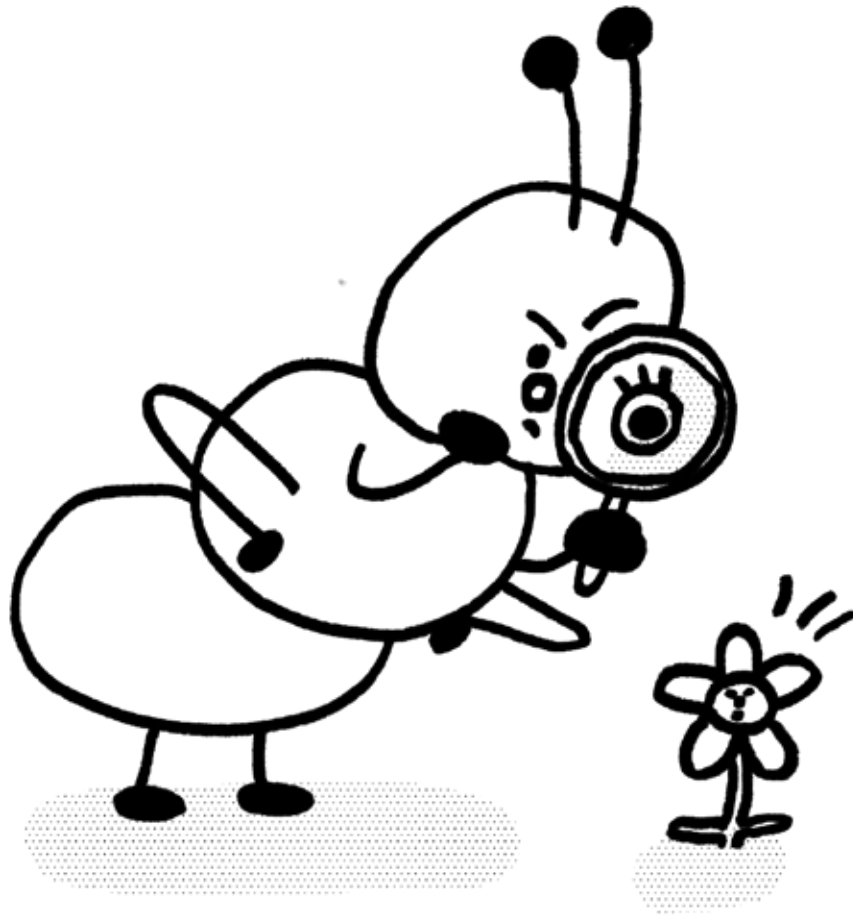


**Engage in a place you feel safe.**



# 1. What is trauma informed teaching?



Trauma informed teaching is a framework - not a set of rules.

Trauma impacts learning and behaviour. Informed teaching is about asking 'what happened to you?' rather than 'what is wrong with you?'

It allows space for discomfort. As we know, practice only ever makes *almost* perfect.

Trauma informed teaching centres cultural, historical, and gender issues. It takes into account that marginalised communities experience trauma at a higher rate.

# Glossary

**coercion**

using force, threats, and emotional arguments to persuade someone

**consent**

to give permission for something to happen

**emotional dysregulation**

difficulty managing or regulating emotions

**pain point**

a persistent or recurring problem

**psychological safety**

the ability to contribute (ask questions, offer ideas, make mistakes) without fear of punishment or humiliation

**re-traumatisation**

reliving or re-experiencing a past traumatic experience

**self-destructive behaviour**

any behaviour that is harmful or potentially harmful towards the person engaging in the behaviour

**trauma**

an emotional response to a distressing event or ongoing circumstances

**trauma response**

the way a person responds to traumatic experiences

**trigger**

a stimulus that elicits an emotional and physical reaction

## 2. The Key Principles of Trauma Informed Teaching



### Safety

Invite authenticity  
Foster belonging: use preferred pronouns and correct names  
Promote psychological safety  
Allow space for vulnerability

*Do your students feel 'safe enough to learn'?*

*Are there written policies in place for student physical, mental and emotional safety?*



### Trust

Build compassionate relationships  
Establish boundaries and roles  
Recognise differences  
Acknowledge limitations and avoid unnecessary disappointment - be honest with what you have capacity for!

