



# Supporting people who have experienced trauma



***Many people have experienced trauma in different ways.***

***It's important to know how this affects them, so you can be helpful to them through their healing journey.***

***Unresolved trauma can have continued intergenerational impacts on people and community today.***

***Remember: One of the most powerful influences for healing is positive relationships with others.***

## **Main things to know about trauma**

- Trauma can impact a person's mind, body and spirit.
- Trauma survivors often feel scared and withdrawn. Small things (eg: a sound, smell, word or touch) may trigger a reaction in the person.
- Effects of trauma can continue long after the event has happened, and this can often impact on everyday functioning.
- Trauma is strongly linked with mental health and alcohol and other drug issues, and many of the risky behaviours we see in people may be ways of coping with their pain.

# It takes time to heal so patience and understanding is important

## If you are supporting someone:

- Be aware of what trauma is and understand how it impacts on a person.
- It's important to:
  - » Build trust and safety by acknowledging their pain and respecting their story
  - » Work with the person, by empowering them to have choice
  - » Recognise their strengths (cultural strengths); use this to help them heal. Cultural strengths can include being good at creating art, singing songs, dancing, telling stories, cooking, caring for Country and/or hunting and gathering.

## It is important to know:

- 'Trauma informed' involves acknowledging, believing and knowing how to respond to a person's story.
- Regardless of our roles, if we understand the impact of trauma, we can make a positive difference.
- Remember emotional and/or physical pain can make people irritable, anxious and aggressive.
- The survivor is not responsible in any way for what has been done to them.
- Believing and supporting any myths or 'blame the victim' attitudes that exist in the community can impact the survivor in a bad way.
- The survivor may take time to stabilise - be patient.



## Remember

*Something as small as saying 'I'm sorry that has happened to you' can help.*

### Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC)

**Metropolitan area:** A free 24-hr emergency service providing medical and counselling services for people who have experienced a recent (within 14 days) sexual assault, and counselling services for any form of unwanted sexual contact that has happened in the past for all genders ages 13 years and above.

**Regional area:** Advice and education and training can be provided to services across the state of Western Australia.

Call SARC on (08) 6458 1828 or Freecall 1800 199 888.

Email SARC Education and Training on [SARCTraining@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:SARCTraining@health.wa.gov.au)

### Yorgum Healing Services

Disability counselling, intensive family support and National Redress services

Call 1800 469 371

### 13 Yarn

The first national crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping, 24hrs/7 days a week

Call 139 276 (13YARN)

### WA Police

To report a sexual assault:

Go to your local **police station**.

Call **131 444**

Go online **Safe2Say.com.au**

### Non emergencies

Police assistance and reporting

**Call 131 444**

Emergency

**Call 000**

Police, Fire, Ambulance