

APPENDIX A: – A TRAUMA INFORMED & RESPONSIVE APPROACH

Trauma-informed practice understands how past adversity can continue to affect a person's life, how it can impact individuals, relationships, and organisational systems. In taking a trauma responsive approach, the personal, cultural, and structural changes needed are made in collaboration to avoid and alleviate retraumatising dynamics. Collaborative relationships are essential to effective trauma informed co-produced practice; relationships that are committed to creating trauma informed communities, that build environments where people feel safe, supported to connect, engage, and build upon and promote internal and external resources, and emotional wellbeing. This charter will support the development of relationships through trauma responsive practice.

Co-production across social work service delivery isn't easy; it is however totally worth the value and depth of insight that will be brought to the practice relationship. As unique individuals with experiences of adversity and trauma, there are also internalised narratives in respect of relationships and connectivity. There may be experiences of toxic, distorted connections and environments that were imposed by people who had power, authority, influence, and significance to the individual. Often resulting in individuals finding it hard to connect, to trust, to speak or to break their silence. There may be fear of attachment for those who've spent their lives protecting themselves and/or pushing people away. Individuals may fluctuate in terms of mental and physical wellbeing which may impact capacity to be committed and consistent; this is not a reflection of character but a feature of trauma.

Those with lived experience who have a trauma history may be hypervigilant, picking up every nuance and interpreting this within the lens of their experience. They may respond in maladaptive ways, employing often very essential survival and coping strategies, or triggering trauma responses, which from the outside may appear to be negative. Individuals tune in to you, your communication, scan for threat and lack of emotional or physical safety, which are not barriers to good co-production but vital coping skills that have helped survival. With warm, genuine, authentic connection, relationship building and collaborative approaches; peoples' experience can be transformed. The healing benefits of connectivity and relationships can support individuals to develop, grow and overcome barriers to collaborative, co-produced working that stem from trauma.

Whilst acknowledging the benefits of co-produced practice, the converse is also true, that poor practice hinders healing, growth and may without intention become retraumatising. This Charter outlines the values and principles required to embed a positive trauma informed co-production approach, highlighting best practice standards whilst taking a creative, innovative approach to practice.

There are actions all can take in promoting and embedding a culture of trauma informed, co-produced practice. Creating deeper self-awareness, employing professional curiosity and assertiveness, initiating personal or organisational change, utilising power, agency, and



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activism to effect structural and societal change. With shared intentions and a commitment to collaborative, co-produced practice we can embed the practical guidance for best practice shared within this charter.