*Are course expectations clearly stated?*  
*Do your students understand the roles of individuals on the course?*



### Peer Support

Make space for peer relationships  
Encourage mentoring  
Reach across lines of difference  
Prioritise belonging Support community building

*Are there peer activities facilitated by the course? Is information about university community groups, organisations and clubs easily accessible?*

Trauma informed teaching uses these principles to create psychologically safe environments. The poster included in this guide shows how the different principles and actions inform and enhance each other.



### **Culture**

Incorporate feedback opportunities into every day studio life

Make space for disagreement and discomfort

Centre shared decision making

*What opportunities for feedback are available for students?*

*How are students involved in decision making?*



### **Voice and Choice**

Practice giving informed choice without coercion

Give space for contemplation

Don't assume, ask!

Share discussions where appropriate to empower other students to share their voices

*Are your students empowered to say yes as well as no?*

*Are students able to make decisions in their own time without pressure?*

### 3. What actions can you take?

#### Recognise the signs

Look for indicators of trauma:

- \* Triggers - do certain topics or actions elicit heightened responses?
- \* Emotional dysregulation
- \* Changes in attendance
- \* Self-destructive behaviours

Not all trauma responses are negative. These are examples of resilient responses:

- \* Revised priorities and sense of purpose
- \* Volunteerism and activism
- \* Bonding with community

#### Realise the impact

Show understanding of how trauma impacts studies:

- \* Acknowledge trauma as a widespread experience particularly amongst marginalised groups (without minimising the individual)
- \* Check in before, during, and after sessions
- \* Assist in making learning accessible
- \* Acknowledge resilience and the on-going strain of trauma

#### Respond with compassion

Be prepared to respond quickly and effectively:

- \* Listen and acknowledge
- \* Provide sign-posting to resources
- \* Create opportunities for choice as a standard. Consent is empowering!
- \* Celebrate milestones and achievements in context of individual student journeys
- \* Appreciate disclosures and say 'thank you for sharing'

#### Resist re-traumatisation

Healing is non-linear, but we can help by doing the following:

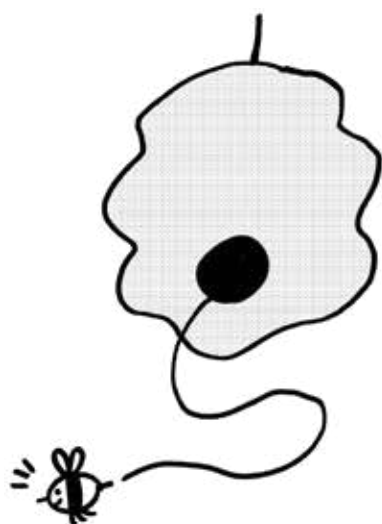
- \* Create a trauma-informed environment
- \* Recognise individual and collective pain points
- \* Highlight confronting course content ahead of time and offer alternative materials
- \* Allow space for feedback and discomfort
- \* Communicate how feedback will enact change



Recognise the signs



Realise the impact



Respond with compassion



Resist re-traumatisation

## 4. Resources

### **UAL Services**

Counselling

020 7514 6251

[counselling@arts.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@arts.ac.uk)

Health advice

020 7514 6251

[studenthealth@arts.ac.uk](mailto:studenthealth@arts.ac.uk)

