

Ki Te Ao Mārama: Understanding trauma-informed approaches & pathways to healing | Workshop 2 | 22 April 2026

Session two: Understanding trauma through lived experience | How systems can shape experience | Questions and answers

Question / discussion topic / theme	Response
Responding to disclosures of harm (culturally complex)	• Lead with curiosity, not judgement: “Can you tell me more?” • Balance cultural respect and safety (both/and approach) • Maintain trust (be transparent about limits of confidentiality) • Focus on quiet risk assessment & safety planning • Strengthen protective relationships (safe adults, whānau) • Recognise that externalising behaviours can be an expression of distress, unmet needs, or an attempt to regain a sense of control. Te Pou lens: Safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment underpin responses.
Recognising trauma without a single event	• Shift from “what happened?” to “what has this person experienced?” • Trauma can be cumulative, relational, or intergenerational; systems themselves can contribute to cumulative trauma. • Lack of choice, chronic uncertainty and disrupted relationships can be unintentionally retraumatising • Focus on impact (patterns, regulation, relationships) versus proof. • Recognise that trauma responses may persist even when immediate danger has passed • Advocate using observable clinical presentation Te Pou lens: Trauma is defined by its impact, not just events.
Creating change within systems	• Focus on micro-changes: language, relational practice, reflective spaces • Share small evidence and stories • Build alliances Reframe: Change happens through everyday practice, not only system redesign.
Supporting traumatised kaimahi	• Create psychological safety • Normalise vicarious trauma

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	• Provide reflective practice & supervision • Advocate up, buffer impact down • Value lived experience roles • Foster team cultures where asking for support is viewed as strength Te Pou lens: Workforce wellbeing is essential for trauma-informed care.
Trauma-informed schools	• Shift teacher lens: behaviour = communication • Prioritise predictability, safe relationships, regulation before discipline • Use simple, practical tools for staff • Attendance and engagement are often influenced by a young person's sense of safety and belonging
Making language practical	• Use plain language (e.g., trauma = hard experiences that affect reactions) • Focus on doable actions: offer choice, slow things down, co-regulate • Use language that acknowledges strengths, resilience and personhood, rather than defining people by their behaviours or experiences
Funding & lived experience	• Name tension: relational work versus volume targets • Gather practice-based evidence • Advocate for quality and connection outcomes • Embed lived experience across services: recognise lived experience as expertise that informs service design, delivery, and evaluation, not only consultation.
Integrating clinical & cultural practice	• Use Te Whare Tapa Whā and cultural frameworks • Ask about identity, whānau, connection • Reflect on power and bias • Partner with cultural and peer expertise
Navigating traumatised organisations	• Recognise signs: fear, silence, reactivity • Focus on safe pockets of practice. • Seek external supervision/support • Use collective voice where possible

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	• Sustain values-based practice • Be conscious of and reflect on how organisational practices may unintentionally recreate experiences of powerlessness. Model curiosity and compassion with fellow kaimahi, especially when navigating conflict
Key Te Pou resources	• Being trauma-informed: Principles and actions • Trauma-informed approaches: Resource for leaders • Keep it Real Kia Pono te Tika • Workforce wellbeing resources
Closing	Trauma-informed practice is how we show up; centred on safety, culture, relationships, and lived experience. Small, consistent changes create meaningful impact, even within constrained systems.