



Trauma-informed Recruitment, Interview, & Induction

Introduction:

These questions & areas of consideration, will of course significantly vary depending on the procedures already in place, the job, the role, the context etc. However, there are some aspects which may be helpful to consider & to reflect on. They then need to be aligned with your current processes & tailored according to your organisation's needs. They are not prescriptive or exhaustive; & not replacement for existing procedures. They also are a work in progress (So please send your ideas and thoughts).

Recruitment is key, & the people are a huge part of what makes, shapes, drives, & develops an organisation. They need to model the model; & ideally, infuse the principles & values of trauma-informed practice. We want people to be champions, cheerleaders, drivers, & advocates in the transformation- this is vital for sustainability & maintaining momentum around trauma-informed practice. Therefore, recruitment is a process that should be prioritized, & done in a thoughtful & meaningful way. Similarly, the interview process itself is crucial. It is a person's first impression & first feeling of the organization, & of the culture. It sets the tone. It gives an insight & flavor into what to expect, & what is expected.

The recruitment, interview, & induction when done through a trauma-informed lens acknowledges that many people coming into the work have experienced their own trauma & adversity; it also respects & expects that there is a multi-layered impact on staff of working in trauma-focused highly-stressful environments & contexts. This is in addition, to the knowledge that most people find interviews an anxiety-provoking, high pressure situation which can evoke & re-surface anxieties, & feelings around being judged/ being stupid/ not being good enough etc.

Moreover, interviews by their very nature involve a power dynamic & a position of privilege. Therefore, with this in mind, we know that fear & being in survival mode can restricts & constricts thinking & exploration. So, in order to get the best out of people, it is in our best interest to make it collaborative, communicative, transparent, & reciprocal; & to support them to feel safe, listened to, valued, engaged, welcomed, & so forth.





Pre-Interview:

- It is important to think about how transparent the process is, and in what ways the person is communicated with. For example, how clear and accurate is the job description? Are there sections around the trauma-informed elements/ nature of the work? Are the qualities, knowledge, and skills required clearly stated and communicated?
- Are the employers considering how to have a diverse work force which represent multiple experiences, skills, & backgrounds?
- Do people get advance notice of the interview date and time?
- Has the applicant been provided with clear directions & instructions of how to get to the interview, including the location/parking/contact person?
- Is there an opportunity for the applicant to communicate to someone, if they need any additional support around the interview?
- Has the person had an opportunity before the interview if they wish to, to speak to a person about the job & if wanted, to have a walk-through-tour?
- If there are any tests, presentations, vignettes in the interview, has the applicant been told about these, & given some information about them?
- How are people not selected informed of this decision?

During the Interview:



- Depending on the role & existing processes, it can be very beneficial to have the person's likely supervisor/manager in the room; as well as someone with lived experience.
- Is the person greeted by name & warmly welcomed into the room? Have they been introduced to everyone in the room?
- Are the chairs comfortable? How is the candidate seated in position to the interviewees?
- Do they have water available? Have they had the opportunity to go to the toilet?

- Have they had clear information about the length of the interview, the amount of questions, encouraged to take their time & ask clarifying questions, when they will hear about the outcome, the process of writing notes etc.
- Is there an acknowledgement that it is 2-way process? With opportunities for them to find out more about the role/organisation, & to ask questions?
- Are people told that the interviewers know interviews can be anxiety-provoking etc and that they want to get the best out of them? Is the opening question one which eases people in?
- Are the interviewers showing the interviewee that they are engaged, present, & listening? (E.g. Making eye contact, looking up from their notepads, smiling, nodding, asking clarifying questions etc).
- Are there questions incorporated about the person's understanding of the impact of the work; & around self-care & emotional wellbeing? Including things like, "What is your understanding about the impact of working with trauma?", "What do you think makes working in a context of trauma, different to working in for example a bank/ a shop", "What supports you to be your best/worst self at work?", "What coping & regulating tools do you use, why, if any do you think this is important?"
- It can also be helpful to ask things like: "Why do you want to work in a trauma-informed way/organisation?", "What does a trauma informed organisation/ team look like to you?", "What do you think you would see/feel/notice/experience?", "What do you think are some of the key ingredients, principles, assumptions, & values of a trauma-informed organisation?", "Why do you feel it is important to be trauma-informed as a person/team/organisation?", "What might some of the benefits be of becoming trauma-informed?", "What do you think are some of the differences between trauma-inducing environments compared to trauma-informed environments?", "What areas do you want to learn more about with respect to this area, what is on your wishlist?".
- It can also be helpful to take some of the trauma-informed principles & values & ask people specific questions, & for examples around these (e.g. Safety, choice, agency, elevating people of lived experience, cultural humility, collaboration, transparency etc.). For example, with one element of safety, "Can you think of an example where you have supported a colleague/ client to feel safe; what did this look like/ involve?", "Why is safety important in the context of trauma?", "What do you think happens when someone feels unsafe?" "What different ways might this sense of unsafety show itself in this context?", "Can you think of a time when you felt safe/unsafe at work, how did you understand this/ respond to this/ learn from this?", "Can you think of a

time when you spoke up/ challenged authority/ expressed an unpopular or controversial view?" etc.

