

# Taking Time– Framework: A Trauma-informed framework for supporting people with intellectual disability– *Executive Summary*

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The Taking Time Trauma-Informed Framework has been developed to guide service providers who support people with intellectual disability. It was informed by the literature, consultation with people with intellectual disability, and support from the consultation and governance and groups established through Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Department of Family and Community Services (ADHC, FACS).

Trauma theory and other areas of knowledge are discussed in a literature review which is a companion document for the Framework entitled *Taking Time – A Literature Review: Background for a trauma-informed framework for supporting people with intellectual disability* (Jackson, Waters & Abell, 2015).

The Framework provides guidance for organisations to meet their obligations in accordance with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006* and the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*.

The Framework is presented in 8 parts:

1. Introduction
2. The Taking Time Framework
3. The Framework in Action
4. Supporting Information from the Research
5. Conclusion
6. Appendices
7. References
8. Acknowledgements

The vision and aims of the Framework are multiple and have a specific focus on people with intellectual disability including:

- reducing trauma and re-traumatisation
- facilitating healing from past trauma
- supporting the use of trauma-informed practice
- strengthening reflection on practice and self-care approaches
- improving appropriateness of the broader system's responses
- enhancing quality of life
- enabling society to gain from the contributions of people with intellectual disability
- facilitating a compassionate and responsive society that demonstrates the right for dignity for all.

Some of these aims are easier to grasp and achieve while others are more aspirational. No single paradigm, including

trauma-informed practice, is sufficient to achieve these aims on its own. Consequently, this Framework draws on other theories that support the understanding of trauma and trauma-informed practice. Nonetheless, the Framework is predicated on the view, informed from research and practice, that trauma-informed practice can make a major contribution to achieving these aims and aspirations. It is also predicated on the view that the alternative – where an organisation is not aware of the implications of working with people who have experienced trauma – can sometimes be harmful.

A useful definition of trauma-informed practice is as follows:

A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2014, p. 9).

The key elements of the Taking Time Framework are:

- Foundational value – values underlying trauma-informed practice supporting people with intellectual disability
- Guiding principles – as tools of the mind to inform practice, services and the system
- Knowledge and skills – to enable the principles to become action, which are embedded in an ongoing learning cycle
- Environment and resources – what the physical and social environments provide to promote safety and the provision of appropriate resources to achieve this
- Policies and procedures – enabling organisations' internal systems and documents to reflect the spirit, intent and actuality of trauma-informed practice
- Leadership and organisational culture – what is required to ensure ongoing commitment at an organisational and sector level

The Taking Time Framework is represented in this hour-glass diagram.

unique needs of individuals

'Hear me'

Mainstream services  
Disability specialist services | Trauma specialist services  
Disability trauma specialists



'Take time with me'

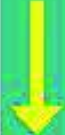
Skills + knowledge

Environment + resources

Policies + procedures

Leadership + organisational culture

'Let me show you'



Quality of life

Principles  
Foundation values  
safety | relationships | collaboration choice | voice | person-centred practice

'Respect me'

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The six foundational values underpinning this Framework are:

**Safety - Relationships - Collaboration - Choice - Voice - Person-centred practice**

The voices of people with intellectual disability are illustrated through the themes that arose when they were asked for their thoughts about trauma and what could be helpful.

The six foundational values underpinning this Framework are safety, relationships, collaboration, choice, voice and person-centred practice.

The 15 guiding principles underlying this Framework's approach to trauma-informed practice are summarised as follows:

1. Taking Time to understand and embrace each person's goals and aspirations, their unique strengths and support needs including communication, problem-solving and other cognitive processes.
2. Understanding and recognising trauma and its impacts including the potential relationship with behavioural difficulties that may be experienced by the person.
3. Creating opportunities for people to make or find their own meanings and to create the environment that supports them to communicate their feelings.
4. Promoting a safe physical and emotional environment tailored for each individual.
5. Being culturally respectful and informed and working towards cultural competence.
6. Supporting the person's control, choice and voice to have or work towards genuine autonomy, self-determination, participation, and respect for human rights and freedoms.
7. Sharing power and governance in a genuinely inclusive way.

8. Valuing safe and genuine relationships in the process of recovery.
9. Embedding a family-sensitive approach.
10. Ensuring access to supported trauma-specific treatment (which may require adaptation and extra time for people with intellectual disability) delivered by appropriately trained professionals.
11. Acknowledging recovery is possible for everyone and the importance of hope, fun, joy and peer support in the present and the future.
12. Integrating practice that has a holistic view of the person and the recovery process, and facilitates communication among services and systems to support continuity.
13. Acknowledging staff need to be and feel safe, and acknowledging the potential for vicarious trauma and need for self-care and organisational care.
14. Acknowledging the need for transparent trauma-informed processes and systems that emphasise the importance of reflective practice.
15. Adopting a trauma-informed organisational approach which requires a healthy organisational culture and positive leadership approach.

The Framework includes ideas for translation into practice at both service and system levels, and includes vignettes which provide examples in action within NSW. A number of organisations are in different stages of implementing trauma-informed practice from an individual, program or organisational perspective.



The opportunity to 'take time' – to research, reflect and develop a trauma-informed framework for supporting people with intellectual disability – was made possible by Statewide Behaviour Intervention Service (SBIS), Clinical Innovation and Governance, Ageing Disability and Home Care, Family and Community Services.

Recommended citation:

Jackson, A. L., & Waters, S. E. (2015). *Taking Time– Framework: A trauma-informed framework for supporting people with intellectual disability*. Melbourne, Australia: Berry Street.

## References

*Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW). Retrieved June 29, 2015 from <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/view/inforce/act+41+2014+cd+0+N>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA]. (2014). *SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach*. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved July 2, 2015, from <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA14-4884/SMA14-4884.pdf>

United Nations. (2008). *Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and optional protocol*. Retrieved June 26, 2015, from <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=14&pid=150>

*You can request a recording of the for the Taking Time– Framework: A trauma informed framework for supporting people with intellectual disability webinar by contacting [kellie.vansebille@fac.s.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kellie.vansebille@fac.s.nsw.gov.au)*

*This webinar provides an introduction to the Taking Time Framework developed by Berry Street's Take Two Team in partnership with the Statewide Behaviour Intervention Service, Clinical Innovation and Governance, Ageing Disability and Home Care. The webinar outlines why all disability services need to operate in a trauma informed way and how agencies can go about achieving this.*

