



## **Trauma Informed Plymouth Network – Code of Ethics**

The Trauma Informed Plymouth Network Code of Ethics is one of the ways we put our Network's trauma informed values into practice. It recognises that everything we do in connection to the Network will be, and should be, measured against the highest possible standards of ethical conduct and our own aspirations to be a trauma informed and shame sensitive community. Our commitment to the highest standards helps us to embody the values enshrined within our Plymouth Trauma Lens, be respectful and caring of those who have experienced trauma and adversity, provide a safe space for Network members to connect and learn together reflectively, and enable us to attract new members to the Network community. Enabling each other to feel safe, be safe and enjoy trusted and respectful relationships has been key to our success and something we need to always consider.

Please read this Code of Ethics and our Plymouth Trauma Lens values and embrace both in spirit and letter, always bearing in mind that each of us has a personal responsibility to encourage other Network members to incorporate the principles of the Code and values into our work. The Network has always been a place where respectful challenge is embraced, indeed it's how we learn together and constantly shape our understanding of what being trauma informed and shame sensitive means. If you have a question or ever think that one of your fellow Network members, directors, or the Network as a whole may be falling short of our commitment, don't be silent. We want – and need – to hear from you.

### **Who Must Follow Our Code?**

We expect all Trauma Informed Plymouth Network members, Community Interest Company (CIC) director's and anyone holding an office or role assigned to support the CIC to know and aspire to follow the Code. This includes those engaged in any branch of the Network. Breaches of the Code will elicit an enquiry aimed at reflection and learning but could also result in remedial action.

the Code. This includes those engaged in any sub-branch of the Network. Failure to do so will entail an enquiry into the ethical breach and could result in remedial action. While this is not something that will be considered lightly, serious breaches of the Code could lead to Network membership, a CIC director's role, or any other assigned Network role being reconsidered. Moreover, while the Code is specifically written for Network members and CIC director's, we expect anyone who is temporarily assigned to perform work or services for the Network, or who engage with the Network at our invitation, to follow the Code in connection with their work or engagement with us. Failure of a covered service provider to follow the Code could result in their relationship with the Network being concluded.

### **What If I Have a Code-Related Question or Concern?**

There is a director assigned as the Ethics lead for the Network. If you have a question or concern, please contact this director or the Network coordinator to share your concern. If it



makes you feel safer or more confident in highlighting an issue, then please feel free to ask another member to raise the concern on your behalf.

## **Our Commitment to all Network Members and Others we Encounter**

The Trauma Informed Plymouth Network is an open network which embraces participation from all of its members. The Network is an independent collaborative space that is neither mandated, controlled, nor belongs to any specific city voluntary, statutory, or commercial partnership system. The Network may be invited to be represented and participate within these as a trusted stakeholder, and Network members may happen to participate and influence these as part of their own professional roles. However, the Network's integrity and independence is something we value, and therefore no part of the Network will be used as a wider city partnership system delivery, task and finish or sub-group unless it is expressly agreed by the Network directors. As a place where we reflect and learn collaboratively together and where we respect the views of our members, the Network is also a politically neutral space and will not endorse or promote any specific political party, group, or interest.

Members value the Network because we offer a safe, kind, and trusted space for conversation, connection, and reflective learning. We hold ourselves to our trauma lens values in how we treat members and others we connect with. Keeping the following principles in mind will help us to maintain that high standard:

### **1. The Trauma Lens Values**

**Safe** – We prioritise emotional and psychological safety as a foundation for positive relationships and understanding the impact of shame for those affected by trauma and adversity. We endeavour to make people feel safe in all our Network activity.

**Person Centred** – We see the person in each and every interaction and seek to build upon the strengths each person brings to the Network, ensuring they have a voice, and that their lived experience is recognised and valued.

**Kind** – We avoid judgement and understand that shaming and blaming language can damage emotional safety and harm relationships. When we are required to challenge others or hold them to account, we will do so with compassion and with a view to maintaining positive relationships.

**Collaborative** – We work together for the best possible outcome, being open when something hasn't worked and being reflective in how we can be better together.

