

Trauma-informed approaches

A resource for leaders



Keeping it real
Kia pono te tika

The purpose of this resource is to help leaders plan, implement, and sustain an organisation-wide trauma-informed approach.

The resource identifies:

- why such an approach within services is important
- what a trauma-informed approach is
- an evidence-based process on how to implement
- a readiness-to-implement checklist
- further resources and information.

Trauma is experienced across many communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Recognising and validating people's trauma experiences enhances the strengths of tāngata whai ora, whānau, and communities, inspiring hope.

Leadership support and commitment is needed to implement and sustain trauma-informed practice and organisation culture change. This is crucial to complement workforce training and development of trauma-informed approaches.



Why a trauma-informed approach?

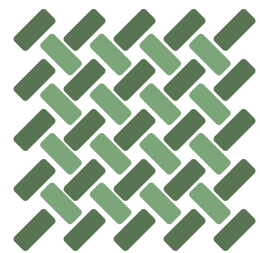
Traumatic events are common in Aotearoa New Zealand and can impact all aspects of hauora

- › A trauma-informed approach recognises and acknowledges the high prevalence of previous traumatic experiences for tāngata whai ora and kaimahi.
- › The impacts of colonisation on trauma for Indigenous populations are significant and ongoing.
- › People who experience mental health challenges and problematic substance use are more likely to have experienced trauma.¹
- › Some population groups experience different rates of trauma and post-traumatic stress.²⁻⁵



Supports the strengths of tāngata whai ora and kaimahi

- › When a trauma-informed approach is implemented across an organisation it means all kaimahi act in ways that minimise the possibility of causing further trauma.
- › It helps understand that people's reactions may be due to past and ongoing trauma, significant events, or the accumulative effects of trauma.⁶



Kaimahi in health services often experience trauma

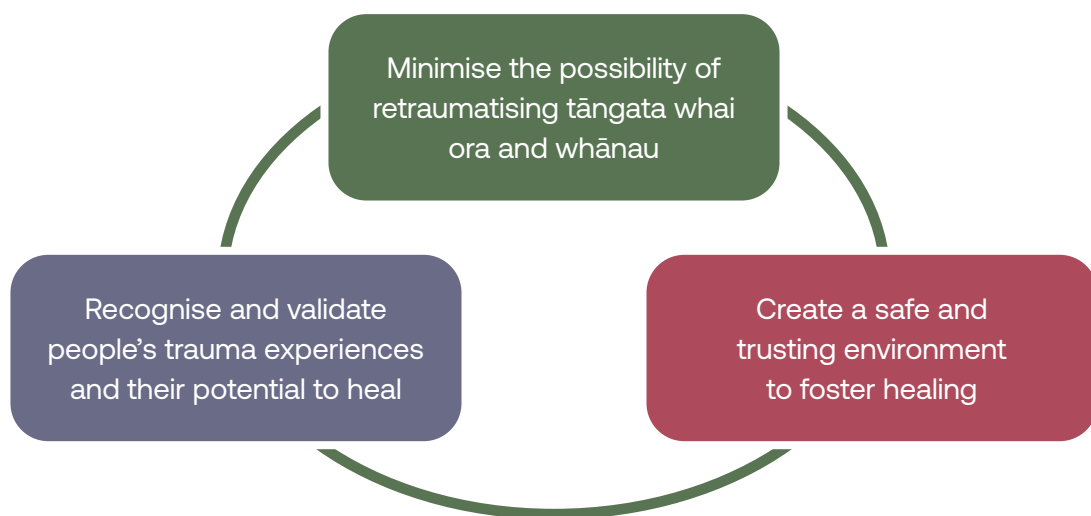
- › The work environment can expose kaimahi to secondary trauma, vicarious trauma and compounding personal trauma.⁷
- › An emphasis on kaimahi wellbeing is an important aspect of a trauma-informed approach.



What is a trauma-informed approach?

A trauma-informed approach is an overarching way of working based on a set of principles to create a safe and trusting environment that minimises the possibility of retraumatising tāngata whai ora and kaimahi.

