

Emergency Services Foundation

# Emerging trends in workplace wellbeing

Presented by Professor Jane Burns

Tuesday 29 March 2022

# Emerging trends in workplace wellbeing

About the speaker



**Professor Jane Burns**

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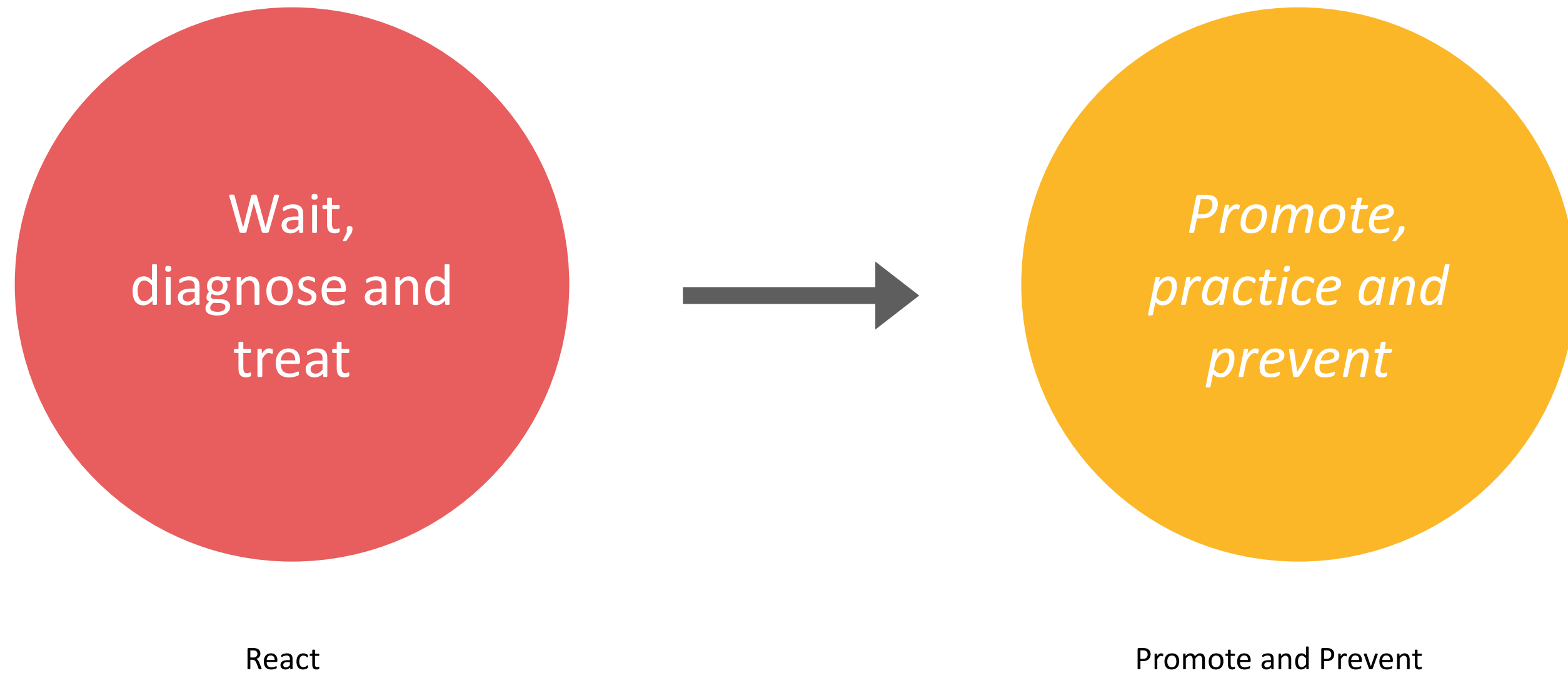
Chair Open Arms and Swiss8, NED, National  
Disability Insurance Agency

“I Love the intersection of passion and purpose. Clarity provides an opportunity to work with great people and partners with one end goal - to create safe, well and productive workplaces.”

**CLARITY+**  
**GROUP**



## We have choices



**What impact has the pandemic had on your mental health?**



Source: Monique Shoesmith supplied to ABC News

# The US Worker Edition Mental Health Index

## Mental Health Index

U.S. Worker Edition — Q4 2021 Update

PTSD, Depression and Addiction Soar Amid Skyrocketing Cases of Omicron





# State of mental health among working Americans

Risk of PTSD and other conditions soars

136%

Greater risk of PTSD in December 2021 vs. pre-pandemic.