**Empowering** – We 'dare to try' to enact cultural change, seeking to make a difference and be the change we want to see.



## **2. Valuing Lived Experience**

From its inception the lived experience of trauma and adversity has been at the heart of the Trauma Informed Plymouth Network. Many of our members have direct, or vicarious experiences of harm and the Network is a place where these experiences can be shared safely and responded to appropriately, kindly and in a shame sensitive manner. It is these experiences that so often shape the strength and creativity of our Network.

Lived experience, quite rightly, is taking a more central role in informing the development of trauma informed approaches. However, the developing interest in how trauma impacts upon an individual's outcomes, and an expanding array of organisations seeking to elicit the views and contribution of individuals with lived experiences to shape the future development of their services carries some risk. The potential for those with lived experience to become exploited or further harmed through inappropriate, ill-considered, or less empathetic interactions should always be considered. This risk can apply to the actions of the Network itself and its membership as much as the risk from outside agencies.

The Network is committed to nurturing, encouraging, and giving a voice to lived experience. The Lived Experience sub-branch of the Network is an important part of this commitment and will help the Network to ensure it's keeping to its own values. Members are encouraged to contact the Network coordinator should they wish to join the Lived Experience group.

## **3. Integrity**

Our Network reputation is that we are safe, kind, and trustworthy. Our integrity is our most valuable asset, and it is up to all of us to make sure that we continually earn that trust. All our communications and other interactions with our Network members and others who encounter the Network should be directed to maintaining and increasing their trust in us.

## **4. Privacy & Security**

The Network does not hold or retain on record any sensitive personal data in relation to its membership. However Network members and at times others, do sometimes share their stories and as result entrust us with their personal information. This can include their lived experience of trauma and adversity. Preserving that trust requires that each of us respect and protect the privacy, sensitivity, and security of that information. The Network does utilise open calendar invitations for meetings and events that does necessitate the sharing of email addresses to support connection between members and aid the flow of information. However, we take the private, personal, and sensitive information of our members seriously and will always seek to



protect this information from any inappropriate or unauthorised access or sharing. All members have a role in respecting the privacy of other members and have an ethical responsibility to protect both the personal information and the lived experience that is expressed within the Network.

Network meetings and reflective learning sessions are increasingly online events. At times these sessions will be recorded to enable other members to access the learning. There is a possibility that personal experience may be shared in these discussions, and we ask that all members do not make their own recordings of meetings or share Network recordings inappropriately.

## **5. Learning from Feedback**

Part of being reflective and honest is being responsive to feedback. We value and embrace the feedback from our members and others who connect to the Network. We take pride in responding to communications from our members, whether questions, problems, or compliments. If something is broken, we want to fix it.

## **6. Take Action**

Any time you feel Network members aren't being well-served, please let someone within the Network know about it. We don't always get things right even when we act with the best of intentions. Continually improving how we recognise and respond to trauma involves all of us, and we're proud that Network members are empowered to take the initiative to step forward when the interests of the Network is at stake.

## **7. Equality and Diversity**

The Network is committed to preventing unlawful discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, colour, religion, national origin, pregnancy status, sex, gender identity, age, marital status, mental or physical disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics protected by law. However as a Network we seek to go beyond any legal duty and seek to make the Network a safe space that embraces difference and is inclusive and welcoming to all. We aim to challenge discrimination based on people's experience or trauma and adversity, understanding that these experiences are often misunderstood, misrepresented, or ignored and can also lead to a lack of fairness, inappropriate responses, people facing disadvantage, or social injustice.

## **8. Harassment, Discrimination, and Bullying**

The network prohibits discrimination, harassment and bullying in any form – verbal, physical, or visual. If you believe you've been bullied, harassed, or discriminated against by anyone within the Network, or by a person connected to the Trauma



Informed Network Plymouth CIC, we strongly encourage you to immediately report the incident to the Network coordinator, a CIC Director or to a person holding an office or role assigned to support the CiC. The Network Directors will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaints and take appropriate action.