A trauma-informed approach is also relevant to other cultures, including refugees, migrants, and Asian and Pacific people, as it recognises and addresses the unique experiences and challenges faced by these communities.

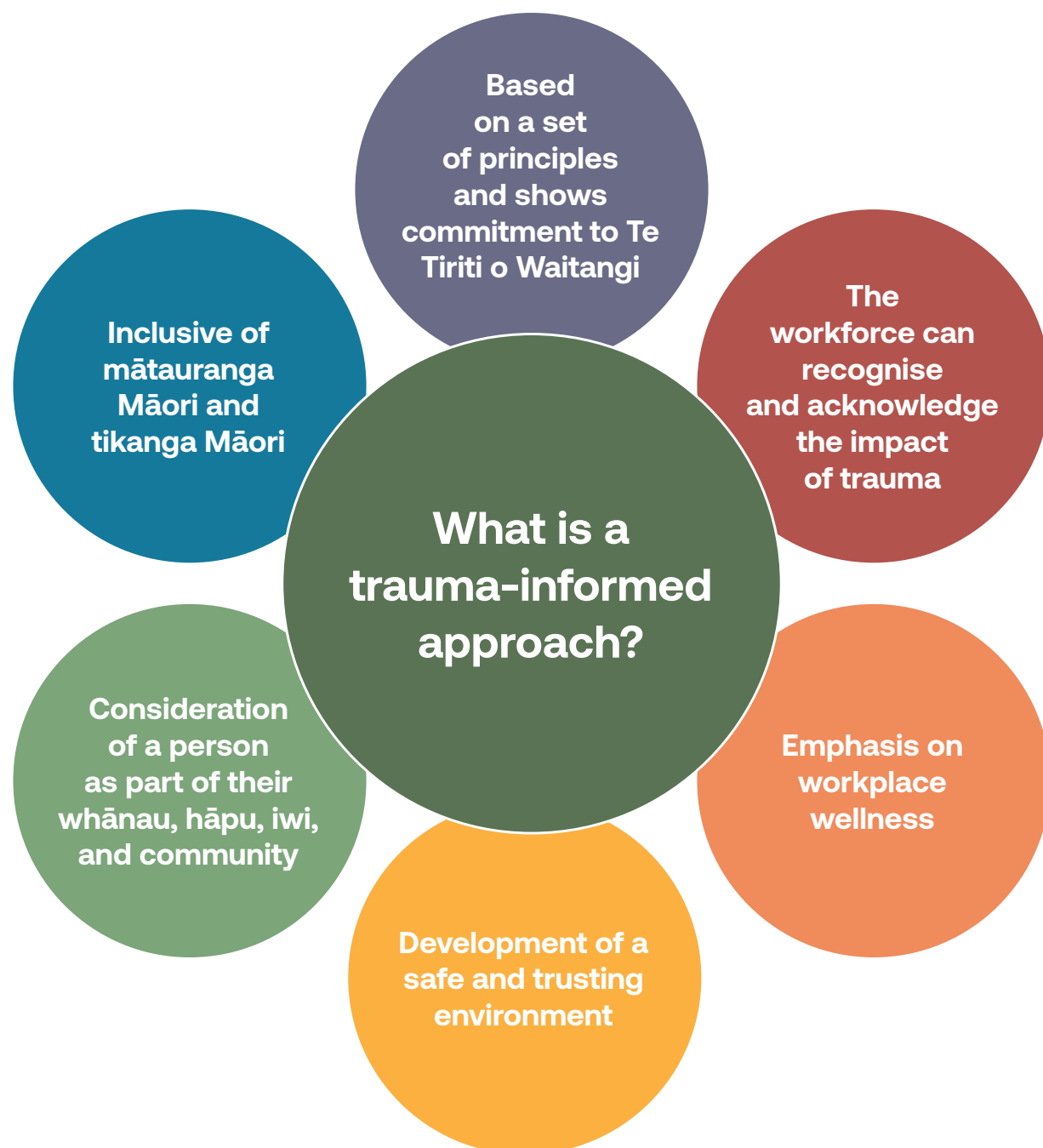


Within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi are applicable to a trauma-informed approach and involve a range of considerations and actions. These include:

- › embracing mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori, and kaupapa Māori theory and practices
- › considering all aspects of hauora and the interdependence among mind, body, and spirit being fundamental to health and holistic wellbeing⁸
- › understanding hauora as founded on whanaungatanga (relationships), whakapapa (genealogy, descent), and manaakitanga (hospitality, support)
- › considering a person as part of their whānau, hapū, iwi, and community
- › acknowledging, understanding, and addressing impacts of intergenerational trauma to promote healing⁹
- › emphasising workplace wellness.

