

Summary paper on the multi-agency learning forum

Summary paper- written and collated by Dr Karen Treisman- contributed and created by all those who participated.

Summary paper on the multi-agency learning forum:

The contents and structure of this summary report:

This summary paper will include the following (each section will be brought to life with quotes, examples, and illustrated images):

1. An introduction and context setting.
2. Words and metaphors that attendees used to describe and capture the course and their experience of it.
3. Biggest take home messages and favourite parts which have made an impact.
4. Some of the key ingredients which attendees felt made it effective and high quality
5. Some of the ways in which attendees feel their practice and ways of being have been influenced or shaped
6. Some recommendations, suggestions, and hopes for both embedding the learning and expanding and widening its influence and impact to others.

Introduction and context setting:

In late 2019, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs launched the “Network Support Fund” to support statutory, community, and voluntary organisations who were co-ordinating networks and learning communities which increased understanding, and use, of evidence informed approaches to prevention and early intervention services for children, young people and their families. Candle Community Trust made a successful application to support an inter-agency learning forum centred on working with young people/families who present with relational and developmental trauma, and how we might develop trauma responsive organisations.

The initiative, which ran between September 2020-March 2021, included a series of training workshops and reflective practice groups involving 37 professionals from 3 main organizations, namely the Probation Service, TUSLA and Candle. The training was led and facilitated by Dr Karen Treisman, MBE, a specialist Clinical Psychologist, author, trainer, and internationally renowned voice in the field of Relational Trauma and Trauma Informed Organizations.

This summary report will present some of the findings/feedback/recommendations from this inter-agency experience; with the hope of disseminating learning, influencing policy and practice, and implementing on a wider scale.

The learning forum included:

- 2 days on the impact of relational and developmental trauma on children’s bodies, brains, emotions, relationships, behaviours, and sensory world. This had a large emphasis on the power of trauma-informed language.
- 3 days on organisational trauma, secondary trauma, and trauma-informed organisational change.
- Optional sessions (which were attended by almost all attendees each time) on:
Creative ways of talking about feelings and emotions
Creative ways of talking about hope, resilience, and strength

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Creative approaches to engaging and getting to know the unique person
Tangible emotional regulation tools and strategies

- There were also reflective practice sessions facilitated each month by Honor Carroll in between the sessions.

Having introduced the structure and the scene setting the following will now capture the responses from the attendees in the evaluation. First, we will start with how attendees would capture the learning journey using 1 to 3 words.

If you were going to describe and capture the experience of this program in a word what word would it be?



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In keeping with the theme of the training. Attendees then went on to expand the previous question by describing the course or experience of it as a metaphor, colour/s, an animal, something in nature, type of weather, an item etc.

Having captured some of the descriptors of the course, the evaluation then asked attendees to capture some of the key ingredients and take-home messages to discover some of the aspects which would be important to recreate, honour, and implement into practice. These are shared in the section below.

DR KAREN TREISMAN - SAFE HANDS THINKING MINDS

YELLOW
(THE BRIGHT YELLOW OF BUTTERCUPS) BECAUSE THE TRAINING CELEBRATED, HOPE, STRENGTH, COLLABORATION, EMPATHY, HUMILITY, JOY, SECURITY, OPENNESS, CURIOSITY & RESPONSIVENESS

A RAINBOW AFTER A STORM/ RAINBOW BECAUSE OF THE MANY COLOURFUL ARTISTIC RESOURCES SHARED

AN OCTOPUS - 3 HEARTS, 1 CENTRAL BRAIN & EACH OF THE 8 ARMS HAS A SMALL BRAIN

A SNAKE SHEDDING ITS SKIN & EMERGING AS A RENEWED SELF

CLOUDS CLEARING

AN ELEPHANT. WE CAN'T IGNORE THE TRAUMA MANY YOUNG PEOPLE FACE & EXPECT TO LIVE IN A DECENT & JUST SOCIETY

A ONCE IN A LIFETIME UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY

'BLUE'
LIKE A CALM SKY, A BEAUTIFUL LAGOON OR LAKE. 'WHEN A FLOWER DOESN'T BLOOM YOU FIX THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH IT GROWS, NOT THE FLOWER.'

A LIGHT BULB

A BIRDS EYE VIEW/ HELICOPTER/DRONE ALLOWING A VIEWING OF SITUATIONS FROM ABOVE & SEEING MORE OF THE SITUATION

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

TRYING TO PICK OUT THE BEAUTY EVEN IN STORMS OR EVEN JUST MAKING SURE YOU HAVE ON A RAINCOAT TO GET THROUGH IT

A VIRTUAL HUG OR BEING MARINATED IN THERAPEUTIC AIR

SEEDS BEING PLANTED & TURNING INTO A TREE

A GARDENER DIGGING THE EARTH, PREPARING THE SOIL FOR PLANTING . WHEN THE SOIL IS BROKEN SO MUCH IS EXPOSED THE SMELL OF THE RICH MOST EARTH. THE GARDENER'S JOB IS TO WORK THE EARTH PREPARING IT TO PRODUCE HEALTHY PRODUCE