- What is people's understanding of the prevalence & impact of trauma? What is their understanding of what trauma is/can be? What do they think are some of the key issues facing people in the context of trauma & adversity? How do they think these might influence & impact the way in which they use/access/relate to the service?
- How have you incorporated an understanding of trauma into the work which you do/ an interaction which you have had? Why do you think a trauma-informed lens is important for your specific role?
- In addition to certain skills- it can be helpful to look out for certain relational & desired qualities which we know lend themselves to trauma-informed work, such as empathy, compassion, self-awareness, regulation-skills, curiosity, reflectivity etc. It can be helpful to have specific questions which explore & look out for these; as well as case vignettes or scenarios which allow these to be explored. This might also incorporate things like a difficult situation, & asking what people's understanding of the person/situation was? And how they would approach that person/situation? For non-clinical staff, this might be something like a person shouting/crying in the reception; or a person cancelling 3 appointments/ turning up late. This also provides an opportunity to get a sense of the language and labels which people use when describing situations & people.
- Given relationships & connections are so important- it will be important to ask questions about team working, collaboration, engaging people etc. As well as being attuned to the feelings, sensations, & dynamics in the interview room.
- It is also important for people to be able to make mistakes, be human, show some vulnerability, & be able to reflect on these- so it is helpful to incorporate questions around this which assess people's capacity to do this.
- It is important to make sure that there is space for questions at the end. Also, it can be helpful to ask them if there are any other questions which they wanted you to ask that you didn't, or if there is any information they were hoping to talk about that they didn't have the opportunity to.
- Thank them for attending, make sure they know when they will hear from you, & that they know the way out.



After Interview & Beginning of the Job: (Not in a particular order)

- Have you told the person of the outcome as soon as possible? Have they had an opportunity to receive balanced feedback? Have they had the opportunity to feed back about their experience of the interview? Are they then given additional information about the job/role?
- Have they been communicated with regularly between the time of being offered the job & the start to ensure that all of the processes have been done in a timely manner? Do they know the key information like start date & time, key dates for their calendar, dress code etc.?
- Once they start, have they been clearly welcomed & introduced? Has their manager made the time & space on their first day to be available to them? Have they had a tour of the building; & oriented to the local area? It can also be a lovely start to be taken out for coffee/lunch/ a walk by a colleague/manager.
- Have you checked how they would like to be called, & how their name is pronounced?
- Have you named & normalised how overwhelming, confusing, exhausting, & so forth, starting a new job can be; & where possible, given clear expectations, role definition, & guidance- as well as sharing that it is OK & expected to ask questions & to need things repeated.
- Have the practicalities been arranged? For example, having a computer/ a folder with relevant materials in it/ a work diary/ an email address/ access to the shared drive/ access to the policies/ ID badge/ keys/ a phone/ IT support number etc. This also goes hand-in-hand with being shown practical things like using the photocopier etc.
- Have they had an induction into the job/ role/ the organisation? This should include meeting with key people; & where possible having opportunities to shadow & observe other people. Acronyms should also be explained.
- Have they had context setting including the organisation's history, development, aims, vision, mission etc.
- Have they been oriented to the values & principles of trauma-informed practice & the rationale, key messages, & importance of it? This is as important for non-clinical staff so that they have a sense of why it is relevant to them, & why their role is key in this practice.

- Have they had in their induction/ discussions/ supervision/ training information around the multi-layered impact of trauma & adversity/ trauma-informed principles & values/ impact of the work including when working in traumatised system & around secondary trauma etc.
- Have you sent a welcome & email introduction about the new starter to the team/organisation? It can be nice to write a bit of information & some fun facts about the person. Also, have they been added to the correct mailing lists/ other team communication forums?
- Have you spent some time to get to know the person? Including their wishes/ hopes/ expectations/ interests/ experiences/ worries/ apprehensions etc. This can also help to collaboratively & meaningfully create a development plan/goals/ objectives/ a wellness plan/ a safety plan etc.
- Is there a buddy/ mentor system?
- Do they have access to regular supervision & to check-ins as to how they are doing/ settling in/ finding the role & organisation? Holding in mind, that new starters also have a fresh pair of eyes/ideas/ experiences; & have a lot to offer in terms of evaluating & reviewing the processes & organisation.
- Do they have access to relevant & desired training?
- If there are support avenues in place, like employee assistance programs; and/or other benefits & services such as access to bicycles, breast feeding rooms, gym membership etc., are these shared & encouraged?
- Have you shared your enthusiasm about their joining the team? As well as where genuine, given personalized appreciation, feedback, & recognition on an ongoing basis.
- Do they have contact details for the necessary people in case they are running late/ sick/ need help etc.?

