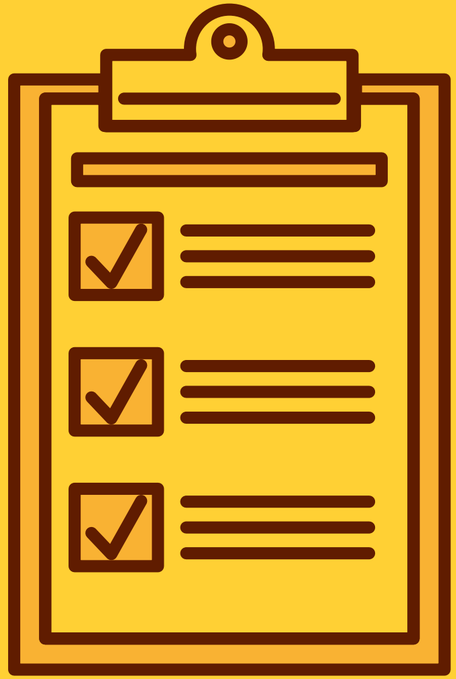
End of workshops - doing check outs and signposting to other supporting services and useful information. This can be prepared beforehand, and edited with specific follow-ups to conversations from the focus group.

-If you are a researcher, or policy worker, you can strive to make the event mutually beneficial in some way. For example, providing a list of relevant community group that would specifically answer questions that came about in the group.

Always gain consent and agree with the expert of experience what information they want to share beyond the meeting. Check and check again!

As a researcher or investigator you should always share , main bullet points and notes you will take away from the meeting so that participants can validate, verify or change.

Worksheets + Checklists

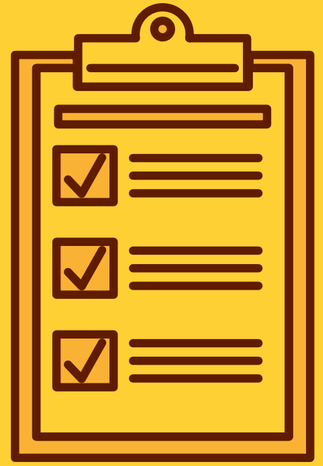


RESISTS RETRAUMATISATION : through using inclusive language .

FINDING INCLUSIVE, INTENTIONAL LANGUAGE TO TALK ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE. BELOW ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW TO USE INTENTIONAL LANGUAGE - USING REAL WORLD EXAMPLES FROM EXPERTS WITH EXPERIENCE IN YOUTH ADVOCACY WORK

Instead of	Say this	Why
Wow you're so articulate	Thank you for sharing such an informative story	Reduced socio-economically micro-aggressive language.
Knife crime/suicide 'epidemic'	Concerning rates of'	It is really helpful how clearly you communicate your thoughts
Committed Suicide	Took their own life	Commited implies it is a crime and stigmatises it
Boys and girls	People , everyone, humans, earthlings, change makers	Inclusive language for people in the LGBTQIA+ community. 1 in 8 people aged 18-24 in this community have attempted to end their life
Amazing opportunity	An opportunity to [brief outline of proposed reward/process]	Outlining features of an unpaid experience in an unbiased way alleviates pressure for a YP to come get involved.
My young people	Young advisor/experts of experience/those with experience of	To avoid infantalising competent experts of the room
What do you think about	If you feel like sharing 'I'd like to understand your perspective.'	Being more specific about wanting to gain insight as a form of collaboration
[after a focus group] any other thoughts or feelings	How was it for you to talk about this	A reflective checking out and checking in on how the session was.

Worksheet : Running Trauma informed Campaigns.



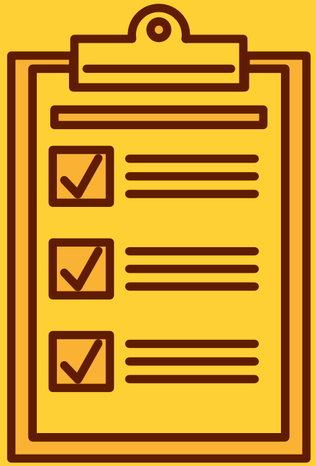
- Have I researched in-depth the potential barriers for experts by experience to get involved?
- Am I offering opportunities for participants to set boundaries?
- Have I spent resources in a way that responds to wider systems of trauma in society?
- Am I handling other people's stories with care?
- Did volunteers benefit from being involved?
- Is the language I am using inclusive and realistic?
- What is my relationship to the campaign issues?

WORKSHEET: PLANNING A WORKSHOP



1. Check materials before session, including timings
2. Try to ensure that there are at least 2 facilitators running events
3. Risk assess the work
4. Plan and implement a clear structure for accountability and evaluation
5. Where highly sensitive issues are being explored give more time/avoid trying to cover too much ground and begin with an external example to illustrate the work rather than the lived experience of members of the group to provide more space for reflection, observation, and learning
6. Agree the cut off point for people joining sessions and be explicit about this in publicity for the event
7. Be explicit about the role of professionals joining events for young people and make that explicit in the publicity for the event (i.e. are they observers, stewards, critical friends etc)
8. Make a plan of how to follow-up from the event - when will you be in touch after? and how?

WORKSHEET: RESPONDING TO SIGNS OF TRAUMA IN WORKSHOPS

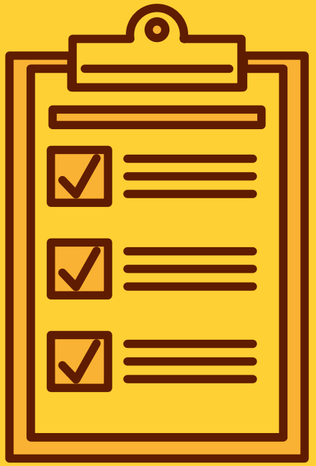


Trauma manifests in our behaviour in many ways, it might look like: conflict, shouting or crying. Lateness, missing sessions and inconsistent communication can be prevalent in people with complex access needs or volunteers trying to get involved in unpaid labour. Although they are frustrating, a trauma-informed approach seeks to make space for real-world obstacles too.

<u>Ways to de-escalate moments of tension.</u>

- create a consistent approach to emotional dis/regulation
- use breathwork to calm the nervous system: you can work on re-regulating breathing together with slow exhales.
- avoid language that triggers shame or blame
- take a much-needed rest break, do not overload an agenda or feel pressured to continue with an agenda
- if a break is needed, agree length of time with the room
- provide separate spaces for those involved to have a chance to be listened to

WORKSHEET: CHECKLIST DURING A WORKSHOP



- Have I set context for the event/session, what is this space for?
- Is the collective clear on what is ok and what is not ok at a session?
- Do participants know what the roles of the organisers are?
- Did I explain what steps to take if a participant wants to challenge a point of view?
- Am I present in the moment?
- Am I suspending judgement?
- Have I shared all relevant information in accessible ways, before during and after ?
- Have I been explicit about who the session is for and roles of public and professionals in the space?
- Am I seeking to understand first, then to be understood?
- Am I thinking of care and support in my language?
- What feelings came uo for me in the conversations?

References + Further Info (links)

Reporting Poverty: A guide for media professionals by onroad media

Involving young londoners: A peer research toolkit by Partnership for Young London

samhsa's concept of trauma and guidance on trauma informed care.

Gendered Intelligence - Trans-inclusive training and resources

Supporting Trans People of Colour - How to Make Your Practice Inclusive (Book)Sabah Choudery

Mind - What is Trauma

In-Align

who to follow on the gram
@decentertheteacher
@bareradicalsfromends
@goodthinkinguk


bare
radicals