'BLUE'
TO DESCRIBE THE JOURNEY OF DIVING DEEP INTO THE VAST OCEANS OF OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCES; & FOR CALMING FEELINGS

A WISE OWL

A BEACON OF HOPE & A LIGHTHOUSE

LIKE A DOG; DEPENDABLE, SAFE & REASSURING

A SUITCASE FULL OF SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

IN KEEPING WITH WHAT WE HAVE DONE IN MANY OF THE SESSIONS. YOU MIGHT LIKE TO DESCRIBE THE COURSE OR EXPERIENCE OF IT AS A METAPHOR, COLOUR/S, AN ANIMAL, SOMETHING IN NATURE, TYPE OF WEATHER, AN ITEM, ETC

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My main and biggest take home messages, highlights, and favourite bit/s of the course have been...

My main and biggest take home messages, highlight and favourite bit/s of the course have been...

- The power of language and “labels” (Emily story, acronyms, Narrative therapy, person first language, & much more).
- The story telling, anecdotes, poems, & narratives used by the trainer throughout (e.g. The chocolate box story, the Russian dolls, the pencil poem, the genogram, the girl who cut her finger etc).
- The 7 E model (Treisman, 2018)- enriching, expanding, embodying, embedding, expressing, exploring, & exhaling.
- The power & helpfulness of using multiple senses, visuals, & props- bringing the material alive.
- This was echoed in the practical, non verbal, & creative ways of supporting people.
- “Relational trauma requires relational repair & healing” (Treisman, 2017). The importance of making meaningful connections & relationships with the unique person e.g. Leaving a heart-print.
- Emotional contagion & being marinated in feelings; including the different types of trauma (e.g. • Cultural, intergenerational, relational, developmental, medical trauma etc).
- The uniqueness of each person- no cookie cutter approach- tailoring responses- “Same storm different boat”.
- Being a limbic whisperer in response to a limbic hijack (Our own & others regulation & well-being- “Wellbeing leads to welldoing”- Wellness Project, Kenya).
- Emotional regulation tools (e.g. Rainbow breathing, hand breathing, sensory box, safe place, & much more).
- Environment & system change- “When a flower doesn’t bloom you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower” (Alexander Den Heijer).
- “Every moment & interaction can be an intervention” (Treisman,2007).
- The concepts of the “Shield of shame” & “Connection before correction” from Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy- Dan Hughes.
- The “shark infested water” concept & the different survival modes (Treisman, 2017).
- The technique of “Name it to tame it” (Dan Siegel).
- The parenting patchwork exercise (Karen Treisman).
- The notion that you don’t try to take down someone’s fences before you try to understand & honour why they were put up.
- “Be curious not furious” & that behaviour is communication, also if the behaviour could talk what would it say? Who is the person behind the behaviour?
- “See a behaviour differently & you see a different behaviour. See a person differently & you see a person differently”.
- That trauma does not define someone- do not reduce someone to their trauma- trauma does not need to be someone’s master identity.
- Being mindful of our own assumptions, biases, hotspots, & values.
- The impact of trauma on the body & sensory world- if the body could talk what would it say?
- The concepts & creative ways to discuss & build on strengths, hope, & resilience. To rejoice & delight in people.
- Understanding about organisational trauma & traumatised systems including mirroring & parallel processes.
- The 4 R’s of trauma informed practice- realise, recognise, resist, & respond (SAMHSA).
- The trauma river metaphor (Treisman, 2020) & the difference between trauma sensitive, aware, informed, & responsive.
- The trauma informed philosophical shift which moves from it is not what is wrong with you but what happened to you/us/ our organisation.
- The power of secure base leadership & working towards a healthier team.
- Model the model & be the change you want to see in the world.
- Authentic & meaningful change not tokenistic or reactive.
- Moving from knowing to feeling to doing & to being (Treisman, 2020)
- Trauma informed environments, policies, procedures etc.

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The ingredients that made this course useful and effective were...

Expanding on the previous section on the highlights and take-home messages, there were several ingredients identified as particularly useful and supportive of the program- these will briefly be described below, and it is hoped if this course was recreated that they would be incorporated and prioritised.

Length of course:

Having the course spanning **over 6 months** enabled the information to be really embedded and for attendees to be marinated in it- most people said they felt they went on a journey (Many said they would have liked longer and didn't want it to end). Some abridged comments on the benefits of the length of the course rather than a 1-2 day training event are shared below:

"Having it over 6 months really allowed time for the information to be processed, put into practise and reflected upon. It meant that the topic/themes etc were constantly 'held in mind'. For me, doing a 1- or 2-days standalone training can sometimes mean I end up forgetting themes/concepts once I'm back in the busyness of day-to-day work life.... However, with this, always having an upcoming training or reflective practice session meant the concept of 'trauma informed' never really left my mind".

"Coming back to the group every month helped me feel grounded, connected, and in it with other people- it allowed relationships to build and for repetition and as Karen says muscle memory is needed".

Reflective practice sessions in between the training:

Having built-in reflective practice in between the sessions to embed the learning, consolidate the learning and come together as a supportive group was identified as a key ingredient by the majority of attendees.