Some widely recognised principles of a trauma-informed approach are safety, trust, choice, empowerment, peer support, and cultural, historical and gender sensitivities.¹⁰

Organisations need to agree on principles of a trauma informed approach as they can vary within the context of services.



How to implement a trauma-informed approach

Leaders can take seven key steps to successfully put in place a trauma-informed approach.¹¹ This is a gradual process and may take time. For example, reviewing policies can be a big step on its own.

1 Pre-implementation work

- › Identify trauma-informed approaches already being used.
- › Check if people and the organisation are ready and able to implement (see readiness tool page 8).
- › Identify key people to lead the work.

2 Hold collaborative discussions with meaningful engagement to ensure safe working relationships and an equitable balance of power. Aim for co-production and co-design, with active and visible leadership support. Include:

- › people with lived experience
- › Māori partners
- › other cultural stakeholders.

3 Build on relationships from step 2 to establish a collective sense of purpose and create a shared vision that will achieve outcomes for kaimahi, tāngata whai ora and the community.

- › Decide on key principles for the trauma-informed approach.
- › Use trauma-informed principles throughout the process to support participants' wellbeing.

4 Develop a plan

- › Choose a change management approach to create a clear plan for working with kaimahi to build on what they do now and ensure everyone understands their role in achieving the vision. (See further resources on page 10 for examples of frameworks.)

Pre-implementation
readiness



Collaborative
discussions to set
up co-production
& co-design

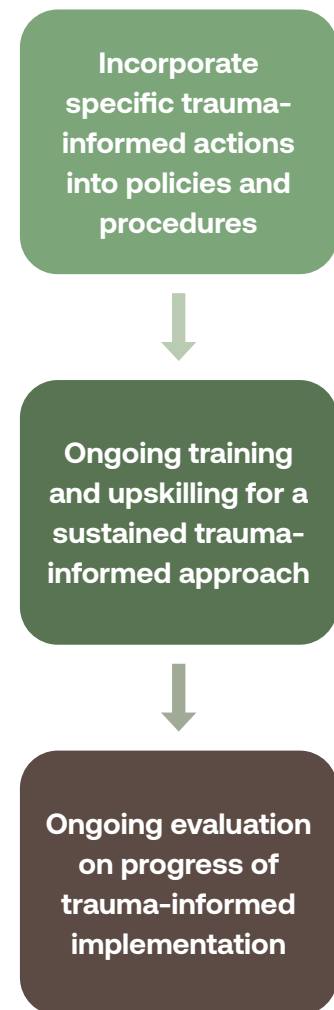


A shared vision so
all agree on what
a trauma-informed
approach looks like



Put together a
structured and
intentional plan
for change

- 5 Incorporate trauma-informed actions and intentions into organisation **policies, procedures, and strategic plans**. Examples could be:
- › adding trauma-informed discussions into an already planned schedule of regular meetings to provide feedback and communication
 - › how the organisation will support kaimahi experiencing trauma
 - › actions in policies to create a safe environment
 - › cultural and lived experience partnerships defined
 - › workforce development and worker wellness strategies.
- 6 Identify and provide **ongoing training and upskilling** for the whole workforce to ensure lasting behaviour change and cultural safety in the organisation.
- › Embed into onboarding and ongoing professional development planning.
 - › Involve people with lived experience in all aspects of ongoing learning.
- 7 Work together throughout the process to create **evaluation** measures and mechanisms to review success factors and processes.