63%

Greater risk of General Anxiety Disorder in December 2021 vs. pre-pandemic.

Men show signs of struggling to cope

80%

Greater risk of addiction than 3 months ago.

162%

Greater risk of social anxiety disorder than 3 months ago.

## What is a psychologically safe workplace?

What challenges (systemic, pandemic, crisis response due to disasters) do you see in the workplace?



Source: Emergency Services Foundation

Psychological safety...

fostering a climate of respect, trust, and openness in which people can raise concerns and suggestions without fear of reprisal.

In psychologically *safe* teams, team members feel accepted and respected.



# Natural disasters and mental health



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# Welcome to the Disaster Mental Health Hub

Information, resources and training for professionals who support individuals and communities experiencing the mental health impacts of disasters.



## Prepare

[Find out more →](#)



## Respond

[Find out more →](#)



## Recover

[Find out more →](#)

**Information, resources and training programs that will help you to support the mental health needs of individuals and communities before, during and after a disaster.**



# What is Moral Injury? What is Burn Out?

What support is in place to help you manage?

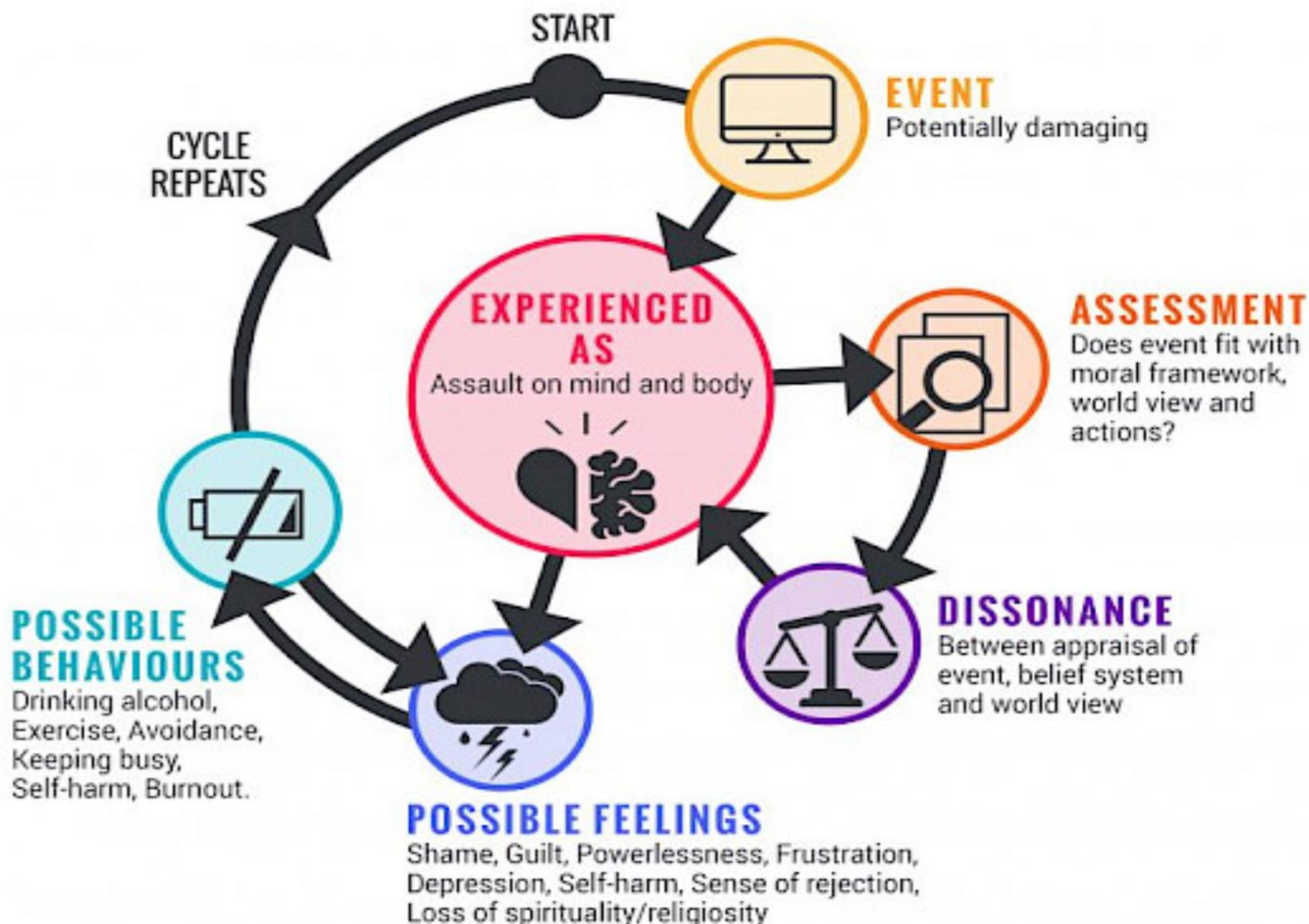


Source: Emergency Services Foundation



# MORAL INJURY

"Perpetrating, failing to prevent, or bearing witness to acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations may be deleterious in the long term, emotionally, psychologically, behaviorally, spiritually, and socially." (Litz et al., 2009)



## NARRATIVE

- STAGE ONE**  
I am watching media footage of abused children as part of my job
- STAGE TWO**  
It hurts me because I can't protect these children
- STAGE THREE**  
I am a police officer; it is my role to be able to protect these children
- STAGE FOUR**  
I want to protect them; I should be protecting them yet I am unable to do so
- STAGE FIVE**  
I know what is right but cannot do it
- STAGE SIX**  
I feel some, or all, of these things
- STAGE SEVEN**  
I may behave in some of these ways



**Is it safe to speak up about moral injury,  
workload, stress and mental health?**



Source: CFA Victoria

**Values**  
**Ethical Decision Making**  
**Organizational betrayal**  
**Spirituality**

# Thank you!

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# What can organisations do?

- Acknowledge the inherent moral stressors for front line responders during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Promote a supportive culture within the workplace and arrange access to a range of support services for staff.
- Recognise the critical role of informal and volunteer service providers, and ensure sufficient resources to support the health and safety of these providers.
- Rotate staff between high and low stress roles.
- Establish evidence-based policies to guide ethically difficult decisions such as the allocation of scarce resources.
- Remove difficult ethical decisions from frontline workers.