"I think the reflective practice sessions allowed us to chat through their thoughts or experiences without having to digest new information. It reaffirmed the trust within the group".

"Reflective practice sessions so useful, to take space and time to reflect, discuss and helped me personally to consolidate learning"

"Reflective practice was great, but personally I would have preferred some time just with my own agency too- so maybe both options".

"Reflective practice was great as it sowed it all together after some time for reflection. It was great to hear how other agencies work and share our experiences together".

"It was interesting to hear the challenges of other people's jobs. That's important as when resources are scarce, we can 'other' clinicians in different services and take out frustrations on them for not responding quickly or for not accepting referrals etc. It's always helpful to hear from people with another lens. I like reflective practice with Honor. She stimulated

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conversation so people felt comfortable to contribute and it wasn't awkward, but she didn't take over. That's a delicate balance that not everyone can do so I appreciated her skill".

Multi-agency group of people and the power of being with like-minded people all coming together with a common vision- representatives from different sectors. This was another key ingredient which was identified as adding to the usefulness of the experience.

"I enjoyed having the different agencies in the group, it was enriching during the discussions, even though we work for different organisations we are stills working towards supporting young people in their lives".

"It was positive that the course was delivered in a small multi agency way as it prevented the group think that can happen in single agency training sometimes. There was a richness in hearing about other people's work experience and gaining an understanding of other people's roles and listening to other people's perspectives. There was also an opportunity to build networks for future working relationships that will be positive for staff but hopefully to for service users."

"Multi agency group great in terms of different perspectives and experiences. Really hopeful that having built these connections with other agencies in the area that this will have positive impact for children and families we engage with".

"It was great to have people from different professions as I could gain their views and different perspectives, & to see how they approach things, it gave me broader view on the topics and experiences".

"I thought that having people from different agencies but who work in the same area (Probation services, Tusla, Candle, etc) was immensely enriching. Everyone was able to contribute their particular perspectives and the specific challenges they face; yet there was enough common ground between participants to allow for all the contributions to illuminate each other's work and resonate at a collective level".

"Working with Probation Officers and social workers in the Ballyfermot area already feels a little different. Working on the ground with those who have done the training means that we are able to put into practice these trauma informed practices in a shared way. Also, people have heard about the training and there seems to be a shift among probation officers/social workers to engage in a trauma informed manner. Within Candle there is greater cohesion in terms of our focus as a team particularly when reflecting together on young people, their needs and the interventions required".

"I love the multiagency approach to work with Trauma. For a long time, Candle have been using trauma sensitive and responsive ways of working with young people but felt we were working alone as the other agencies working with the same individuals were a lot less sensitive and dare, I say punitive. It's powerful to be all singing off the same hymn sheet".

"Multi-agency component added a lot. I felt increased compassion for staff in other services (e.g. Tusla/Probation) and the challenges they face. they can sometimes appear like faceless

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entities in day-to-day work life as often we only interact when we need something from each other/have problems with each other”.

“I loved that we all worked together. I thought it was a great way of engaging with other professionals and seeing things from their perspectives”.

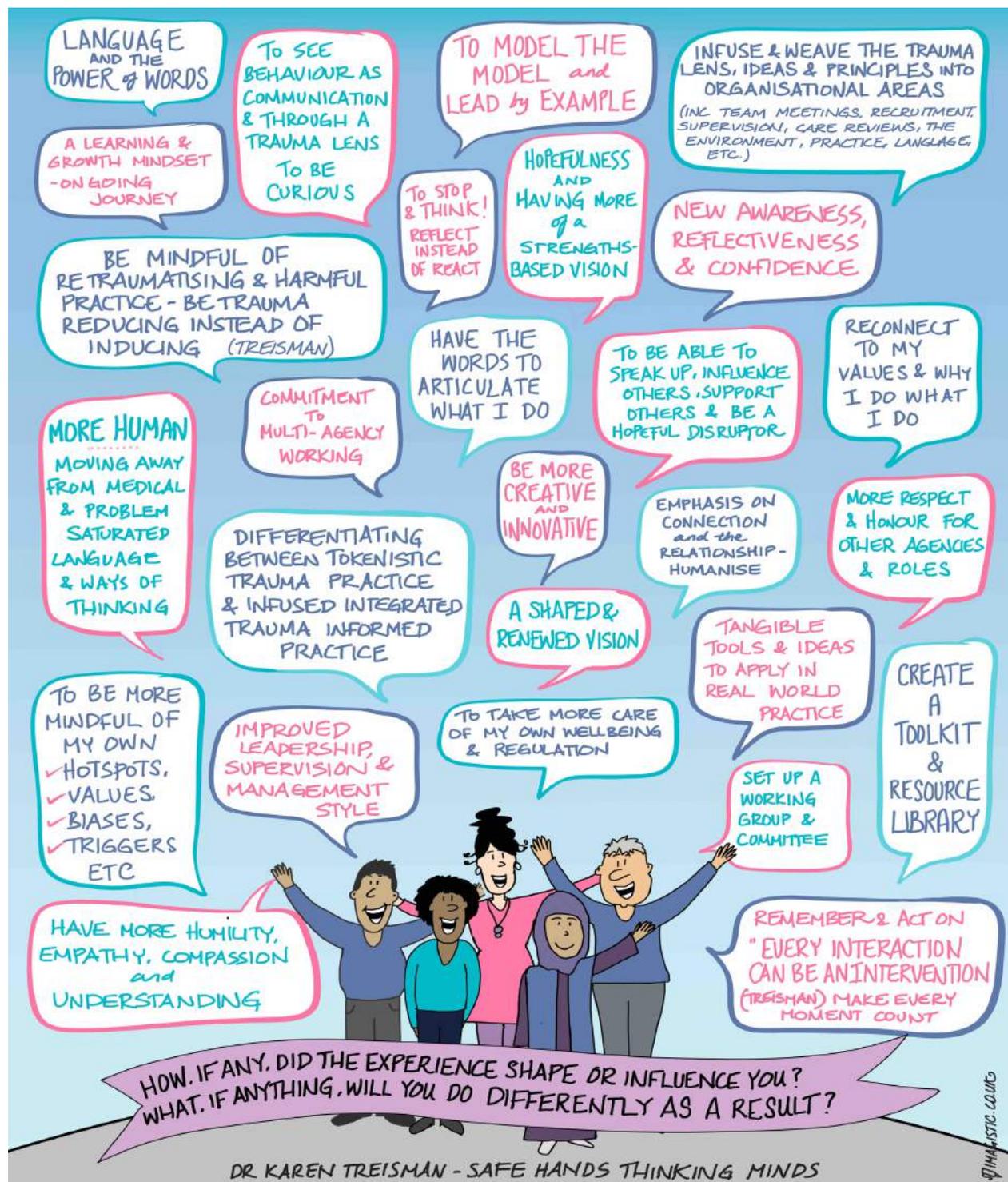
Some additional ingredients which the attendees shared that they felt added to the success of their experience:

- Having **multiple people from our organisation attend** made a huge difference; and for those who were the lone one they wished they had others from their teams of organisations.
- Having people who were **truly committed**- people who attended each session, bought in to the idea and vision, were supportive to each other, made the effort to engage with the material etc.
- **Karen’s facilitating** (Some words used- “safe, passionate, experienced, captivating, knowledgeable, enthusiastic, fun, engaging, energetic, creative, real, human, practical, relatable, kind, confident, inspiring, hopeful, gentle, relaxed, and real”).
- The **stories, anecdotes, real life examples and experiences**, and the **language** used throughout.
- Peppered with **hope, fun, and practical ideas**; and the **visuals, props, photos and diverse creative ideas** used.
- The **quick regulating exercises** too. “*I’ve used the finger breathing in the car outside school already with a young person*”.
- **The language and power of word used.**
- Interactive **chat box and break out rooms**. Some people absolutely loved, and much preferred the virtual experience saying it increased accessibility, felt less intimidating, that they felt more comfortable in their own home etc. Others said it worked but they would have preferred face-to-face if the pandemic hadn’t have occurred.
- A **wide range of theories and approaches** were drawn on so that there was something for everyone and woven together- diverse, eclectic, and integrative.
- Having **optional evening and afternoon sessions** on practical and creative sessions.

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How, if any, did the experience shape or influence you? What, if anything, will you do differently as a result?

The below image captures some of the summary words of how people were shaped and influenced by the course. These are then expanded on and evidenced by some of the direct quotes and comments from the group which capture some of the multi-layered reflections and benefits of the course.



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“I feel like it validated feelings I had about wishing things (e.g. The physical environment, the way language used in meetings) in my workplace were different... it gave me confidence to speak up more about this within my team/organisation, to make suggestions that I now feel are evidence-informed.. and finally, it gave me a sense of hopefulness that even just ‘modelling the model’ to colleagues can be a small way to try and start influencing change.”

“Over the course of this programme, I developed a stronger commitment to working collaboratively and in an interagency approach to lead out radical change of approach to working with young people that have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences in the hope that by experiencing positive relationships adults/service providers in various services the outcomes for that young person will be immense”.

“‘Modelling the model’ more within my team, starting a Working Group within my organisation. Making ‘trauma informed practised’ a standing agenda item in my own supervision”.

“More confident in regard to telling the difference between tokenistic trauma practice and infused integrated trauma practice.”

“This program has helped me to understand the power of language when working with young people. For example, the anger instead of your anger. It has also reminded me the importance of the relationship with the young people, and of connection before correction. As well as thinking about, “Who is the young person behind the behaviour/ label/crisis?”

“More often checking in that what I am saying has been fully understood by who I am talking to, working on being curious and seeking to understand behaviours rather than being reactive. Modelling self-care with staff and encouraging them to be mindful of their own self care.”

“Reflective of my practice to date and learning from times where I may not have been as trauma informed. Also, good to see practices of mine that were trauma informed”.

“To take more care of my own wellbeing. Without that I cannot give the level of commitment that our young people deserve. How can we give the best of us not what is left of us”?

