

A Trauma-Informed Wales

A community summary of the Trauma-informed Wales Framework



Hello

We all experience different challenges as part of life. Sometimes we cope and manage quite quickly with help from family and friends. But sometimes things happen that cause distress or frighten us.

Trauma is any experience that is unpleasant and can cause us distress or anxiety. Trauma can also refer to the effects of a traumatic event.

Trauma can be a one-off event, a series of events, or an ongoing situation.



Trauma can happen because:

- we experience abuse or neglect
- someone you love gets a serious illness or dies
- people get divorced or separated
- we feel unsafe
- we are threatened or bullied
- we're involved in an accident
- we see a crime or violence
- of a fall when we're older
- we can't afford to pay for heating, food and other basic needs.



It can affect:

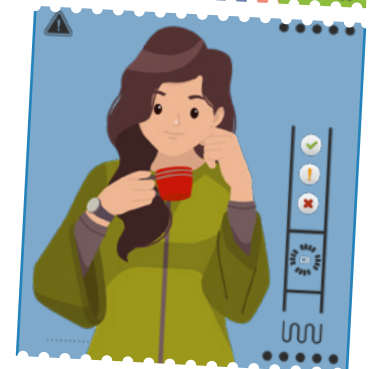
- how we feel about life
- our mental health and emotions
- our physical health
- our ability to do everyday things
- our ability to learn new things
- our relationships with family, friends and other people.



Different people find different things traumatic, but there is support to help us feel better and stop things getting worse.



This framework was co-created with people and organisations across Wales and supported by the Welsh Government.



About the framework

This new framework will help make sure:

- Everyone knows about adversity and trauma and understands how they affect people.
- Everyone knows how to step in and stop adversity and trauma happening.
- Everyone knows how to support someone affected by trauma.

i **Adversity** — hard times or difficult situations.



The framework is for everyone in Wales. It's everyone's business.



It's for everyone of all ages.



It helps everyone work together — organisations, services, schools, communities, families and you.



It's about making sure everyone has their rights. Human Rights and Children's Rights as set out by the United Nations. In Wales our rights are also set out in law and government policy that help us to:

- to be safe from harm
- to have a healthy life
- to have a say in decisions that affect your life
- to be treated fairly and not discriminated against.

It's about making sure people get the right support at the right time in the right ways.



About the framework

The aim

This framework aims to help everyone in Wales understand how adversity and trauma can impact people and how to support people who are affected. This will help improve people's health and well-being.

The goals:

- Everyone in Wales understands what we mean by adversity and Trauma-informed.
- Everyone in Wales can get the right support from our communities and any services we need.
- Everyone's life is better because the community, services and organisations are working in the best ways to help us.
- The community, services and organisations work together, bring together good practice, training and resources to improve lives.



The 5 Principles

Universal

This is important for everyone in Wales. We all need the right support and when this is provided it should not cause harm.



Person Centred

Putting people first, involving them in decisions and making sure they get the right support.



Relationship-focused

Safe and supportive relationships between people, families, professionals and communities are important. People need trusting relationships to feel understood and get support.



Resilience and strengths-focused

Building on the strengths people already have so they can cope now and in the future.



