



Trauma-Informed Care Information Sheet for Visitors and Volunteers

Thank you for supporting The Salvation Army's Oasis Youth Support Network (Oasis). As a volunteer or visitor to Oasis there is some important information that we would like to share with you regarding our approach to working with young people.

At Oasis we recognise that the young people we work with have all experienced trauma in some form. Trauma refers to physical, emotional, psychological, verbal and sexual abuse; deprivation; neglect; poverty; domestic violence; loss of a parent, primary caregiver or loved one; homelessness; accidents; natural disasters; warfare; torture; and terrorism. To ensure that no aspect of our organisation's service delivery risks re-traumatising the young people who come to us for assistance, Oasis has chosen to work within the therapeutic framework of Trauma Informed Care.

What is Trauma Informed Care?

Trauma Informed Care recognises that early life trauma impacts brain development and as a result can affect a child's biological, neurobiological, psychological and social functioning. During severe, repeated, and prolonged trauma, often referred to as complex trauma, the brain undergoes adaptations designed to maximize the child's chances of survival. These survival adaptations, whilst effective at the time, often mean that the young person learns to cope with life experiences, especially fear and stress, in ways that are unsafe, challenging, self-destructive and harmful to others. In a broader social context, coping in this way further marginalises and isolates the young person and reinforces their destructive coping patterns.

Trauma Informed Care's therapeutic aim

Using evidence-based principles from a variety of psychological modalities, including neuroplasticity, to guide practice, Trauma Informed Care supports the individual's capacity to choose safe coping options, build safe relationships, and move beyond their trauma history. The therapeutic goal of Trauma Informed Care is to restore to the individual's life the choice, control and predictability that was compromised by their experience of trauma.

Trauma Informed Care in practice

By prioritising safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment in every interaction, and by establishing and maintaining safe therapeutic relationships and professional boundaries at all times, Trauma Informed Care seeks to moderate the effects of trauma and reduce reliance on unsafe coping behaviour. Trauma Informed Care offers a distinct alternative to the traditional punitive, directive and disempowering hierarchies of 'care' which can reinforce trauma and stifle opportunities for self-development and growth. Underpinning Trauma Informed Care is the fundamental understanding that because trauma occurs as a result of unsafe relationships it can only be healed in the context of safe relationships. This means that anyone who comes into contact, no matter how briefly, with a young person in a service setting such as Oasis, becomes a significant part of that young person's therapeutic

Oasis Youth Support Network

365 Crown Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010 (PO Box 600 Darlinghurst NSW 1300)

T 02 9331 2266 F 02 9331 2200

salvos.org.au/oasis



journey. How a visitor or volunteer at Oasis chooses to engage with a young person can either reinforce that young person’s narrative of trauma and disconnection or can contribute positively to their therapeutic progress and personal growth.

Visiting & Volunteering

As a visitor or volunteer to Oasis it is expected that you will support our therapeutic approach by engaging with our young people and staff in ways that are consistent with Trauma Informed Care.

Below is a ‘Dos and Don’ts’ table which lists some simple, practical ways you can demonstrate your support for Oasis and our young people and ensure a safe environment for everyone.

If you have any questions please raise them with the Oasis worker responsible for coordinating your visit.

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the person behind the behavior • Leave assumptions about homelessness at the door; make up your own mind! • Respect young people’s privacy, dignity and identity • Conduct yourself with integrity • Say hello and acknowledge the young people where appropriate • Introduce yourself and explain why you are visiting Oasis • Observe personal space • Maintain a calm approachable demeanor • Recognise that Oasis is the young people’s home and act accordingly • Maintain appropriate boundaries • Follow staff directions • Bring any concerns to staff attention • Be positive and friendly • Use humour and have fun!! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask young people questions about their history • Use aggressive, invasive or dismissive communication and/or body language • Make assumptions about identity, for example cultural or sexuality identity • Expect young people to behave poorly • Gossip about what you see or experience while at Oasis • Sensationalise young people’s trauma history • Prompt young people to talk about their stories of trauma • Get involved in conflicts • Attempt to ‘rescue’ young people • Give out personal details or arrange for external meetings • Raise your voice, slam doors, make sudden movements, pop balloons etc. • Take photos or video footage of the young people

1 Mental Health Coordinating Council. (2012). Understanding and Responding to Trauma: Trauma-informed care and community-based services resource book. Rozelle, NSW: Author.

2 Hopper, E., Bassuk, E., & Olivert, J. (2010). Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Service Settings. The Open Health Services and Policy Journal, 3, 80-100.