“To always commit to the relationship with young person, creating sparkle moments- to laugh more”.

“I see people’s negative behaviour and actions/reactions through a very different lens. I’m more forgiving of people actions and can see beyond the behaviours. Martin Luther King is one of my greatest heroes. He believed that agape or brotherly love and compassion was the only way to restore broken communities. King loved his enemies. He spoke ill of no one. Seeing the woundedness in all men and women, he forgave them for their hate. I was always fascinated by how he could love so unconditionally, especially people who hated him. The training has taught me that agape is the most essential type of love when working with trauma”.

“To be present with every human I have an interaction with, to be more trauma informed with my interactions. I have stated to view all my work practices through a more trauma

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informed lens i.e. All meetings and greetings with young people and staff, timetables, class delivery on and offline, skills demonstration's, assessments etc".

"Understanding that trauma affects people differently, and to be curious- be mindful of my own assumptions, biases, blind spots etc".

"Myself and a team member will be doing an interactive walk through of a "placement" breakdown with the Children in Care Team based on the last exercise that we did as part of the training. Trying to share and help the wider team in thinking through what exactly this might be like for the children experiencing this / the social worker facilitating a move / the foster carer who might be struggling with the child moving on..."

"Expanding my knowledge of trauma and how it has affected the people we work with. I am more aware of the importance of recognising trauma whilst not allowing it to cloud my relationships with clients or to become the main focus. I am also aware of the opportunity that working in trauma presents to help vulnerable young people build strengths.

"As a Manager of a team dealing with young people, I have become more challenging of the teams' attitudes, prompting them to question some beliefs as to why change cannot happen".

"As a team leader, when I am allocating a file to a social worker, how I speak about the child and family, the language I use and the narrative".

"Holding on to hope and creating an individual and a team sparkle moment box".

"I speak about trauma and share resources that I come across with my team regularly now, trying to look out for opportunities for them to upskill outside of reflective discussions".

"I want to work on developing better ways of chairing meetings that will allow people to participate in a safer way. E.g. Child in care reviews, thinking about how we can make this format better".

"We practice more self-care in our meetings, we check in with each other more, we reflect more and categorise into diagnoses less. I would like to reflect on our defences and own triggers as a team more. I would like to explore that with clients too".

"As a leader I have been challenged to integrate trauma informed approaches into my style as a manager – shaping how I do HR, challenging and broadening my mindset around employee needs, being aware of when my own prejudice, pride or defensiveness is at play".

"As a leader it has been me realise how we need to look at everything from a trauma lens- from policies, to practices, to language, to meetings, to the environment, and so much more- one step at a time but have gained so much confident and have Karen inside my heart and heart".

"It has given me so much awareness of the language I use and confidence to make positive changes and to shape other systems and people- wide ripples".

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“When I am supervising keyworkers and we talk about the young people’s needs we consider the trauma and how it manifests much deeper and really consider and research presenting behaviours from a trauma informed approach before we put interventions in place”.

“Organisational Trauma: Considering the Stat 42% of Social Workers have had 4 or more ACEs. What does that mean for me as a supervisor? There are 5 on my team – leading these workers. Trying to increase the quality of the supervision that I am providing, ensuring spaces for reflection frequently amongst the team and individually. Trying to carve out what my team’s ethos is... How can I be trauma reducing as a leader?”

“I remind myself daily to model the model, most importantly be curious and not furious. In my role in Candle, I am striving to lead out a culture of being a trauma informed organisation. I recognise the need for me to support staff in roles which in turn creates the right environment for the young people we work with and all who engage with our services”.

“The central part of the course for me that was new was in relation to creating a whole centred approach to being a trauma informed organization; and a commitment/confidence to view all aspects of the organization through the lens of trauma informed approaches”.

“Thinking more about the physical environment, what changes need to be made and how it is experienced by young people.”

“It has given me many useful tools to use in the moment. I have clarity of vision and a clear understanding that this way of working is right. It gives me a framework to question decisions – for instance, questioning an operational decision by management or peers about a young person. Instead of just letting it go. (management decision is the final one) or seeming argumentative, I consider and bring the trauma theory to discussions”.

“Making me more aware of the complexity of trauma while inviting me to view trauma not so much as a noun but as a relationship; encouraging me to reflect on my own blind-spots, triggers, habitual scripts; prompting me to be more curious about sensory activities and creative/playful ways of working with young people; reminding me of the importance of slowing down and truly listening”.

“I am constantly thinking whether what I am doing is Trauma informed, prior to, during and after all interactions. The knowledge that have gained from the course as enabled me to think more deeply around trauma and now it is at the forefront of my mind in daily work”.

“It has made me more confident in my understanding of being trauma-informed and it has spurred me to think more on the organisational level than before- it really has widened my frame”.

“My language has been transformed and it has shifted things in a big way in how I understand things but already seeing the impact in my colleagues by dripping in different ways of doing things”.

“I feel like I have listened more and showed more humility to the people I manage which in turn seems to have increased our connection and working relationships”.

