



Trauma Informed Approach

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Solicitor



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge this land that we meet on today is the traditional lands for the Kurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their country.

We also acknowledge the Kurna people as the custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kurna people today.



WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE (SA)

Who are we?



Vision

Purpose

Core Values

WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE (SA)

Who are we?



Our Journey

- Incorporation: October 1995
 - Founded after successful lobbying for government funding.
 - Inspired by the Australian Law Commission's report on barriers to women's equality before the law.

Expanding Services

- Nearly 30 Years of Growth
 - Rural and Remote Services
 - Family & Domestic Violence Support
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services
 - Support for Migrant Women Fleeing Violence
 - Complex Family Law Support

Our Clients

- Diverse Backgrounds and Needs
 - Many clients have experienced trauma, violence, and complex legal, medical, and health issues.



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What do we do?

Provide free and confidential advice for all women across South Australia.

Legal Services

- Family Law
- Intervention Orders
- Navigating support for family violence
- Separation and divorce
- Immigration family violence exemptions
- Victims of Crime compensation
- Advocacy and advice for women survivors of family violence and/ or sexual assault
- Criminal Defense (minor indictable and summary matters only)

Support Services

- Family Advocates
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Worker
- Financial Counsellors



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Strategic Priorities



Recognition of WLSSA across SA

Trauma-informed and holistic specialist legal services for women

Collaborative effort for women's justice and safety

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Where are we?



Head Office is located in Adelaide

Outreach Locations

- Berri
- Cedar Health Service
- Ceduna
- Elizabeth Downs
- Elizabeth Grove
- Kangaroo Island
- MarionLIFE
- Mount Gambier
- Port Lincoln

Satellite offices in Christies Beach, Mt Gambier and Pt Augusta.



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A Trauma Informed Approach



The Women's Legal Service has developed an implemented an **integrated service model** between legal and community services to ensure women and children receive the most seamless, coordinated and trauma informed support possible.

By bringing these services together, clients can access legal assistance alongside practical and emotional supports, **reducing risk of re-traumatisation** and gaps in care.

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A Trauma Informed Approach



The integrated model framework is grounded in recognising the widespread impact of trauma and integrating knowledge of its effects into all aspects of service delivery, this is one of our core principles.

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A Trauma Informed Approach



What is trauma?

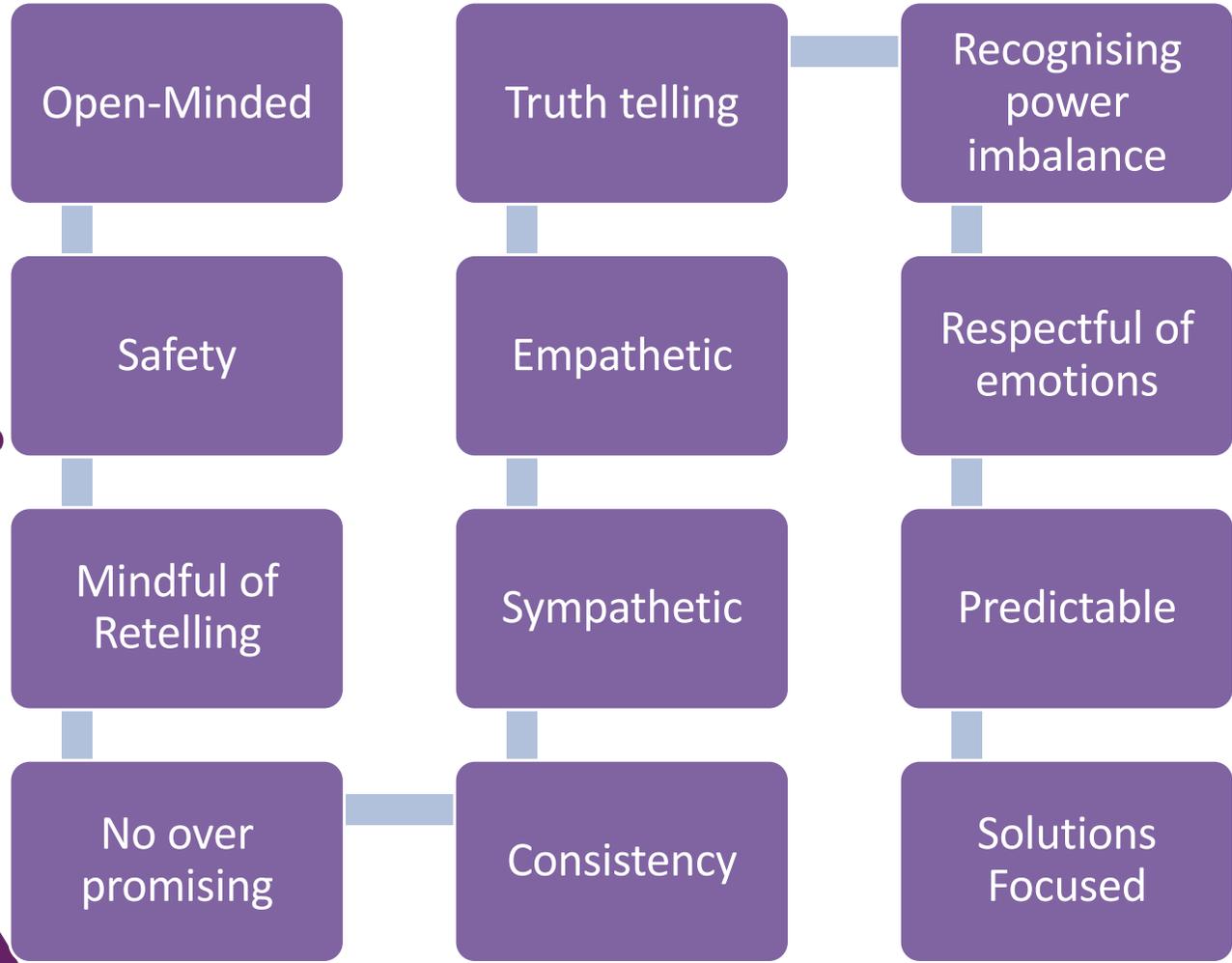
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A Trauma Informed Approach



