



TRAUMA INFORMED TOOLS FOR THERAPISTS

6 tools to help create a trauma informed environment for your clients

ACTIVE LISTENING: We have two ears, two eyes and only one mouth. Honour the 4:1 ratio by listening attentively to the spoken word and the meaning, and watching for emotional expressions and non-verbal responses. Clients want to be witnessed, listened to and most importantly understood. **ACTION:** Listen in an unconditional way. Allow the narrative to unfold and resist the urge to provide the answers – they will come when you ask the right questions.

MINDFULNESS: Mindfulness is the practice of being aware of your own experience and cultivating an attitude of reflection rather than reaction. The more you're able to stay present in that experience, the more you'll be able to connect with, listen to and respond appropriately to your clients. **ACTION:** Mindful starts in the moment. Breathe with mindful intention, use your breath like an anchor on a ship – it will keep you in the same place (the present) and to stop your mind from drifting off course.

BEGINNERS MIND: Clients often arrive for therapy with the belief that professionals aren't interested in their lives or that they're not worth the effort. **ACTION:** Adopt a beginners mind and ask your client about their life and interests. Become curious about how their experiences can support their journey to health, freedom and happiness.

EMPATHY: Practice empathy by stepping into the shoes of your clients. Visualise and feel what it's like to be him or her. Hold strong and really *feel* it. **ACTION:** Doing this before client meetings will help build rapport and cultivate great professional relationships.

COMPASSION: Compassion is the desire to understand and alleviate pain and suffering. When clients know you are coming from a place of compassion rather than you're just doing your job, they will feel more connected to you, trust you and be more open to working with you. **ACTION:** Spend a few minutes every morning visualising your clients and send them compassion, this is a great way to set yourself up for a successful client day.

SELF DISCLOSURE: Our clients need to know that we are authentic and real. Self disclosure is the practice of revealing personal information to build empowering relationships. When our clients know that we have history and experience we add balance and integrity to the relationship. **ACTION:** Plan in advance what you're willing to share. Write down what you're happy to disclose to your clients. Now write down what you're not comfortable disclosing. Remember if something surfaces during this exercise you can give it some breathing space at your next supervision session.