- Arrange rosters for shift workers to follow the clock with a cycle of morning to afternoon to evening shifts.

# What can team leaders do?

- Provide strong leadership and establish cohesive teams with high morale.
- Be prepared to discuss moral and ethical challenges.
- Help team members make meaning of moral stressors.
- Model positive coping and encourage self-care and help-seeking as required.
- Celebrate successes – however small they may be.
- Arrange regular check-ins with staff to monitor wellbeing.
- Facilitate referral for further support or counselling if required.



# What can individuals do?

- Access psychoeducational material about moral stressors and moral injury.
- Undertake stress reduction activities such as relaxation therapy, mindfulness, or meditation.
- Attend to self-care through eating well, exercising, maintaining social connections, and getting sufficient rest.
- Support each other as colleagues who understand shared experiences.
- Seek professional support if you are feeling distressed or troubled by your experiences

# Trauma Informed Care

## Trauma-informed care in mental health services across NSW

A framework for change

**Trauma-informed care changes the question from ‘what is wrong with you?’ to ‘what has happened to you?’.**

Trauma is defined as: “an event, a series of events or a set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful and has lasting adverse effects on a person’s mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being”.<sup>1</sup> There is a high prevalence of trauma in the lives of people accessing mental health services.

Trauma-informed care is based on the principles of safety, choice, collaboration, trust and empowerment.<sup>2</sup> It emphasises safety and minimises re-traumatisation for both service providers and people accessing services.

Trauma-informed care is associated with:

- improved patient-reported outcomes and coping skills
- improved safety and fewer injuries for staff
- increased rates of discharge to lower level of care
- decreased use of seclusion and restraint
- decrease in presenting problems
- improved symptoms with shorter length of stay.

### Trauma-informed care

Trauma-informed care or trauma-informed care and practice is a strengths-based approach that is responsive to the impact of trauma. It emphasises physical, psychological and emotional safety for both survivors of trauma and service providers. Trauma-informed care creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. It is grounded in an understanding of the neurological, biological, psychological and social effects of trauma, and recognises the high prevalence of these experiences for people who access mental health services.

Some experts in NSW prefer the term ‘trauma-informed care and practice’. This framework uses the term ‘trauma-informed care’ as it is the predominant terminology used in the literature.

### How can this framework be used?

The intention of this document is to support the implementation of trauma-informed care in mental health services across NSW. The framework identifies what good practice looks like for mental health systems, services and staff, and includes related actions.

