

**Serious case reviews: Lessons learned- my rambling thoughts- Dr Karen Treisman ([www.safehandstinkingminds.co.uk](http://www.safehandstinkingminds.co.uk) and author of A Treasure box for creating trauma informed organizations”:**

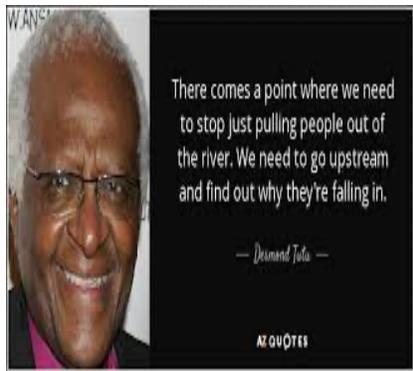
Generally, people are trying their best in unbelievably stretched, trauma soaked, and pressurised systems which are under resourced and underfunded. We need to hold in mind that “if a flower doesn’t bloom, you don’t fix or blame the flower, you try to change the environment in which it grows” (Alexander Den Heijer). To make the environment more enriching, reparative, healing; or certainly to not be harmful or trauma-inducing instead of trauma reducing.

A few analysis reports are out there already including the Munro but not in the way I am talking about or envisioning. There is such a need for a multi layered, multi-disciplinary, meaningful, trauma informed (and other lens) review of the numerous serious and best practice reviews to pull out themes & factors not in the way that is currently done like gender & age and other demographics (course those are important as well) but one which looks from a wider contextual & systematic lens which includes: (by no means an exhaustive list):

- Trauma (including organisational, system, cultural, intergenerational, institutional, secondary, vicarious and other types of traumas),
- the wider context including political,
- the application around areas such as sensory processing, dissociation, emotion regulation, and neuroscience to and within the work,
- what impacts decision making including the lack of reflective practice or space for it (including workers own values, biases, hotspots, triggers, when falling down a chain of pain or memory timehole), protective dissociation, snoopervision instead of meaningful supervision, the blame, fear, and shame culture, lack of psychological/ cultural/moral/ relational/ physical safety,
- areas including cultural humility,
- oppressive environments for some worsened due to covid and lockdown,
- initiative fatigue and change which can liken whiplash,
- the barriers including financial, IT, lack of admin, huge caseloads, mismatch of timelines etc
- the role of preventative and community-based approaches,
- the value of appreciation and feeling seen, & SO so much more (beyond a tweet).  
And I am not just talking about a review for review’s sake or paper that collects dust or is discounted or minimised.

This would be a learning collaborative which draws on the existing literature and the multi-disciplinary evidence base (there are some great papers and work out there and of

course more needed); as well as incorporating on the ground experience and tangible real-world applications. And to then link this not only into what happened & why it might have happened but also importantly into why do these changes not get incorporated, or if they do they don't stick once known or identified. And we find ourselves in Groundhog Day.



Recommendations are just recommendations if they are not done or if they are not possible or realistic. Or there are too many barriers in place to block them. So often you can read serious case reviews (of which I've read hundreds) and it is like they have been copied and pasted! And we see the same patterns, themes, dilemmas occurring over and over again. "Only a fool keeps on doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results". This fits w Sandy blooms concept around "organisational learning disabilities" and organisational amnesia amongst so many other things which are beyond a tweet (course so many more nuances). Or equally with Desmond tutus quote "We need to stop just pulling people out of the river and rather go upstream and find out why they are falling in".

It is so much more than just saying "better communication" or "siloe working". And importantly learning doesn't happen through blaming, shaming or scapegoating or trying to reduce complexity to a simple explanation. Reviews need to model the model and treat people how you want to teach them. It should be about learning and reflecting instead of reacting. We need to be curious instead of furious- and as the trauma informed philosophical shift says, "it is not what is wrong with you but what happened to you- but also extending this lens to what has happened to us?"



Then once this is done to meaningfully launch, disseminate, & infuse the information. This is also not a one-off training but an embedded process which requires repetition, creativity, and muscle memory. It is about moving from knowing to doing to being and feeling.