Readiness to implement a trauma-informed approach

Readiness tools and checklists allow organisations to evaluate their current status, plan for their next steps, and review what has been achieved.¹² Readiness tools can vary in terms of what aspects of a trauma-informed approach they cover, and depend on the organisation's needs and vision.^{13,14} This is an example of a readiness checklist based on a review of international tools that incorporate key factors relevant to our Aotearoa New Zealand context.

The checklist could be used to check project status pre-implementation, during implementation, and after a reasonable period, such as two years post-implementation.

A. People <i>To what extent do you think:</i>	Still to start	Some way to go	Nearly there	We're there
A1. Kaimahi demonstrate willingness and are ready for practice change, and a commitment to use new practices if supported to do so				
A2. There are processes in place to co-design an organisation-wide trauma-informed approach throughout the process, with Māori, whānau, people with lived experience, other cultural partners, and the community				
A3. Kaimahi are familiar with the concepts of vicarious and secondary trauma, and moral distress				
A4. Kaimahi have a shared vision and are actively involved in plans to practice a trauma-informed approach				
A5. Within this shared vision, each person knows their role towards achieving success				
A6. Kaimahi have the interpersonal and professional skills required to implement any changes to work in a trauma-informed way				
A7. Kaimahi have knowledge and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and understand that western trauma-informed models often differ from Māori models				
A8. Kaimahi understand the impact of colonisation on trauma for Indigenous populations is significant, ongoing and can accumulate				
A9. Common expectations are developed for culturally safe and inclusive practice that recognises the strengths, identities, and needs of Māori, Pacific peoples, ethnic communities, disabled people, rainbow communities, and people of all genders				
A10. Kaimahi have regular opportunities to reflect on personal cultural safety, biases, beliefs and assumptions				
A11. Kaimahi recognise practices that take people's choice away can be retraumatising, such as seclusion and restraint				
A12. Self-care plans are in place and regularly reviewed to support kaimahi wellbeing				

B. Organisation and service level <i>To what extent do you think:</i>	Still to start	Some way to go	Nearly there	We're there
B1. Service design is developed in partnership with Māori and is inclusive of mātauranga and tikanga Māori, along with people from other applicable cultures. Includes the concept of cultural safety				
B2. Leaders role model and demonstrate an organisational culture that reflects trauma-informed values and approaches				
B3. There is leadership commitment to an allocated budget to maintain a trauma-informed approach				
B4. Plans are in place to support all participants' wellbeing throughout the implementation process using trauma-informed principles				
B5. Service design and implementation is informed and reviewed by people with lived experience and the peer support workforce				
B6. There is an intentional implementation plan based on a model of change				
B7. Policies and processes are in place to support actions to minimise the possibility of retraumatisation				
B8. Champions are developed to lead, promote and sustain trauma-informed approaches				
B9. Professional development and training opportunities are resourced and available to the whole workforce				
B10. The organisation has a plan for ongoing professional development and training for the sustained application of a trauma-informed approach				
B11. There is the provision for ongoing coaching, mentoring, and self and peer reflection for all kaimahi				
B12. Workplace culture and policies support self-care and wellbeing of kaimahi				
B13. There are welcoming and safe environments for kaimahi and tāngata whai ora, whānau, and the community				
B14. The organisation has a plan to regularly assess the environment for physical and emotional safety of kaimahi and tāngata whai ora, whānau, and the community				
B15. Keeping it Real Kia Pono te Tika is embedded into service design and kaimahi development				
B16. Policy and processes align with trauma-informed approaches, values and attitudes, and role expectations				
B17. There are open lines of communication in place across the organisation				
B18. The organisation has an evaluation plan to elicit feedback and monitor progress of the trauma-informed change process				
B19. Quality improvement processes are in place to identify areas for improvement				

Further resources

Further evidence and resources for a trauma-informed approach are available on the Te Pou website at [Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika](#). The Keeping it Real | Kia Pono te Tika Real Skills Assessment Tool is for kaimahi and teams to reflect on strengths and development needs.

More resources for a trauma-informed approach from other workforce centres are available from [Trauma-informed resources. Cross-workforce centres](#).