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“I want to look again at all aspects of our educational programme set up and consider the ‘flash points’. What routines have we got into unthinkingly that could be benefit from a trauma informed lens? – greetings, teaching methods, classroom structure, communication, schedule, progression, timetables, dining, groups dynamics, environment etc.”

“I have begun to work in a more creative way in terms of developmental work (especially the specific one to ones). I have already begun to experience the energy lift and confidence in working in this way and can see the sessions transformed almost instantly in terms of deeper engagement by the y/p”.

“Getting the thinking brain online is a big part of our work with young people and the regulating tools you have shared have been really helpful”.

“Before young people come in take a few breaths and make sure that I am grounded and there is nothing else on my to do list only time with them. I also check in with myself afterwards. Really take the time to check in with the Young Person when they come in and ask important questions like have you eaten today, how your sleep was last night etc. To try and get a better understanding of where they are at on a day”.

“Every Interaction is an Intervention – trying to instil this with workers who want more time to do “direct work” whereas this in the traditional sense may not always seem possible. Taking every time that you meet with a YP and making that interaction as trauma informed and focussed on building a relationship – seeing and valuing the importance of our everyday interactions and potential catalysts for change. Reframing our thinking about the work that we all strive to do and having confidence in our own skill sets that not everything needs to or should be outsourced”.

“Always remember that every interaction with a young person or colleague has an impact & has the potential to be a steppingstone as part of an intervention for positive change. Changing our world environment by even adding a splash of colour”.

“Helps me understand better how people are affected by and respond to trauma in their daily lives and how quickly one can be to go down a timehole and how important every interaction is to ensure that I don’t retraumatise a young person by how I am interacting with them”.

“I think that this programme helped me to be more sensitive and look at people from different perspective, put myself more in ‘someone else’s shoes’”.

“Applying the concepts daily in the work e.g. Shark infested waters, flower quote, behaviour is communication etc”.

“I will be more mindful about people’s past, and how this can impact on our behaviours/triggers, so I will be more sensitive in approaching people, as what I see or feel might mean something else for other people and they might see or feel differently to me. ‘see a person differently & you see a different person – see a situation differently & you see a different situation”.

“To be curious about what lies beneath different behaviour and meet it with compassion”.

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“I must let the young people know that they are in safe hands when they talk or confide in me. Help them to build up a relationship. Give them more time and space to talk. Hold back and ask the “right” questions”.

“I have become more aware of empathically looking at situations through the eyes of a traumatized person. An example used was that person entering a building. It helps you understand what they see, feel and experience. Here, I found the piece about Organisational Trauma to be very informative too. I have also used the Environment analogy regularly and have found it to be of great assistance”.

“I’m trying to stay vigilant for those small opportunities to connect or support someone. Whether it’s discussing a topic through a TV storyline or learning about someone’s favourite song I think I’ll try to be more consistent with these important moments. I’m feeling much more open to try to understand a person’s behaviours and what it is they are trying to communicate. Also, I am much more mindful in how I or colleagues describe people and their support needs – there is a much kinder and more insightful way to give information where needed. The story about describing a young person as “attention seeking” or a “liar” really stayed with me”.

“I think I have gained confidence in being able to think critically of diagnosis/labels that are being attached to children. We often refer children for assessments without properly considering the potential impact of this assessment, if the assessor has knowledge of trauma and the potential impacts and this results in children being diagnosed with conditions that they may not necessarily have. It is increased my awareness of challenging the medical model that is often relied upon in trying to help children”.

“Refreshes your practice and makes you consider how you are engaging and intervening with young people and families. I am a trained social worker however in Candle I am not carrying out this role. The training has made me miss social work and has helped me to consider my practice and think about doing things differently when I return to a social work role. It has helped me to understand the effects of working in a trauma inducing work environment and how this has such an impact on staff and well-being. It has helped empower myself to be the change maker in these situations and the metaphor about dripping away has really resonated with me”.

“I would like to consider the change that could come about if young people were held through the trauma informed concept while moving between agencies, if they were kept ‘in mind’ without being labelled or box ticked. If there were services such as therapies counsellors that remained the same throughout. If a priceless piece of art was to be moved and reinstalled somewhere or a play moved from the West End to Broadway there will be a set of standards to ensure consistency/ quality/ resources. There is a vested interest in the success of the move. We should consider the value of the human at the heart of all our work”.

“The huge thing I took from the course has been the responsibility to constantly challenge myself as a worker. To put the y/p first in planning how an intervention/session is set up and then be decent enough to offer variety: variety of delivery, format, presentation, style to ensure that the person in front of me is getting the interaction method/style that they are most comfortable with and the conditions are created for them to safely explore, question and grow”.

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“In terms of trying to engage with people; I am committed to being much more cognisant of trauma, and how might that affect how they feel in a service especially at the beginning. I’m also committed to try to be more creative and flexible in how I communicate. I’m also much more aware that I will never be able to truly understand what it’s like being in someone else’s shoes”.

“Something that really struck with me was when you spoke about children moving placement and how it feels to visit a boyfriend/girlfriends family for the first time-lots to think about in terms of how we settle children into new environments, in terms of our empathy and understanding”.

