

Unit 2: What is trauma informed care?

Trauma informed care is a concept originally developed in the United States and in the United Kingdom. The first research was undertaken in the 1990s, and from then on, the concept rapidly emerged both in academia as well as in applied care, mental health and social service provision.

Trauma informed care can be described as a *shift of focus from:*

*“What is wrong with you?” to
“What happened to you?”*



Unit 2: What is trauma informed care?

Trauma informed care has several dimensions:

- the institutional dimension of a care-provided.
- the individual dimension of an individual care and/or social service provider.
- the patient's dimension or in your case, the peer dimension.

A trauma-informed approach to care acknowledges that health care organisations and care teams need to have a complete picture of a patient's life situation (past and present) in order to provide effective health care services.

Adopting trauma-informed practices can potentially improve engagement, treatment adherence and health outcomes, as well as provider and staff wellness. It can also help to reduce avoidable care and excess costs for both the health care and social service sectors.

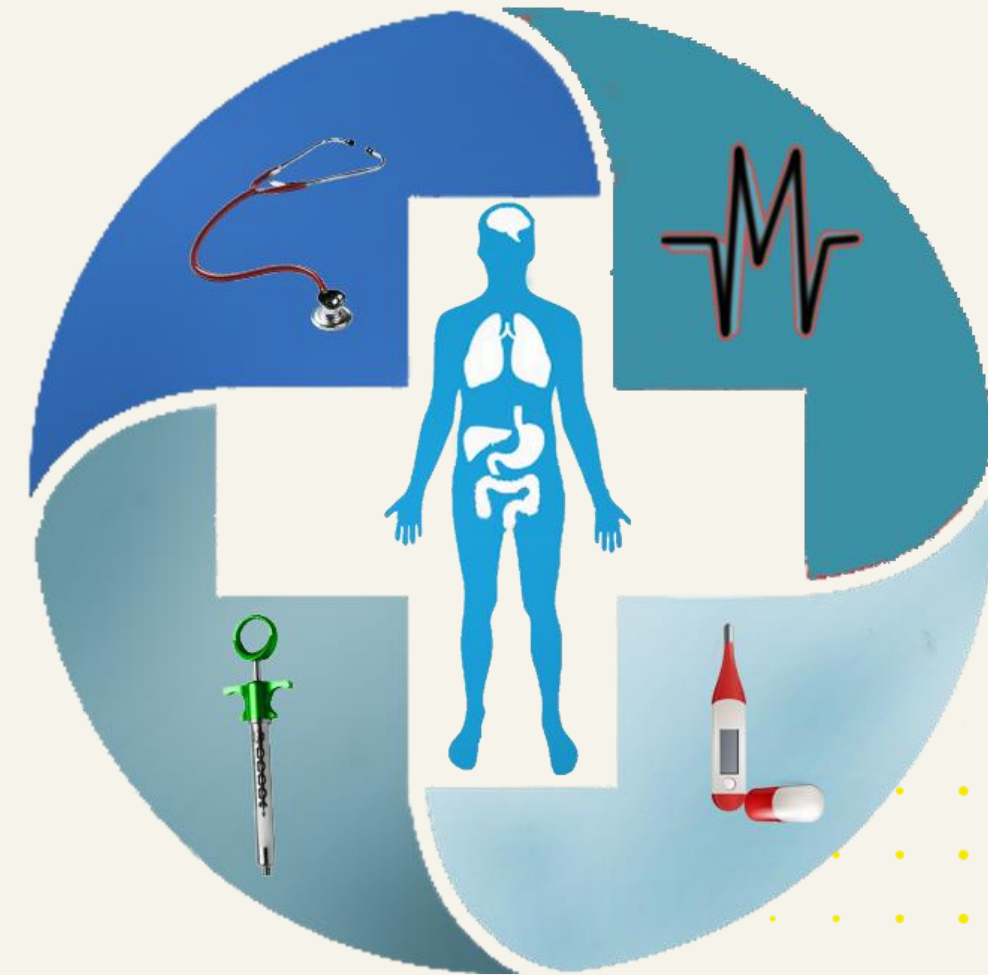
(Adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's "Trauma-Informed Approach.")