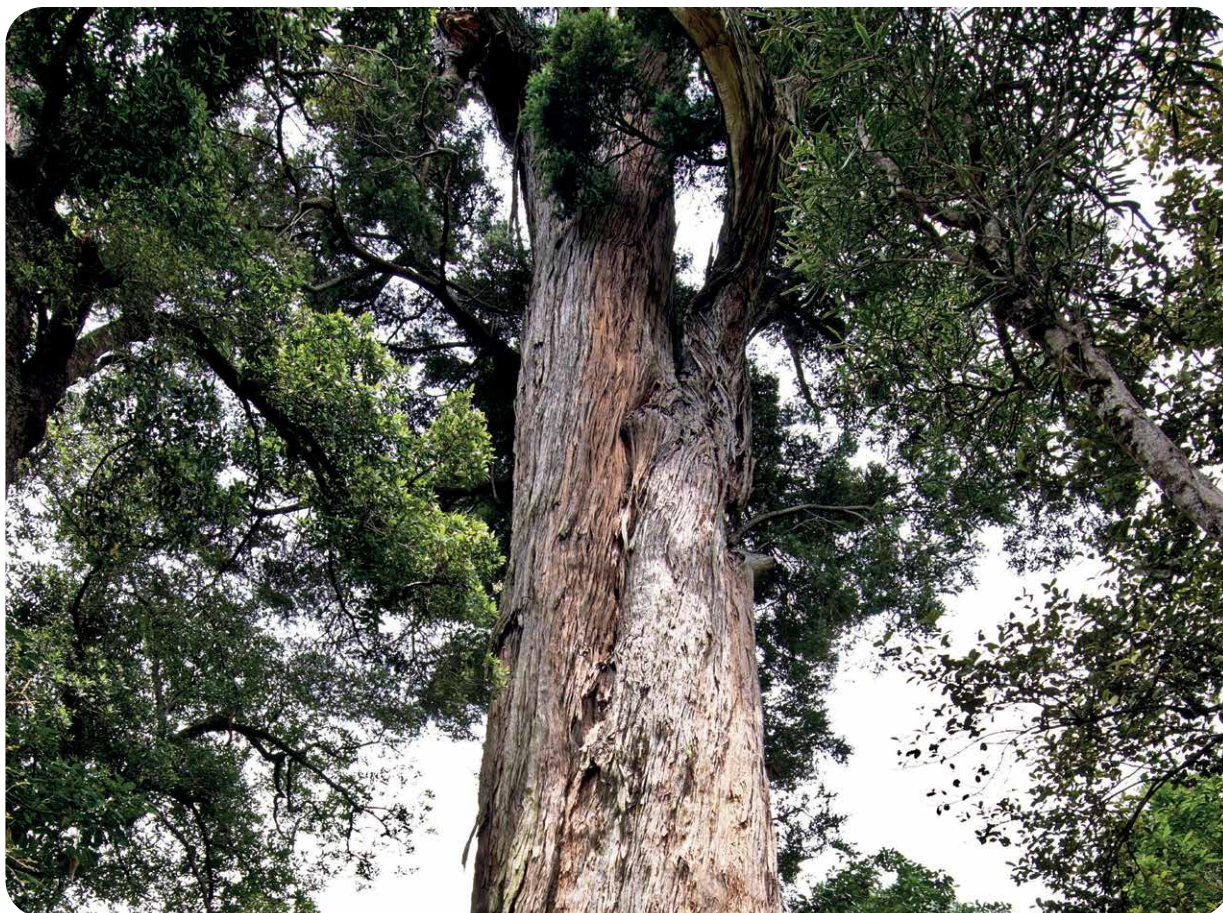
A resource for kaimahi and organisations to support the use of a trauma-informed approach. [Being trauma-informed: Principles and action](#).

An example of a change management approach, ADKAR 'Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement' [The Prosci ADKAR® Model | Prosci](#).

An example of an implementation framework, EPIS 'Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, Sustainability' [EPIS Framework](#).

A guide on how to authentically engage with the mātau ā-wheako consumer, peer support and lived experience (CPSLE) workforce through co-design activity. See [Co-designing with mātau ā-wheako CPSLE workforce for change](#).

A resource providing guidance on how to use language to uplift, validate, and tautoko people, see [Words can heal | Te Pou](#).



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