

CARE

lwb.org.au

Why is it important to be “Trauma Informed”?

Being Trauma Informed is a core principle of the CARE Model, our guide to how we interact with children and young people. As well as the experiences that have brought them into care, for all children and young people in care there is a level of trauma, grief and/or loss experienced simply by being removed from their home and family.

Being Trauma Informed means we recognise the impact of trauma, such as removal, neglect, abuse and violence, on a child’s development. This knowledge helps us guide our expectations, interactions, and responses to the needs we see. Often these needs are communicated through ‘pain-based’ behaviours. Promoting the development of resilience in children who’ve experienced trauma means being accepting, sensitive, available, and invested, even when times are tough.

Trauma informed Carers are empathic and sensitive to the child's life story and responsive to learning about how their caring style might need to adapt to meet the needs of a child who has experienced trauma. Carers need to understand that children who have experienced trauma are likely to display behaviour that is an expression of 'pain' due to their experiences of the world. At Life Without Barriers we encourage adults to view challenging behaviour as 'pain-based behaviour'. Thinking about it in this way ensures Carers respond effectively and sensitively.

Carers who are trauma informed:



Listen to children talk about their feelings and use their relationship to comfort and reassure the child especially through challenging times.



Avoid exerting control, consequences or punishments instead focusing on giving the child choices and resolving conflict through discussion and negotiation.



Focus on reassurance and teaching ways to cope.



Establish a consistent and predictable structure to the day with enough flexibility to meet the individual child's needs.



Discuss expectations, rules, and limits in advance so children know what is expected.



Avoid activities that may trigger the child's stress and stress responses.



Provide opportunities for focusing on the future, like caring for animals, plants and people.

Children need people that understand they may act out when they can't speak out.

In considering your readiness to start the journey of becoming a Carer at Life Without Barriers, it's helpful to think about your existing knowledge of the impacts of trauma on the physical, social and emotional development of children. It's also important to consider how your own experiences of trauma might impact your caring journey, and how you might draw on your support networks throughout.

Some questions to consider are:

- 1.** Think of a time when you were experiencing loss and grief. What did it feel like in your mind and your body? What helped and what didn't?
- 2.** What do you know about a child's reaction to loss? What could you do to acknowledge children's losses and communicate that you are there for them?
- 3.** Experiences of complex trauma often change how a child experiences their world ('I'm not safe, people want to hurt me, people can't be trusted, I'm not good enough, it will never get better', etc.). How might these thoughts and feelings impact our attempts to form attachments and build healthy relationships with children and young people?
- 4.** When dealing with children's behaviours, what is the difference between responding versus reacting? What self-awareness and self regulation techniques do you use? How can you decrease a child's stress and avoid confrontation?
- 5.** What's been your lived experience of caring for children who have endured grief, loss and trauma? What effect can it have on your emotions?
- 6.** What opportunities do you have for personal rest and relaxation? What support networks could you draw upon when you are feeling overwhelmed?

**Healing from trauma can take a long time.
The relationship with the caregivers is the 'active ingredient' and it is in the everyday moments that change happens. We'd love to hear about the strengths and attributes you have that make you a great Carer who can help children heal, thrive and grow.**

LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

Contact us

For more information on any of the services provided by Life Without Barriers, please contact us on:

1300 592 227



LWBAustralia



Life Without Barriers



Life Without Barriers



Life Without Barriers

lwb.org.au