
Trauma Awareness Training

Kate Chivers & Kirsty Kitchen



Agenda



1. Welcome & introductions
2. Housekeeping & working together online
3. Birth Companions overview
4. Engagement work
5. Training aims
6. Definitions of trauma
7. A trauma-informed approach
8. Breakout rooms
9. Applying the approach to research
10. Developments
11. Questions

Birth Companions



- Founded in 1996
 - UK's leading voice on the needs and experiences of women facing disadvantage and inequality in pregnancy and early motherhood
 - Working in prisons and the community
 - A systems-led approach: maternity, criminal justice, social services and immigration
 - Our frontline services offer women practical and emotional support
 - Our policy and influencing role seeks to improve care and address inequalities
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Engagement work



- Birth Companions Lived Experience Team



Training Aims

- Develop an understanding of a trauma-informed approach
- Explore the five key principles
- Examine how to apply this approach to research
- Review recent developments in the trauma-informed arena
- Develop a good practice information sheet

Definitions of trauma



"Any event that
overwhelms
a person's capacity
for positive coping"

Definitions of trauma



"Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one or more of the following ways..."

- Directly experiencing traumatic events
- Witnessing in person the event(s) that occurred to others
- Learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or friend
- Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to adverse details of traumatic event(s)

Definition by American Psychiatric Association

"It comes down to the question of not "what's wrong with you? [but]...what happened to you...?"

Oprah Winfrey

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Women suffer disproportionately from severe trauma
- Women with extensive experience of physical and sexual violence are far more likely to experience disadvantage and inequality
- Lifetime trauma increases risk of experiencing trauma during pregnancy and poor perinatal outcomes

How does trauma affect body and mind?

- PTSD
- Cognitive impairment
- Depression/mental health issues
- Emotional distress/numbing
- Disassociation
- Aggression
- Anxiety



Triggers to trauma during the perinatal period



- Routine obstetric care
- Physical contact from health professionals
- Blood tests
- Blood loss / sight of blood
- Hospital stays
- Potent smells
- Unexpected medical interventions
- Severe pain
- Fear of death
- Stimulation of the breast (breastfeeding)



Values underpinning our approach



- Woman-centred, trauma-informed and non-judgemental
 - Developed through our work supporting women at the highest level of vulnerability who live in very harsh environments
 - A trauma-informed approach is vital when working with women with very complex needs because so many of them have experienced psychological trauma
 - We have applied this approach to the development of the Lived Experience Team, and across our engagement and research work
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Trauma-informed approach



What does this mean and how can it help you in your role?

- Recognise trauma as an important element of women's experiences and recovery
 - Seek to empower, build trust and meet her needs respectfully and safely
 - By adopting the five core principles of a trauma-informed approach you can support women to engage in a safe and respectful way
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The 5 core principles



1.
Safety

2.
Trustworthiness

3.
Choice

4.
Collaboration

5.
Empowerment

Principles of engagement



1.
Careful planning

2.
Building relationships

3.
Clear information

4.
Wraparound support

5.
Outcomes



Comfort break

Breakout rooms



- Can you apply the principles of a trauma-informed approach to your work?
- What practical things can you do to support this approach?
- What things are you already doing which feel trauma-informed?

** Please appoint a rep to feedback to the group*

Feedback to the group



- Can you apply the principles of a trauma-informed approach to your work?
- What practical things can you do to support this approach?
- What things are you already doing which feel trauma-informed?

Trauma-informed approach to research

- Follow 5 core principles
- Ensure adequate support is in place for research participants
- Share outcomes

Incorporating lived experience in research projects

- Work with specialist organisations
- Hold conversations at the application stage
- Build experience into the research design; e.g. an advisory board
- Ensure lived experience is appropriately remunerated

Best practice example

"Working with Birth Companions has been incredibly helpful for my research... It felt particularly helpful to involve them at an early stage, and to keep in regular contact.

Being upfront and clear with mothers about what their involvement will consist of has felt important, while also allowing them to have a say about their involvement – and being very flexible and open to adapting according to individual needs.

We check-in individually with lived experience advisors before and after meetings, to offer a space to reflect on their involvement.

Having the women involved in the research has been immensely valuable, as they are often able to offer a different perspective, and have been extremely open and thoughtful about their experiences."



Comfort break

Recent developments in this area

- A best practice guide: Trauma-Informed Care in The Perinatal Period
- The NPEU Listening Series
- One Small Thing organisation
- Engaging With Complexity
- A Sense of Safety



Questions



End of session survey

Thank you for your time

Kate Chivers

kate@birthcompanions.org.uk

Kirsty Kitchen

kirsty@birthcompanions.org.uk

