Welcome to the Centre for Excellence in Community Investment conference 2025

Enabling a Trauma Informed and ABCD Approach

Sanctuary

affordable homes, sustainable communities

ABCD and Trauma Informed Practice

Anthony Morrow, Community Connector Manager

Marie-Claire Wattison, Head of Community Investment

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Context

Sanctuary's Theory of Change

Impact

A resilient community is one with the resources, capacity, and confidence to support each other, learn and adapt through change to emerge strong.

Outcomes

Community Connection is people supporting a healthy/thriving community and individual aspirations through building relationships and sharing local knowledge and skills. A connected community has confidence, shared goals and support to realise these.

Individual-level

Breaking cycles of poverty by developing individual community members':

- Ability to affect change in their local area
- Employability and employment
- Digital and financial literacy
- Health and wellbeing

Place-level

Strengthening collective ownership over the local area, supporting:

- A stronger local economy with better employment opportunities
- Higher quality education and training pathways
- Safer and more welcoming public spaces

Sanctuary-level

Sanctuary is better embedded in communities, with social purpose integrated across its work. This builds the profile of social housing providers as an embedded form of community support and catalyst for social change.

Enablers

Understanding

Understanding what the community has
Engaging and co-creating with communities
Gaining trust by showing not telling
Being empathetic
Being relatable, reaching people at their level
Being agile, adaptable, and flexible

Mediating

Brokering relationships with others
Working with the local authority to promote understanding of the local community and what they want at a grassroots level
Supporting community members and groups to connect and collaborate
Keeping outside organisations informed about community members' priorities
Building relationships with other parts of the system/influencing the system

Supporting

Listening
Supporting confidence-building
Being inclusive to all
Managing expectations
Being open and honest
Raising the profile of smaller community groups

Activities

Supporting the community and place

Strengthening connections between residents and place
Creating spaces which benefit residents and the environment
Supporting groups to build capacity
Strength-based approaches to community development

Improving residents' lives

Building life skills (e.g., health, relationships, employment)
Supporting wellbeing
Discovering and sharing aspirations
Accessing food and essentials (cost-of-living response)

Community Assets

Spaces – physical and shared purpose

Community partners

The knowledge and understanding of community members

Sustainable Communities staff

The resilience of individual community members

Asset Based Community Development

Asset Based Community Development



ABCD in a Housing Context

- Empowerment
- From problems to possibilities
- Collaborative action
- Sustainability
- Resilience

A connection between ABCD and practical application is **Mattering…**

The Power of Mattering

"For people to feel like what they do matters, they first have to feel like they matter"

Zach Mercurio – The Power of Mattering

Everyone shares at least four unique gifts with us daily:

1. Strengths: What someone loves and is good at. Notice what energizes them or what others consistently seek them out for.

2. Purpose: The unique impact a person makes. Ask yourself: What's lost when they're gone? What's better because they're here?

3. Perspective: The viewpoint that only they can offer based on their life or work experience. What insights do they see that others might miss?

4. Wisdom: What only they have learned. What can they teach you or the team that no one else can?

Finally, name what you see. Because when you do, they start to see it too.



Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful events occurring in childhood including:

- domestic violence

- parental abandonment through separation or divorce

- a parent with a mental health condition

- being the victim of abuse (physical, sexual and/or emotional)

- being the victim of neglect (physical and emotional)

- a member of the household being in prison

- growing up in a household in which there are adults experiencing alcohol and drug use problems

- Overview - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) - Early years and young people - Population health - Public Health Scotland

Traumatic Events

- *"An event, a series of events or a set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being."*

What are ACEs?

Relationship between early childhood trauma and health and well-being problems later in life.

Source: World Health Organization





ACEs Summary Video

- How does this make you feel?
- Do you recognise how this might apply to the customers/tenants/communities that you work with/in?
- Any other thoughts?