What does it mean to be trauma-informed?

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Guiding Trauma-Informed Principles:
Dr. Maxine Harris and Dr. Roger Fallot

Safety
Trustworthiness
Choice
Collaboration
Empowerment

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What do these categories mean to you?

Safety
Trustworthiness
Choice
Collaboration
Empowerment



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Values/Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice

Safety



Ensuring physical and emotional safety for all. Generally involves protection of self or others.

Trustworthiness



Maximizing trust, ensuring clear expectations, and having consistent boundaries. Refers to transparency.

Choice



Making individual choice and control a priority. Refers to the right to self-determination and autonomy.

Collaboration



Sharing power and working together with individuals. The idea of working with, not doing to or for.

Empowerment



Involves the recognition of strengths and skills to build a realistic sense of hope and possibility.

Definitions

Values/Principles in Practice

Create a welcoming environment

Embrace diversity and inclusion

Give consequences using supportive, non-confrontational language

Provide clear information about expectations

Inform others of transitions ahead of time

Express patience and acceptance

Inform others about options available to them

Balance flexibility while defining parameters

Reflect options regarding race, gender and culture

Seek ideas and feedback

Explore others' circumstances from their perspective

Acknowledge power dynamics

Build on strengths and capacities

Ensure interactions are validating and affirming

Use person-first and inclusive language

Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care (2021)

Informed by FalLOT & Harris (2009) Creating Cultures of Trauma-Informed Care



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How have you implemented these principles at work?

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**How do we implement them at
WLSSA?**



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[YouTube Video](#)

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Case Study

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Sara attends a community legal service seeking advice about an IO against her former partner. She arrives with her two young children after waiting three weeks for an appointment.

When Sara arrives at reception, the waiting room is crowded and noisy. When Sara meets the lawyer, the lawyer immediately asks her to explain “exactly what happened” with the abuse. Sara becomes visibly anxious and struggles to speak. The lawyer interrupts several times to clarify dates and says, “If we’re going to get an IO we need clear evidence.”

Sara becomes emotional while describing what happened in the relationship. The lawyer interrupts and asks for specific details about dates, evidence and witnesses. Sara says she deleted many of the messages because seeing them made her anxious. She looks uncomfortable and says she did not realise she would need to bring proof to the appointment.

The lawyer continues “to be honest, from what you told me I am not sure this would meet the threshold for an IO, I am not sure I believe there is enough here” and quickly wraps up the appointment and it ends.

Sara leaves looking overwhelmed and uncertain.



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Leila attends a legal service for advice about family law proceedings involving parenting arrangements. She previously experienced family violence from her former partner.

At the start of the meeting, the lawyer says:
“Before we start, I just want you to know that you can take breaks at any time, and you only need to share what you feel comfortable sharing.”

The lawyer explains how the meeting will work and how long it will take.

Leila describes feeling extremely anxious about attending court because her former partner often intimidates her.

The lawyer asks: “What are your biggest concerns about the court process?”

Leila explains she is worried about seeing him in the waiting area.

The lawyer discusses options such as:

- requesting separate waiting areas
- bringing a support person

The lawyer explains the legal process step-by-step and checks in regularly to ask if Leila has questions.

At the end of the meeting, the lawyer says: “There are a few possible legal options here. I can explain the pros and cons, but the decision about what feels right for you is yours.”

Leila says she feels relieved and more confident about the next steps.



WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE (SA)



How to access our Service

Our Legal Advice Line is available from Monday to Friday from **10:00am-4:00pm**.

The numbers to call are **1800 816 349** or **(08) 8221 5553**.

Alternatively, we can be contacted via email admin@wlssa.org.au.

Face-to-face appointments can be arranged after speaking with one of our Legal Advice Line staff or volunteers. Appointments will be given when appropriate.

For service providers wishing to refer a client to Women's Legal Service (SA), please contact us with the client present via phone: (08) 8231 8929 option 4 (service provider priority line). Referral forms can be sent through to admin@wlssa.org.au.



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QUESTIONS?

T: 08 8231 8929

E: admin@wlssa.org.au

W: wlssa.org.au