## **9. Conflicts of Interest**

The Trauma Informed Plymouth Network is a CiC that welcomes a diverse and open membership including those representing business interests that may promote and sell products and services. However, the Network will not endorse any business or its sold services and products, and members should not do so by or on behalf of the Network. The exception is where the Network chooses to enter into a formal partnership relationship with a service provider from the statutory, community, voluntary or private sector that helps to promote the Core Values and work of the Network.

If you feel you are in a position where there are competing loyalties between your role as a Network member and a business interest that may create a conflict of interest, then please bring the matter to the attention of the director Network coordinator or a CiC director.

## **10. Intellectual Property**

As a reflective learning community the Network continues to review and reflect upon the emerging evidence regarding trauma informed approaches & Adverse Childhood Experiences. This means we learn from others and often access resources and tools that are the intellectual property of other people and organisations. Where we use such resources, we will always reference them to ensure the intellectual property owner receives the proper acknowledgement of their work. In the same way resources produced and developed within the Network remain the intellectual property of the Trauma Informed Network CiC and should be properly referenced as belonging to the Network, or the specific named members who have developed the resources.

Members must respect all copyright and other intellectual property laws, including laws governing the fair use of copyrights, trademarks, and brands, including those owned by the Network.

## **11. Ethical Research**

As a learning Network we seek to be supportive of those wishing to access the Network membership and Network resources to develop new learning and understanding around trauma informed practice. In particular, we welcome academic enquiry and are keen to share the Plymouth trauma informed journey with passionate and ethical researchers who are seeking to develop new insight in the field of trauma.



However, as a Network built on the foundations of the lived experience of trauma, we are committed to ensuring our Network members feel safe when research seeks to connect to their lived experience. Any researcher wishing to work with the network membership in this regard needs to discuss their research proposal and methodology with the Network coordinator and it must be approved by the CiC board of directors. The appropriate ethics approval from the relevant academic body will need to be authorised. Where researchers seek to connect with our member's lived experience, they will need to demonstrate how they will:

- Manage the informed consent of member's participating in the research.
- Manage anonymity and confidentiality.
- Protect member's from harm, specifically in relation to causing further trauma or through re-traumatizing them by re-connecting them to previous harmful events.
- Manage data storage, data retention and data sharing, particularly in relation to sensitive, personal data.

Where concerns arise regarding the conduct of any person or body conducting research that are at odds with our Network values, the Network CiC board of directors reserve the right to ask for a meeting with the appropriate lead researcher to discuss these concerns. If the concerns cannot be resolved satisfactorily then Network CiC board of directors reserve the right to end the research collaboration as not being in the best interests of the Network and its members.

## **12. Representing the Network**

Since its inception the Network has valued its autonomy and its integrity, choosing to work alongside, but remaining fully independent from other city agencies, services, businesses, or partnership systems. This independence is important as it enables us to retain an absolute focus on our values, nurture, and safeguard those with lived experience, and empower an inclusive and diverse Network membership that welcomes everybody, even those who are not part of the 'system'.

The establishment of the Network CiC has been enacted with the precise purpose of protecting the integrity and independence of the Network. While it will allow the Network to develop and expand, it's not about making the Network a business or a corporation, but rather ensuring there is effective management and governance of the Network to ensure it continues to work in the best interest of all of its members. The CiC directors are focused on maintaining the standards and values of the Network while addressing its longer-term sustainability in order to continue to offer members the opportunities to encounter new learning and reflection and work together to make Plymouth a more trauma responsive city.

Members have always been encouraged to ‘*be the change we want to see*’ and represent the Network and its values wherever the opportunity might rise. This sense of a shared purpose and a feeling of empowerment has been a key foundation of the Network journey to date. An active, passionate, and committed Network membership is something we continue to value and aspire to and it’s only by coming together that we will achieve our aims. However, we do ask that members take care in speaking on behalf of the Network as there is a risk that even the most well intended actions could compromise the Network’s values and ethical position. This is particularly relevant if you’re asked to endorse a product, business interest, or something else on behalf of the Network, support a funding application as a representative of the Network, or indeed represent the Network at a formal event, conference, or seminar. Where such situations arise, or wherever Network members need support, then please seek further advice from the Network coordinator, or a CiC director.

**The Trauma Informed Plymouth Trauma Lens**