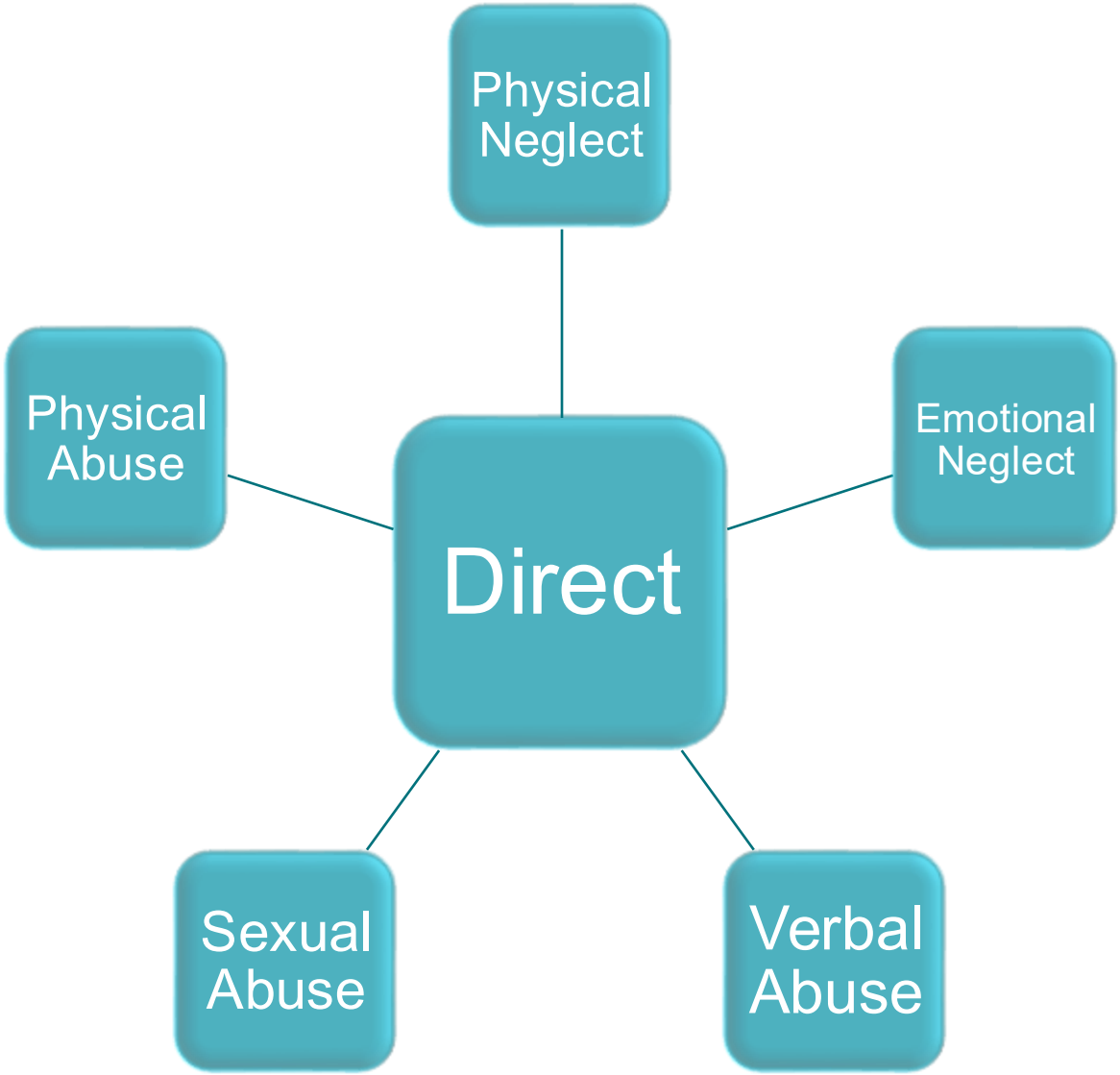


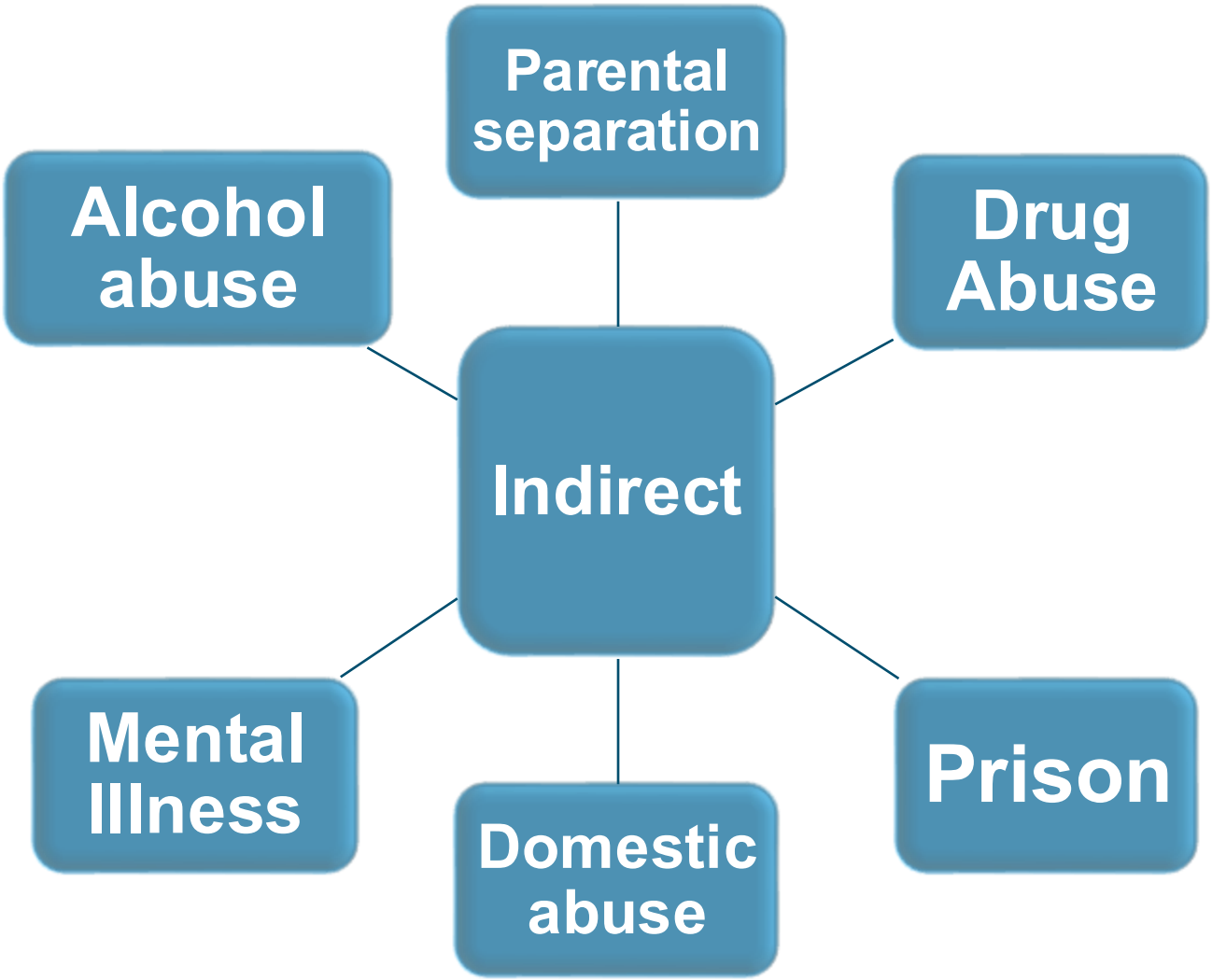
ACEs Summary Video

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Trauma and its effects

- Very personal and prevalent across the population
- Begin to look at root causes, not simply deal with symptoms
- What are the challenges in Housing that take up most time/effort?
  - Arrears, non-engagement, ASB
- Lack of engagement might not be about us
- Every interaction is the chance for an intervention
- Relationships are the answer – connection is key, trust is essential
- What is the role of Community Investment in supporting resilient communities where people can thrive?


Physical Neglect
Physical Abuse
Direct
Emotional Neglect
Sexual Abuse
Verbal Abuse


Parental separation
Alcohol abuse
Drug Abuse
Indirect
Mental Illness
Domestic abuse
Prison

Key Learning – Hope!