Unit 2: What is trauma informed care?

Trauma-informed care seeks to:

- 1) **realise the widespread impact of trauma** and understand paths for recovery.
- 2) **recognise the signs and symptoms of trauma** in patients, families and staff.
- 3) **integrate knowledge about trauma** into policies, procedures and practices.
- 4) **actively avoid re-traumatisation.**

(Adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's "Trauma-Informed Approach.")



"Dieses Foto" von Unbekannter Autor ist lizenziert gemäß [CC BY](#)

Unit 2: What is trauma informed care?

A comprehensive approach to trauma-informed care must be adopted at both the **clinical *and* organisational** levels in professional services.

Too frequently, providers and health systems attempt to implement trauma-informed care at clinical level without the supports needed for broad organisational culture change. This can lead to uneven and unsustainable shifts in service provision.

This narrow focus also fails to recognise how non-clinical staff, like front desk workers or lay volunteers in migrant service provision, can have significant interactions with patients and can be critical to ensuring that patients feel safe.

Unit 2: What is trauma informed care?

There are commonly agreed upon principles of trauma informed care, which include:



Safety

Throughout the organization, patients and staff feel physically and psychologically safe



Trustworthiness + Transparency

Decisions are made with transparency, and with the goal of building and maintaining trust



Peer Support

Individuals with shared experiences are integrated into the organization and viewed as integral to service delivery



Collaboration

Power differences — between staff and clients and among organizational staff — are leveled to support shared decision-making



Empowerment

Patient and staff strengths are recognized, built on, and validated — this includes a belief in resilience and the ability to heal from trauma



Humility + Responsiveness

Biases and stereotypes (e.g., based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, geography) and historical trauma are recognized and addressed

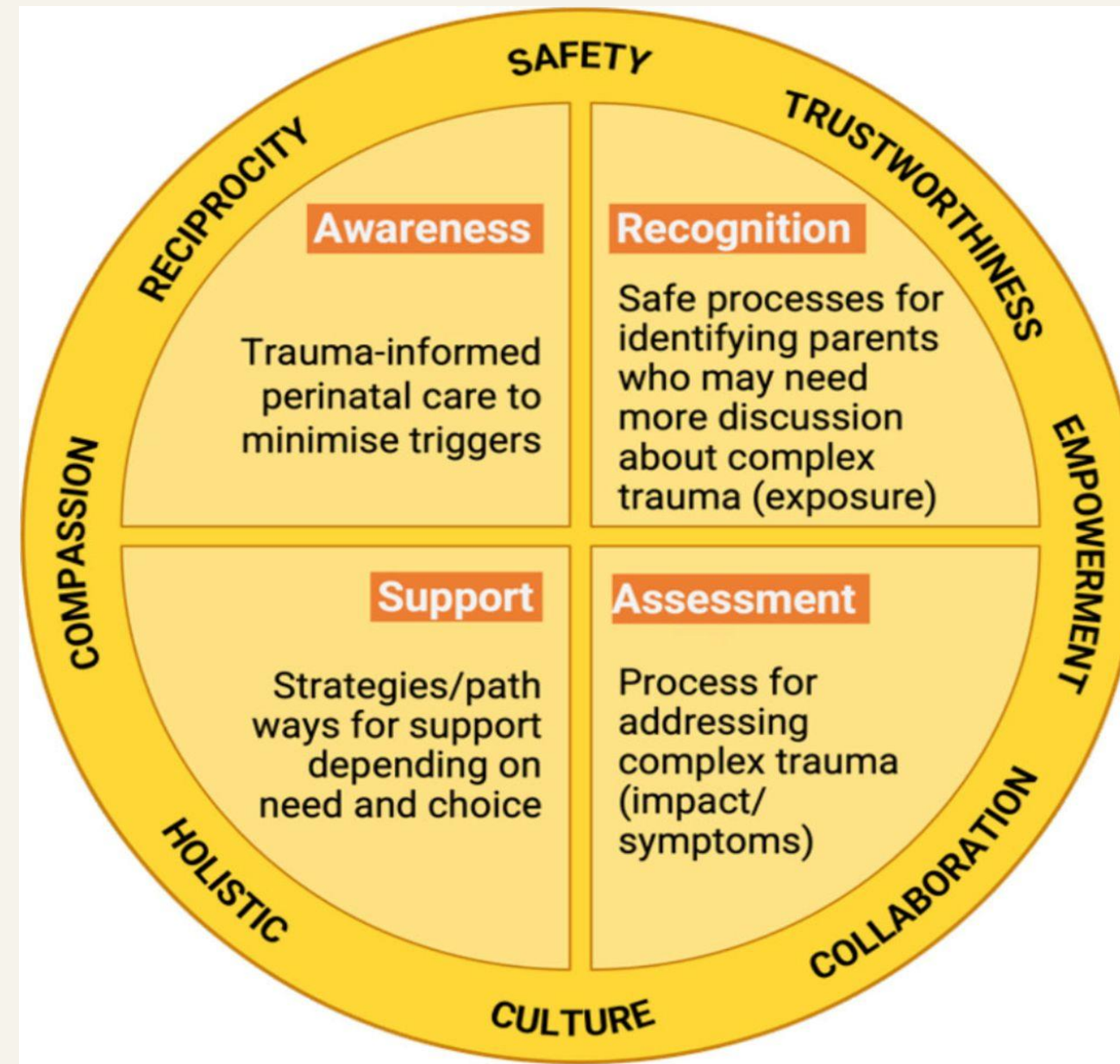
(Adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's ["Guiding Principles of Trauma-Informed Care."](#))

