



Creative Engagement

“Risky
Conversations”

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Complex Risk

1. Safety of the children
2. Safety of all members of the family
3. Your safety
4. Agency/policy/departmental expectations
5. The conversation

Trauma-Informed Care

A strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasize physical, psychological, and emotional **safety** for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

Hopper, E., Bassuk, E., & Olivet, J. (2007). *Shelter from the Storm: Creating Trauma-Informed Homeless Services*. Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Available at www.homeless.samhsa.gov

Multifocal Trauma-Informed Lens

1. Child(ren) who is/are possibly experiencing developmental trauma
2. Adult(s) who possibly experienced developmental trauma

Developmental Trauma

- Violation of child's sense of safety and trust, of self worth, with a loss of a coherent sense of self
- Emotional distress & dysregulation; shame and grief
- See the world differently
- Un-modulated aggression, difficulty negotiating relationships
- More likely to suffer ill health in later life

(ABS 2006; Silburn et al 2011 van de Kolk 2007).

Re-traumatisation

Many survivors have been re-traumatized by health professionals and other workers who have inadequate understanding of complex trauma

TRAUMA disrupts the critical balance between
amygdala and cortex

OR

TRAUMA causes people to have limited control
over their reactivity, emotions and impulses. Their
responses can appear out of proportion to the
seemingly small triggering event

Distress Tolerance



1. Social engagement – ask for help

No-one saves you

2. Fight or flight

Can't defend or flee

3. Freeze or collapse

Immobilise with fear

Principles of Trauma Informed Care

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness
3. Collaboration
4. Choice
5. Empowerment

Safety and Reciprocity


Safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives

Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health.

Managing Your Reactions

Two Core Skills:

1. Manage your physical/biological reactions
2. Manage your emotional reactions

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1. Hostage to your emotions but you are unaware.
 2. Aware you need to control your emotions but don't know how
 3. Control your emotions by challenging your thinking

Indicators

- Notice physical signals
- Notice emotional signals
- Notice behavioral signals

3 Common Mistakes

1. Putting off the tough talk
2. Saying the wrong thing
3. Not knowing when to talk and when to not talk

Holding the Risk

1. Examine your goals/objectives.
2. Monitor your goals/objectives.
3. Review your goals/objectives.

Un-Safe Conversations

1. Ignore the safety issues
2. Decide the topic is unsafe and move to avoidance or dominance.
3. Realize safety is at risk but try to fix it by minimizing or “sugar-coating” the message.

Safe Conversations

1. Honest, congruent and respectful. No hidden agendas.
2. Monitor conversation
 - a) step out of content
 - b) make it safe
 - c) step back in
3. Speak with confidence, humility and skill

Keeping it Safe

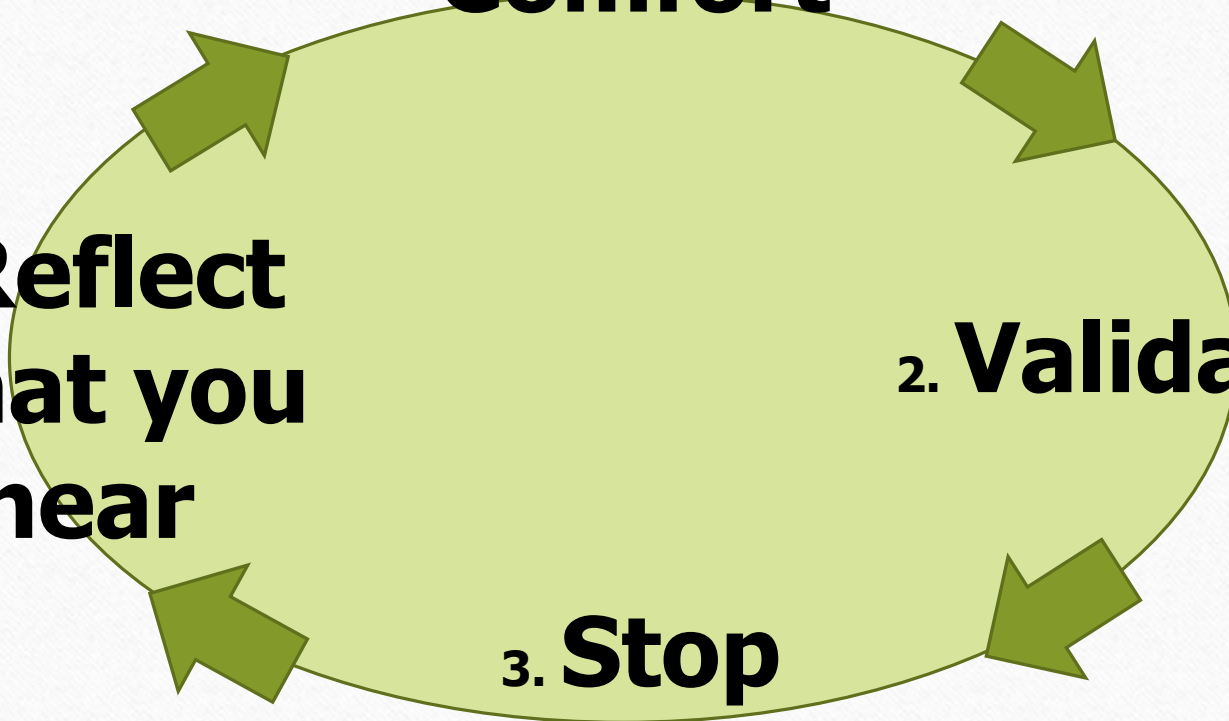
1. Move from reactivity to receptivity
2. Be aware of your triggers
3. Be aware of recipients triggers
4. Context and back story
5. What and HOW

**1. Communicate
Comfort**

2. Validate

**3. Stop
talking and
listen**

**4. Reflect
what you
hear**



Essential Elements

1. Mutual Purpose (welfare and well-being of the children/family)
2. Mutual Respect
 - a) Respect your client
 - b) Be respect-worthy

The Goldilocks Test

- Too soft: friendship before fact
- Too hard: agenda before alliance
- Just right: safe, specific and shared