- Research has found that a relationship with one trusted adult during childhood can mitigate the impacts of ACEs on mental and physical wellbeing

- “Relationships are the antidote to trauma”

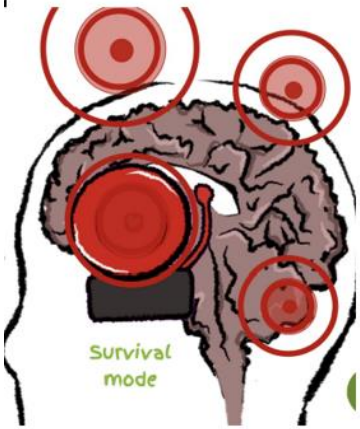


What is “Trauma Informed”?



Window of Tolerance

Trauma and the brain



What does this mean for you?

Under threat, our brains go into survival mode, highly attuned to danger and supporting us to **fight, run away or freeze** in order to survive.

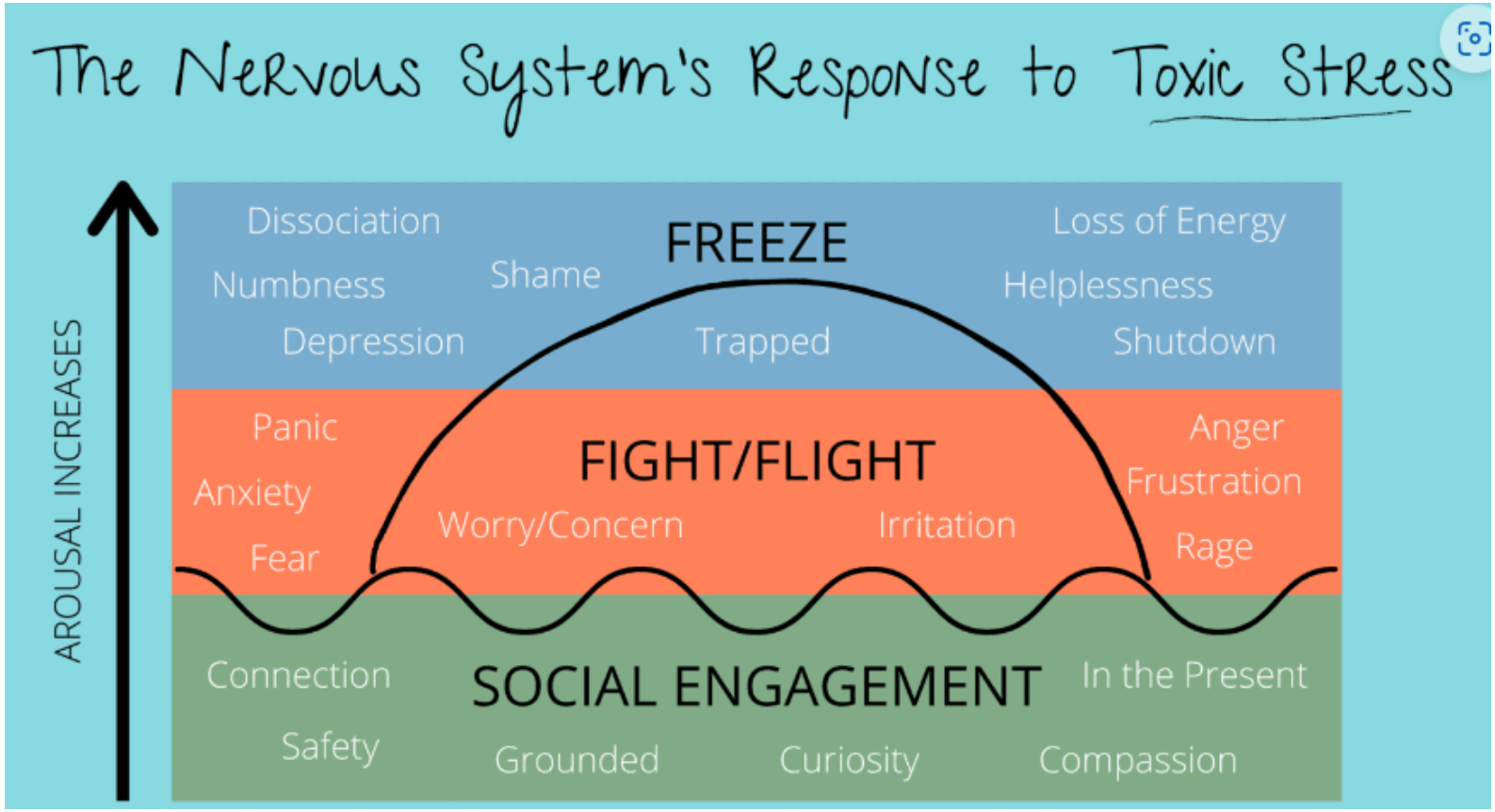
Anything else becomes irrelevant.