Unit 2: What is trauma informed care?



"Dieses Foto" von Unbekannter Autor ist lizenziert gemäß [CC BY](#)

Unit 2: What is trauma informed care?



"Dieses Foto" von Unbekannter Autor ist lizenziert gemäß [CC BY](#)

Unit 2: What is trauma informed care?

There are a number of benefits to using a trauma-informed approach, not only for patients or peers but also for providers and staff. But please note:

Many patients with trauma have difficulty maintaining healthy, open relationships with a health care provider. **For patients, trauma-informed care offers the opportunity to engage more fully in their health care, develop a trusting relationship with their provider, and improve long-term health outcomes.**

Trauma-informed care can also help reduce burnout among health care providers, potentially reducing staff turnover.

(Source: [TraumaInformedCare.chcs.org](https://traumainformedcare.chcs.org) 2025)

TRAUMA INFORMED BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

A Practical Guide to Developing Resilient Learners



Kay Ayre, EdD
Govind Krishnamoorthy, PhD

Foreword by Dave Ziegler, PhD

"Dieses Foto" von
Unbekannter Autor ist
lizenziert gemäß [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Unit 2: What is trauma informed care?

Individuals, and even volunteers or lay advisors, can build trauma-informed health care organisations that create safe, caring, inclusive environments for all patients. **YOU need to become active!**

There are a number of trauma-informed strategies that organisations can adopt to help people overcome the effects of trauma, ranging from **organisational changes in the culture and atmosphere of a health care setting to full adoption of practices to address trauma** at the clinical level.

(Source: [TraumaInformedCare.chcs.org](https://traumainformedcare.chcs.org) 2025)

Unit 2 : How to become a trauma-informed-care provider

There are many ways to become a trauma-informed organisation and the process does not have to be a burden to adopt. Foundational steps organisations can take to move toward fully adopting a trauma-informed approach to care include:

- Building awareness and generating buy-in for a trauma-informed approach.
- Supporting a culture of staff wellness.
- Hiring a workforce that embodies the values of trauma-informed care.
- Creating a safe physical, social, and emotional environment.

(Source: [TraumaInformedCare.chcs.org](https://traumainformedcare.chcs.org) 2025)