

Trauma informed practice

Leading the way on trauma informed practice

"This is a game changer, it changes the way we do our business. It lit up light bulbs for me." Mental Health Nurse

Research tells us that the more severe and prolonged the trauma a person undergoes, the more severe the psychological and physical health consequences.

The Inner Gippsland Area Partnership developed a 'Putting trauma-informed practice on the map' taskforce, headed by Cayte Hoppner, who is a member of the Leadership Group and Director of Mental Health at Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH). Its first major work has been to develop and trial a whole-of-agency approach to trauma-informed training across the hospital's mental health services.

This pioneering program on trauma-informed practice has been rolled out to nearly 300 staff members of the LRH mental health services – from clinicians to cleaners – at 13 sites across a 40,000 square kilometre area. Staff in multiple disciplines and roles have reported its profound impact on the way that they and their teams now work with consumers seeking mental health support, saying it has allowed them to:

- understand how childhood trauma impacts mentally, physically and biologically throughout someone's life
- be part of building a trauma-informed community
- have a shared understanding to guide their practice, wherever in the system they work.

"It's changed the way I worked. I felt I was always aware that some of our clients had very stressful and traumatic backgrounds, but it made it much clearer, helped me empathise more. Even though we are not connected clinically, we are connected on a human, day-to-day basis and I felt it was really helpful." Administration Assistant

From that work, we are now:

- planning to share the trauma informed approach and training across universal and specialist services, including schools and GPs.
- developing a trauma informed course curriculum for all relevant undergraduate programs at Federation University.

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