When we experience traumatic events that are unpredictable **over and over again**, in order to survive, our brains become highly attuned to danger. A bit like an overly sensitive fire alarm.

Any tiny reminder of the situation in which the trauma occurred can trigger the brain into 'survival mode'. Some people call this 'going limbic'.

Even when the danger has gone, our brains remain highly focused on danger, and the sense of fear remains, at the expense of everything else.

Survival Responses – needed, but not 24/7



What can we do?

- We can’t make trauma disappear and we aren’t therapeutic services
- We can reflect on the impact on us personally
- We can look after our staff
- We can build solidarity with tenants and communities
- It is our *response* to the impact of trauma where we can have an effect
- How we manage/mitigate trauma or re-traumatisation also matters

Staff Feedback

I don't want to socialise when I get home

There's no relent in it – no time to recuperate. It has really affected my health

I carry emotions back home, it happens often. It really effects my home life

I've learned to turn myself off and not care. It's hard to do a good job when you feel like that

There's loads happening about the customer but what about us?

I'm passionate about what I do… I don't feel safe

How Trauma Can Affect Your Window Of Tolerance

HYPERAROUSAL

Anxious, Angry, Out of Control, Overwhelmed
Your body wants to fight or run away.
It's not something you choose – these reactions just take over.



WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

When you are in your Window of Tolerance, you feel like you can deal with whatever's happening in your life. You might feel stress or pressure, but it doesn't bother you too much. This is the ideal place to be.



When stress and trauma shrink your window of tolerance, it doesn't take much to throw you off balance.



Working with a practitioner can help expand your window of tolerance so that you are more able to cope with challenges.