“Thinking about the lens someone sees the world through. I’ve really been thinking more the past few weeks about how someone else’s experiences change the way they see the world. Although I’ve always tried to be non-judgemental and empathetic in my practice, I think there was always a part of me that frames someone’s behaviours and actions through my own lens unconsciously. Someone else who grew up with in different world – whether it was through racism, relational trauma – have a right to feel and see things a different way. By trying to measure and judge someone against how you think they should feel or act (i.e. justifiably angry about how they’ve been treated or finding it hard to trust or open up), you can do them a big injustice. (I hope this one made sense)”.

“I have started to pay more attention to the language I use and how I embody what I say; I remind myself to remain curious and open, to look for new patterns and novel lines and that meaning-making is a relational process, always evolving; I strive to include more 'regulating exercises' in my work and to make these more playful while taking into account each person's unique sensory profile. I would like to remain committed to a vision of hope and do my best to weave the thread of hope, resilience, and kindness in everything I do. I try to use the principles of 'Reflect, review, and revisit' and the 7s (exhale, explore, expand, enrich, embody, embed, express) as guiding mantras in my work and interactions with others”.

“I feel increased knowledge and confidence. In particular, I feel more hopeful that there ARE things I can do as an individual (every interaction is an intervention, Treisman) even if the wider organisation is operating in a different way... but also, that systemic change is possible. Crucially, looking at the organisational trauma material increased my compassion for staff/ systems that are maybe operating in unhealthy ways. The idea that ‘well-being leads to well-doing’ concept will stay with me and also encourage more focus on my own self-care”.

“I’ve learned so much from this course. Hope being the biggest message. I believe that the training has given me the skills and confidence to help reparent the young people we work with. I have learned so much about healing and post traumatic growth. I am a more confident practitioner because of the training”.

“This course brought back to mind all the cheerleaders I had in my life, the mentors and guides who helped me along the way”.

“The course made me want to be better and do better and believe in better”.

“I’ve gained knowledge in the rationale for why I work how I want to work. I have gained some spark towards creativity as in the pressure to see more people and to work remotely I

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had lost more and more of that incrementally over time. It has raised my confidence to find my tribe and not feel alone in wanting to really understand someone's experience and to make a connection with them and to support them as they bring about change”.

Attendees then went on to discuss some of the key messages that they would like commissioners and leaders to know- the following responses were from the question:

“If we had more funding, I would do... and I would recommend...; and my wishes for the next steps locally and nationally would be.../ what do we want funders, leaders, and commissioners to know and do...”

Policies:

For **policies** to be reviewed, evaluated, tweaked, and created to ensure meaningful funding, engagement, and commitment to trauma informed practice; and for this to be meaningful and matched with action and high-quality integration.

“Learning about trauma and how we can try to make our service better. We can strive to cause no further harm. We deal with people in often the most difficult time of their lives and have a duty to be trauma reducing. As we spoke about it is moving from knowing, to being, doing, feeling, acting, infusing (Treisman)”.

“Look at the end goal and not the immediate stat breakdown. (Putting the required and necessary time to fully practice trauma informed approaches and interventions may not, on first glance, gel with planned resource outcomes and expectations in the short term; but they will absolutely repay in more abundant, successful, and more importantly lasting change for the lives we are entrusted to look out for in the long term.)”.

“This thinking needs to be infused at a policy and political level; as Karen says hardwired into the fabric”.

“Write it into policies and procedures and strategies... WE are the Strategy.”

Training and workshops:

More **training** in trauma informed models for staff in my agency; and for it to be honoured, protected, and seen as the valuable opportunity that it is. Some said how useful having cover would have been to be fully present. And importantly, for it to not just be seen as one off or tokenistic training but to include the reflective practice, access to supervision, working groups, resource sharing, thinking space etc. there were lots of hope that the training would be for everyone, and that if people were selected that it would be whole teams or several people from a team so that the learning and support can continue and be embedded. The whole of the Candle team were part of the program and they expressed lots of the benefits and the difference that this made.

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There was also a hope from attendees that this thinking and quality of training would be integrated into the education system, the early years system, probation, Tusla, youth justice, and so many others- relevant for anyone working with people. Including adult services, prisons, homelessness, fostering etc.

Additionally, there was the recommendation that the training be integrated into inductions; and for those who have done it to have reminder/ refresher training or consultations with Karen.

Moreover, attendees hoped that leaders would be trained in organisational trauma, secondary trauma, organisational change- especially as change starts at the top- modelling the model.

Lastly, it was shared that there was a recommendation for the attendees for them and others following the core training, to be able to layer learning with more training on aspects like community, cultural, and intergenerational trauma; and to be able to have ongoing supervision, learning sessions, conferences to keep the momentum and buzz.

“I think this should be rolled out nationally as a training programme. Organisationally in TUSLA we need to be more aware in our cradle to grave approach to the families that we are working with of the potential impact that trauma can have on the wider system and this should be shaping our assessments of families in need”.

“We ARE and can be the change- this is so doable- let’s get everyone trained in a meaningful way and embed embed embed- training is one step but a crucial one”.