### **NHS Services Finder**

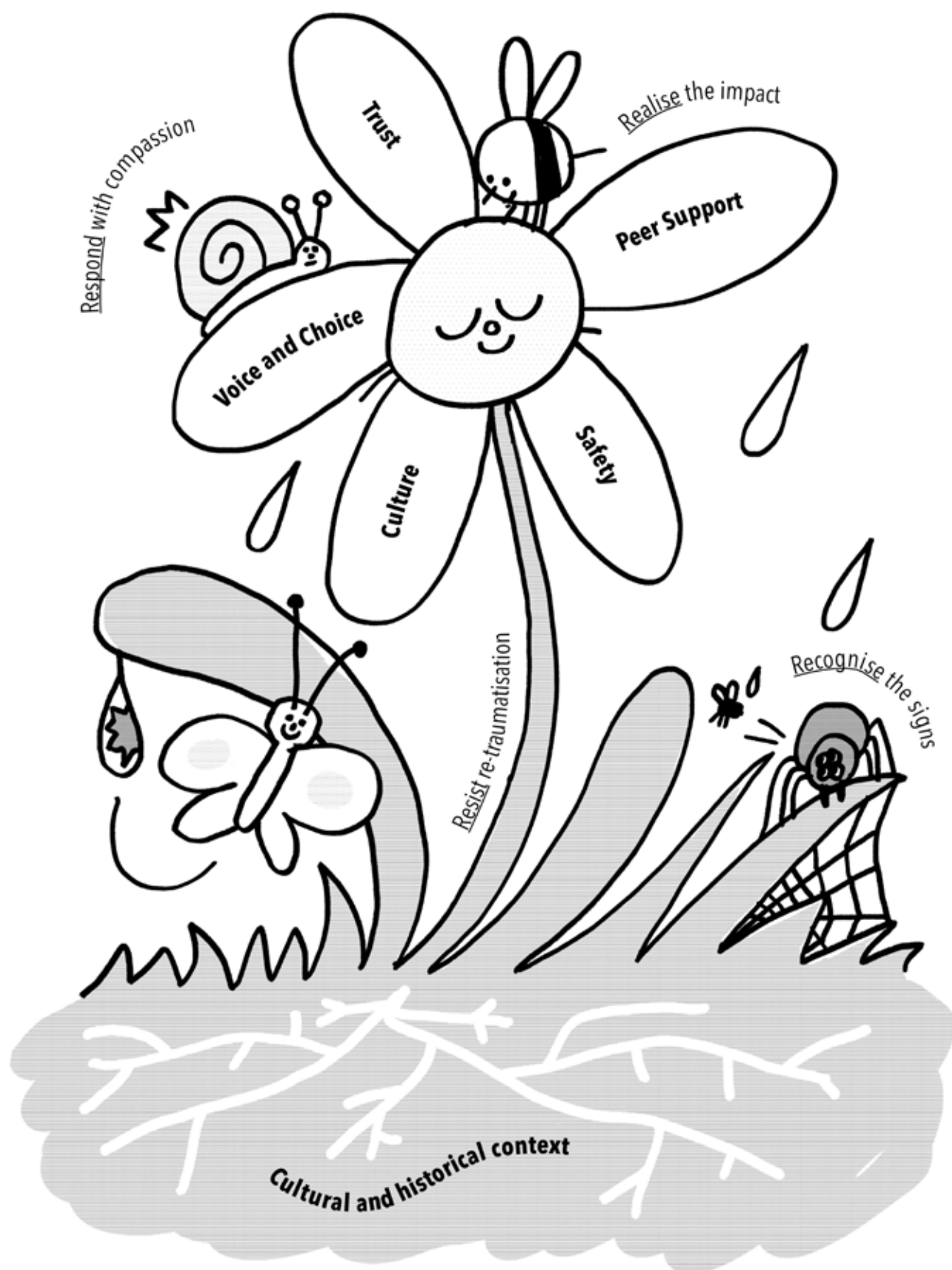
Searchable database of NHS services:

[nhs.uk/service-search](https://nhs.uk/service-search) (England)

[111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices](https://111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices) (Wales)

For a list of related charities, go to [mind.org.uk/information-support](https://mind.org.uk/information-support).  
Search "trauma contacts".





## The Trauma Informed Teaching Environment