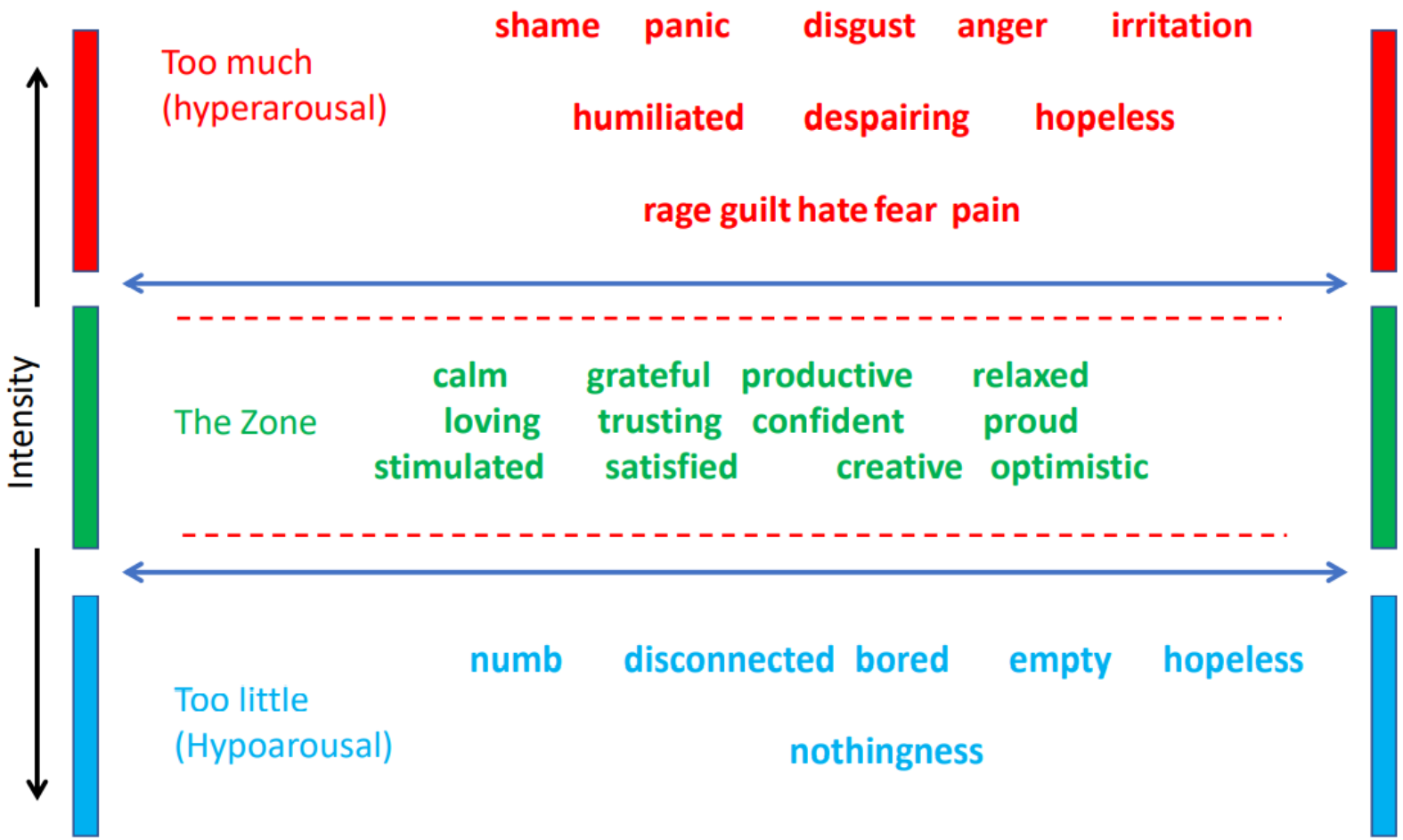
HYPOAROUSAL

Spacy, Zoned Out, Numb, Frozen
Your body wants to shut down.
It's not something you choose – these reactions just take over.

nicabm

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Feelings in different zones



Credit to NHS Fife for this slide

Personal Reflection

- Can you think about a time in work where you were in the red or blue zones?
- What was happening, what was the context?
- How did it feel?
- How did it affect your ability to do your job the way you want to?
- What helped?

Typical example

Affect regulation – Anxiety/fear – Depression/sadness – Anger – Shame – Feeling out of control of emotions – Emotional rollercoaster	**Relationship difficulties** – Others as untrustworthy – Others as dangerous – Others as rescuing	**Social consequences** – Educational impact – Occupational impact
View of self – Feeling of self blame – Shame – Disgust – Inferior	**PTSD difficulties** – Flashbacks/Nightmares – Hypervigilance – Numbing – Dissociation	**Ways of coping** – Substance misuse – Self harm – Dissociation – Eating problems
Physical impact – Pain – Somatic problems	**Others** – Psychosis – Personality disorders – Sleep difficulties	

Vicarious Trauma

- Compassion Fatigue
- Burnout

Is the impact of the job on staff actively considered?

Reflections for an organisation

- Who do staff work with?
- What do they see?
- What do they hear?
- What do they experience?
- What things do they have to do?

What is normalised that isn't normal?

Impact

9 posts across Scotland – Glasgow, Cumbernauld, Aberdeen/shire. Model replicated in England

800+ tenancies supported to date

Real focus on staff well-being – better retention

Impacted rent arrears positively; better relationships with HM; addressed complex issues with tenancies

Greater range of supports, partners, referrals

Prevention of costs to the organisation

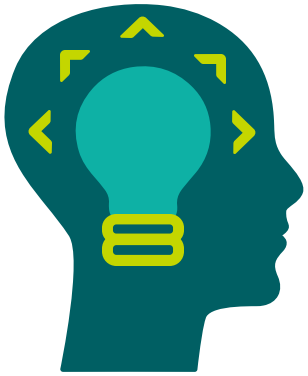
Other HAs using model



What happens if we don’t do anything about this?


Poor outcomes
are not
inevitable
Tina Hendry

Questions or comments?



Anthony.Morrow@sanctuary.co.uk
MarieClaire.Wattison@sanctuary.co.uk