“The impact on every angle of work from placement stability, adoption stability, retention of foster carers, reduced incidents, transitions between services, reoffending rates, staff sickness- it’s a no brainer- it’s a moral obligation- how can we not?!”.

“This training was so useful and thought provoking. I think that this training should be part of that change programme. It needs to be done in a holistic rather than tokenistic way whereby we have the resources, time and space to work in a more trauma informed way to ultimately improve the outcomes of the children and families that we work with.”

“I would like them to know that this training is not a box ticking exercise and I want them to consider their relationship with staff as key to this moving forward. If management doesn’t have a trauma-informed relationship with staff, it’s hard for staff to have a trauma-informed relationship with those they work with”.

“Anyone working with people would benefit from this training full stop! For me it is a no brainer. To be supported in learning and/or reinforcing the essential idea of looking through numerous and applicable lenses at an individual – to get the true, fair and real picture: to then have any place or credentials to support, advise, report on, review, recommend (or all of the other calls we can make it people’s lives) as professionals, or indeed organisations, is imperative”.

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Multi-agency groups and working:

There was a recommendation that this type of course would be recreated for numerous **multi-agency groups** across the country; and to develop **nationally an interagency** trauma informed approach to working with children and young people who access our services. And that this would be about working together in solidarity with and for the most vulnerable in community to create a more coordinated **wraparound service**.

There was also a hope around creating **resources, toolkits (meaningful ones alongside training), working groups, trauma champions, shared resources** and much more.

Moreover, there was the suggestion for there to be more **organisational visits and joint working and shadowing** to learn from each other, to build relationships, to share best practice, to be inspired etc.

“Set up a 'trauma responsive collective' bringing together a number of organisations - and maybe academic researchers too- with the aim of identifying broader structural, policy issues that impact across multiple agencies and advocate/lobby for change”.

Education to others:

In addition to whole system training and a wish to get these ideas into all systems from education to Tulsa to Probation and more. There was also a suggestion that this would be so useful to apply and adapt this to teaching all young people, parents, and carers- including an emotional regulation **curriculum**; and integrating it into other core programs. There was also a hope expressed by many attendees about increasing the **access, number and types of trauma informed therapies** available (which would also require more trained and supported trauma specialists). Additionally, there was also the hope that this information would be integrated and spotlighted more within the **public domain**, such as through radio, TV programmes, podcasts, early years, midwifery etc. Also, some people spoke of wanting to have a **social media account and manager** and creating resource hubs and recognisable hashtags to disseminate the information more.

Some attendees also said they would really appreciate if there was a **video** of all of the practitioners following and advocating for this approach, so that others in the organisations can see people they know and how many of us see things this way.

“Society on a whole would greatly benefit from exposure to and gaining understanding of this content. Imagine large swathes of the general public been Trauma Informed. Awareness of that magnitude would be incredibly beneficial”.

Funding to support training and focus on certain areas like physical environment and direct work tools:

To have money available for shifting things like the **physical environment and buildings** (small things make a big difference) to be more relational and trauma-informed; to be able to buy **“direct work” tools including creative and sensory resources**, to have **external consultation** from **trauma specialists** to come in, to have **external clinical supervision** etc.

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“I would like to see Tusla have some nice spaces to meet children and families. The spaces available to us now are very much “interview” rooms with very little therapeutic furniture / colours / materials. There are no child specific spaces and our services are often shared with the HSE which is a very clinical / institutional setting. I would also love some thought and resources to go into some toys / craft materials that we can use in our work with children and families”.

Supervision and reflective practice:

More investment in ongoing, high quality, meaningful **supervision and reflective practice**- and for this to be protected and safe- different to line or task management or as we said in the course “snoopervision”- and for this to be “super vision”- ideally external. For there to be reflective opportunities and spaces and for this to be seen as essential and not side-lined- this should be fore fronted as much if not more than other meetings or aspects.

“Resourcing us properly so that we can do this work. It’s not rocket science that if we met people’s needs more effectively, they would need services less into the future. We are being starved of all kinds of resources (basic level of staffing, clinical space, consistently functioning internet etc.) yet we are constantly pressured into seeing more people – as if everyone fits into a group intervention and doesn’t need to be met as a person. I wish they understood the amazing uniqueness of people and that we need to honour that rather than churn through them”.

“To make Candle a model of trauma informed best practice which could be a template for like-minded organizations who work with young people in the field of youth justice; to fund Candle’s work in a way that allows all services to be resourced with adequate staff who can be fully trained and supported in trauma informed practices”.

Research and evaluation:

Learn and familiarise with existing evidence and literature base; as well as commit and dedicate to evaluating and researching aspects of practice to evidence change and differences made. Share best and innovative practice. Have learning collaboratives and joint multi-agency research projects.

This should include taking stock of what is already being done and celebrating it, seeing what difference it has made, and then trying to infuse elsewhere and learn from it.

Thank you:

A special thanks to all Brian Johnston, Ciara O Connor, Maria Hayes, the wonderful Candle staff, and all of the brilliant participants for their dedication, energy, thoughtfulness, commitment, investment and more in the whole course and this evaluation.