

# Working with clients experiencing trauma

In the event that someone discloses to you that they are undergoing many overwhelming life experiences, interpersonal violence and adversity, they are experiencing trauma.

Trauma could be both a 'single incident' and/or 'complex', meaning a series of traumatic experiences occurring within close relationships.

If trauma is unresolved it can effect and impair a person's functioning. It can challenge the person's capacity to respond flexibly to life challenges and daily stress. A person's emotional and physical health can be negatively impacted on as a result.

When responding to a client experiencing trauma it is important to keep in mind the following:

- Safety
- Trustworthiness
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment
- Care
- Active listening
- Warm manner coupled with professionalism
- Attentiveness to context
- Relating manner
- Respectful
- Empathic
- Non-escalating
- Focus on what has happened to the person rather than what is 'wrong' with the person
- Optimism about the possibility of recovery

It is very important to know that time does not heal all wounds when dealing with unresolved trauma. The effect that trauma has on the brain can be difficult to shift without proper intervention. That's why recognising, understanding and referring onwards is needed then treating clients with trauma.

It is possible to recover from complex trauma.

## You can contact any of the services below to make a referral:

Women's Trauma Recovery Program

☎ 9214 5528

Australian Psychological Society

🌐 [www.aps.org.au](http://www.aps.org.au) ("Find a Psychologist")

Access Health and Community

☎ 9810 3000

## For further information:

Blue Knot Foundation – National Centre of Excellence for Complex Trauma

🌐 [www.blueknot.org.au](http://www.blueknot.org.au)

Information provided is adapted from from [www.blueknot.org.au/Resources/Fact-Sheets](http://www.blueknot.org.au/Resources/Fact-Sheets)