Inclusive

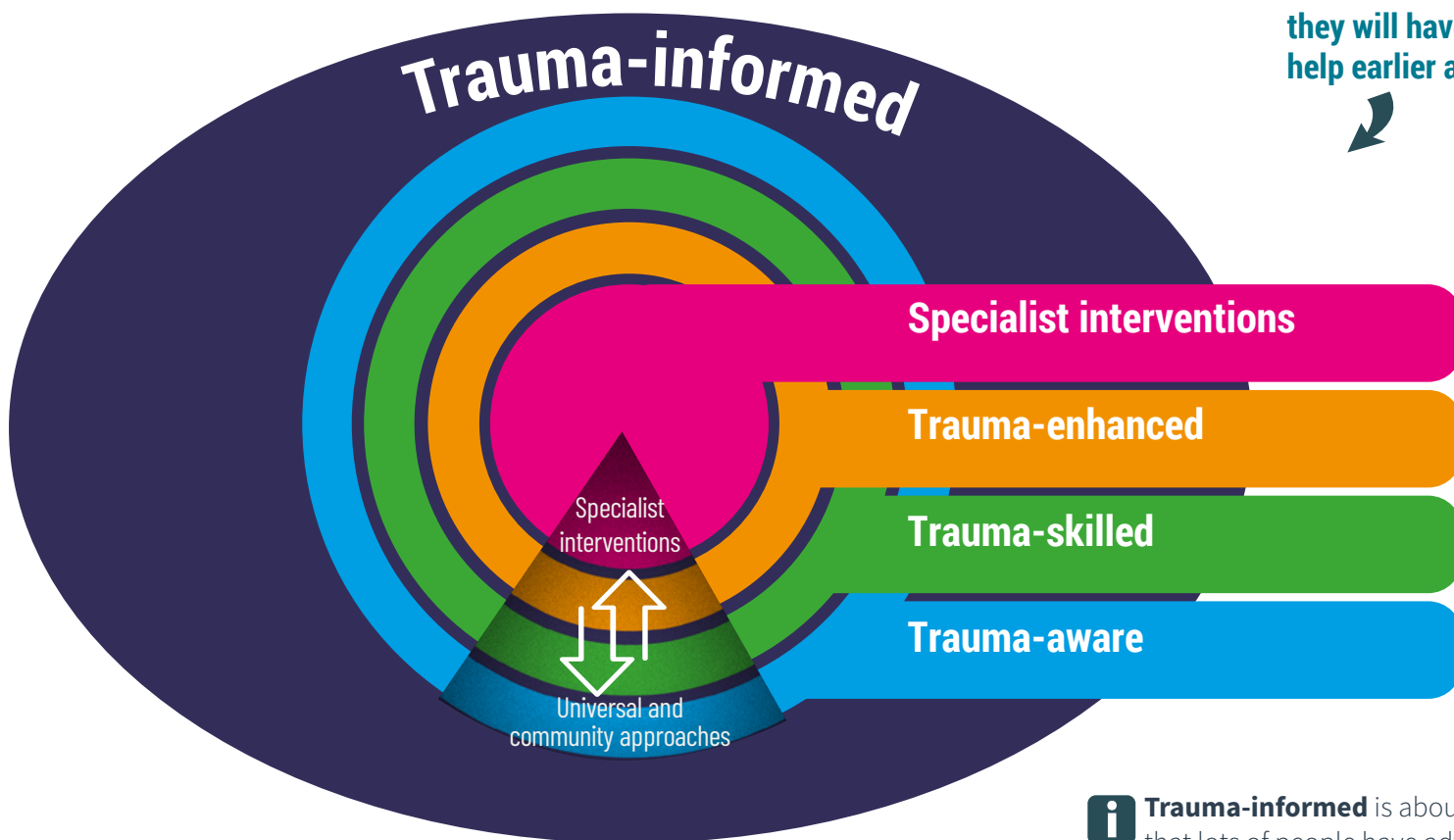
Making sure everyone in Wales can get the support they need, and no one is held back because of who they are, where they are from, how they identify or what they have experienced.



How it works

Everyone in Wales has a role to play in making sure this works – this isn't just about professionals. People need the right support at the right time in the right ways.

Everyone in Wales could benefit from understanding trauma and adversity. However, some may need additional training and support depending on their roles. In this document, we have called these 'levels'. Everyone across Wales should fit into one or more levels.



If everyone in society becomes Trauma-informed, then far fewer people will need additional support, because they will have been able to get help earlier and in the right way.



Trauma-informed is about understanding that lots of people have adversity and trauma that affects them in all kinds of ways.





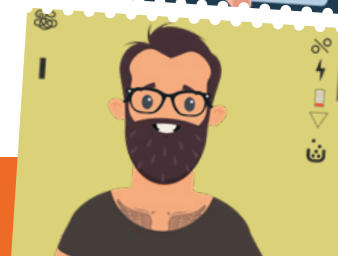
Trauma-aware level

This level is aimed at everyone in Wales.

Individuals, families, communities, services and organisations.

Everyone working at this level should be able to say:

- ... I understand that anyone can experience adversity and trauma, and it can be really hard for people to ask for help.
- ... Adversity in childhood can continue to affect children's lives, even when they're adults.
- ... Kindness, understanding and support make a big difference.
- ... I can recognise when someone is in distress.
- ... Everyone is treated fairly and can get support when they need it.
- ... No-one misses out on support because of who they are.
- ... I know how to challenge systems and things that happen in my community that are unfair.
- ... I get support to cope and build on my strengths.
- ... I have relationships I trust and get support from people who've been through the same things.
- ... I know adversity and trauma can happen to anyone and with support, it can be overcome.
- ... My community is a safe, healthy place and doesn't cause me harm.





Nia's story

Trauma-aware level



↩ **Nia is young mum and works at reception in a primary school.** She loves working there and being the first one to greet children and parents as they arrive for school in the morning.

It can be challenging too. Sometimes a child or parent is upset or distressed because of something that has happened at home. Nia understands this and knows that adversity and trauma can affect how a child treats her or other staff. So, she is always compassionate and kind.

As part of her job, she's had Trauma-aware training:

- she knows people need understanding, support and care
- she knows where to send children and parents for support when they need it
- she knows which members of staff to call if she needs help.





Trauma-skilled level

This level is for everyone who provides care or support to people who may have experienced trauma, whether or not the trauma is known about. That includes staff and volunteers who work in health services, education, social services, organisations, community groups, faith-based groups, emergency services and the courts.



