

Sharing Knowledge

The Apostle Peter in his first letter to his congregation, reminded them that trauma was a normal experience for people.

My dear friends, do not be taken aback at the testing by fire which is taking place among you, as though something strange were happening to you;

1 Peter 4:12



Sharing Knowledge Resource 1.

Trauma informed Care

Standard 7 of the Child Safe Standards, National Catholic Standards and National Principles refers to Training and ongoing education. At the Safeguarding Office we believe that knowledge is power and no one is ever too old or wise to keep learning. We want to make sure that we can provide everyone in the Archdiocese with ongoing education that is not only useful within the Archdiocese but also outside. This quarterly newsletter is going to look at Trauma informed Care.

Any one of us can be affected by trauma. Many lives have been and will be devastated by traumatic events. Three in four Australians will experience an event that can cause psychological trauma in their lifetime, that's nearly 19 million people living in Australia today. Psychological trauma comes in many forms and impacts people from all walks of life.

What is Trauma?

Trauma is when you experience something that is deeply distressing or disturbing to you. It is the emotional, psychological and physiological residue left over from heightened stress that accompanies experiences of threat, violence and life-challenging events.

4 ways you and your community can become trauma informed

1. Be alert to trauma symptoms and honour them.

People who have been traumatised in some way do not necessarily carry wounds on their body, they may display signs of anxiousness or low self-esteem. Trauma will effect everyone differently and it will shape their emotions and modes of communication differently.

2. Consider that individuals who have gone through trauma may have difficulty with their faith

Traumatic experiences shape how individuals look at the world, we can't go back in time and change their traumatic experiences, but we can give them understanding and give them the message *'you are loved by God.'*

3. Signal your support

You may never know whom in your community has gone through a traumatic event, but clergy and workers can find ways to begin to signal to individuals that the parish/agency/chaplaincy supports them. For example, add intercessions for people who are suffering emotionally and spiritually to the Prayer of the Faithful. Place a weekly announcement in the parish bulletin or on the website advertising the support services available.

4. Listen for the voice of God in those who have been traumatised

Most individuals who are or who have experienced trauma want to be heard and to have their very real pain and hurt acknowledged. They also want a compassionate response from the Church - we must remember to respect individuals who have been traumatised and not dismiss them.

Reference: Saunders, S. and Jerome Scarsella, H, 2021. 6 Ways Clergy and Church Leaders Can Build Trauma-Sensitive Parishes.

Trauma informed Information

If you would like to understand a little more about trauma, you can view the *'Understanding Trauma'* video under the [Information and Resources button](#) located on the Safeguarding website.