The services and support I use:

- are safe and can be trusted
- are fair and treat me with respect
- don't cause me more harm, stress or trauma
- put me first and support me in ways that I want
- can support me in the language I speak the most
- support my family with compassion and kindness
- make sure I know about support in my community, including activities that improve health and well-being
- make sure everyone can get the support they need and reduce the barriers
- make sure I get support that will meet my needs in the best ways.



The people that support me:

- are safe and I can trust them
- recognise the impact of adversity and trauma on my life and don't judge me
- understand that things like poverty or discrimination can make trauma worse
- are aware and sensitive to my culture and beliefs
- involve me, my family and my support network in decisions about my care and support.





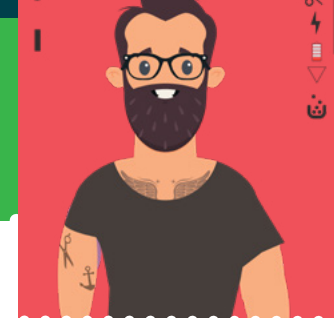
Josh and Clare's story

Trauma-skilled level

Josh and Clare run a community kitchen and drop-in as part of a national charity. They know some children and adults who come to them for help have experienced trauma. They understand how this can affect a child's behaviour and how it may mean that adults in the family are also finding it hard to manage. They are kind, calm and try to reduce stress as much as possible.

Josh and Clare have both had Trauma-skilled training. They understand:

- it's important for children and adults to feel physically and emotionally safe when they meet them
- the importance of supportive relationships and meaningful activities for the children they work with
- the impact of trauma on mental health and behaviour
- it's important not to cause further harm or make things worse.





Trauma-enhanced level

This level is for workers who give direct or intensive support to people who've experienced traumatic events and help them cope with the effects. That includes staff with specific roles in health services, education, social services, charities, emergency services and the courts.

The services and support I use:

- don't cause me more harm, stress or trauma
- work together to make sure I get support quickly, without having to ask again and again
- work together to share information about my support so I don't have to wait for help
- have policies and systems that keep me safe and support me in the right ways
- train their staff, and support them so they continue to improve how they support me
- support their staff's health and well-being.

The people that support me:

- ask me what has happened and talk to me in a kind and sensitive way
- understand that other people in my family might also have experienced adversity and trauma
- understand that my family can be overwhelmed and also need support to cope
- are advocates and make sure that my views are listened
- understand that support may need to change if it's no longer working
- give me all the information I need about therapies and other treatments, so I can make decisions.





Emyr's story

Trauma-enhanced level



↩ **Emyr is a social worker.** He loves his job and wants to support older people in his community to reach their goals. He knows some of the people he sees regularly are finding it hard to pay for food and are sometimes treated differently by others because they look different, or are new to the area. He takes time to get to know the people he's supporting so they're not afraid of him and know they can ask him for help.

Emyr has been trained on strategies to help people distressed by trauma. This helps him:

- understand the effects of adversity and trauma
- understand some of the techniques he can use with people who are distressed, including breathing and relaxation.

Emyr has support from a supervisor and psychologists who work in the team. This gives him time to talk about his work and get support for his mental health and well-being.





Specialist intervention level

This level is for specialist staff and professionals who regularly give special personalised and co-produced interventions in a range of settings to people to help them deal with adversity and trauma. Or for staff who support organisations to become more Trauma-informed.

The services and support I use:

- work together to assess my needs and make sure I get the right support
- work together to put my needs first
- work together so I get therapies based on evidence of what work best
- make sure I can choose different types of support including internet-based therapy
- work together with health services to make sure I have all the medicines, and medical help I need
- work together with local services to make sure I get support across all areas of their life
- have policies, guidelines and systems that keep me safe and support me in the right ways
- make sure their staff are well trained and share good practice.

The people that support me:

- know what's happened to me, the treatment I've had and what support to give
- understand that I need support for other things including my mental health
- involve me in decisions about my care and support
- give me opportunities to set my own goals and decide how I measure success
- are able to spot if my treatment isn't working and change it
- know about all the options they can offer me and help me choose what is right.





Francine's story

Specialist intervention level

Francine is a counsellor. She supports families who have come to Wales to be safe from war, or violence in their home country. Francine works in different ways using different types of therapy. Sometimes she is helping them cope with serious events, adversity and trauma. She has been trained in delivering Specialist Interventions. She understands:

- lots of therapy options and knows how to choose the best one
- the mental and physical impact of adversity and trauma
- how important it is to respect people's culture and beliefs.

She has support from a senior psychologist and a team of other mental health practitioners who are specialists in trauma when she needs. This helps make sure she doesn't suffer from the effects of hearing about the traumatic experiences of others and then become affected by this herself.



Next steps

We will collect information and check how this framework is being used across Wales. This will help services and organisations learn from each other and improve. It will also help see what works well and the difference it makes to people's lives.

Thanks for reading this

You can read the full framework [here](#).

