

# **Best practices for Frontline staff in Cross Sectoral Collaborations to become Trauma Informed Workers**

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# Agenda

A. Welcome and Introduction.

Introduction to VAST

**1. VAST and Trauma Informed Practice**

**2. Best Practices for Working with Refugees and Survivors of Trauma**

**3 Best Practices in Referral Processes (Scenario).**

**4-5. Trauma Informed Questions (Sector Based)**

**6. Managing Stress & Self Care Categories**

B. Resources

C. Additional Resources

D. Contact Details



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# VAST and Trauma Informed Practice

- Trauma Informed Practice:
  - **Trauma-informed work = teamwork**
  - **Healing happens in a community**
  - **Focus on client's strengths, services in clients mother tongue or use interpretation.**
  - **Commitment to Human Rights and Social Justice**

## Becoming Trauma Informed Workers

Know that when clients feel safe, they are better able to engage

- **Understand that trauma impacts client's brain, body and behaviours (especially with survivors of torture)**
- **Acknowledge that clients come with pre-existing resources.**
- **Build Rapport through Trauma informed Interviewing.**

# Best Practices for Working with Refugees and Survivors of Torture

- **Understand that all Refugees are Survivors of Trauma but not all experience torture.**
- **Recognize Normal responses to Stress vs. Serious dysfunction – Post Traumatic Stress (PTS): is not the same as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (DSM5).**
- **Avoid stereotyping by expecting individual differences.** Encourage clients to teach you about their values, beliefs and customs.
- **Observe the defense mechanisms** clients may be employing as a way to **protect themselves vs saying this client is challenging, difficult or resistant.**
- **Understand client coping styles: Emotion focused(lessen emotional distress vs Problem focused (alter or manage the problem)**
- **Recognize priorities: Client satisfaction vs Practitioner satisfaction**

Shebib, B. (2011). Choices: interviewing and counselling skills for Canadians, Fourth Edition. Pearson.



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# Best Practices in Referral Process (Scenario)

- T has **just moved to Canada** their dream is to become **a nurse**.
  - T needs to do more school to meet the **Canadian requirements**.
  - Some people tell T it is going to be **“too hard and expensive.”** They **say just find any job at least you can make some money”**.
  - T has been **sending out their resume for jobs but no success**.
  - T has a **2-year-old** and is trying to get things organized to **bring her to Canada**.
  - T was informed by a sister in their home country that their **only brother is really sick** and will need surgery which is expensive.
  - T is currently **not working** and cannot help to pay the cost. **T’s mother passed away in their home country last year** and T was not able to go to the funeral. T **has not been sleeping well**.
- **Question: Which of these Service Providers does T need to be referred to first?**
    - ✓ Employment counsellor/Career Counsellor
    - ✓ LINC Instructor
    - ✓ Credential Evaluator
    - ✓ Settlement Worker
    - ✓ Childcare Worker
    - ✓ Financial Advisor
    - ✓ Social Worker
    - ✓ Counselor
    - ✓ Psychiatrist
    - ✓ Service Canada staff
    - ✓ Immigration Consultant
    - ✓ Other?



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# Trauma Informed Questions (Sector Based)

## Mental Health:

- ✓ Is there a word for mental health in your culture? **When you are stressed or anxious what does it feel like to you, can you describe it?** How do you manage stress? What gives you hope?

## Healthcare:

- ✓ **In the past, when you would go to seek medical help what was your experience,** have you accessed any here, if not what has been the reason? What type of information should be shared: Truth (All the facts all at once) or parts in due time? **(Fact based vs Emotion Based)**

## Settlement:

- ✓ How do you understand the word community? What is needed for you to have community? **Do you identify with your culture? Is there anything that you don't identify with that would be good for me to know?**

## Family Services:

- ✓ **How do people view gender roles in your culture or community? How do you feel about them? Who makes the important decisions in the family?** What type of information should be shared: Truth (All the facts all at once) or parts in due time?



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# Trauma Informed Questions (Sector Based)

## Education:

- ✓ **What have you been taught about pursuing school or furthering education? What are your current beliefs about education?** How would you say you learn: Auditory (listening), Visual (Seeing), Kinesthetic (Hands-on), Co-operative (Teamwork) Distance (Independent) Observational (Watching others).

## Employment:

- ✓ Describe to me your work ethic? /What beliefs guide the way you work?

## Technology:

- ✓ How would you describe your use of technology? Frequently, Sometimes, Rarely, Never. What apps do you often use or would like to learn to you use? **Do you see technology as something to be feared? Have you had any negative experiences with using technology, are you open to sharing?**

## Finance:

- ✓ When you hear the word “Money” what feelings, word, or phrase comes to mind? Example: Anxious, valuable, or bills, not enough. **What is your beliefs about money? What were you taught? Did your family discuss money, was there any conflict around money? Who was in charge of money at home?** Could you explain to me how you manage money? Tell me what do you know about credit cards?

## Immigration: (Stakeholder Meetings):

- ✓ Which groups are missing from the discussions, how can we connect to them?
- ✓ How can we promote positive and equity-based views of refugees in our policies, programs and with the public?



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# Managing Stress: Self Care Categories

- Physical Self Care: (E.g Eating Healthy)
- Psychological/Emotional Self Care: (E.g Journaling, Seeing a counsellor)
- Social Self Care: (E.g Participating/Identifying hobbies)
- Spiritual Self Care : (E.g Pray, Meditate, focus on values)
- Professional Self Care: (E.g Learn new skills)



# Resources

- Kagawa-Singer, M., & Blackhall, L. J. (2001). Negotiating Cross-Cultural Issues at the End of Life. *Jama*, 286(23), 2993.)
- McCleary, Lynn and Blain, Julie. (2013). Cultural values and family caregiving for persons with dementia. *Indian Journal of Gerontology*. 27. 178-201.)
- Shebib, B. (2011). *Choices: Interviewing and Counselling skills for Canadians*, Fourth Edition. Pearson.
- <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/self-care-assessment.pdf>
- <https://cmha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Your-guide-to-self-care-EN.pdf>

# Additional Resources

- A., V. der K. B. (2015). The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma. Penguin Books.
- Goelitz A. (2022). From trauma to healing : A social worker's guide to working with survivors (2nd ed.)

# Connect with VAST

- VAST provides psychosocial support through groups and offers individual counselling with our trauma specialists. Interpretation is available. Check out our website or call us to find out more.

- Two ways to refer a client to VAST: **Preferred Method:** Fill up our referral form via our website: [www.vastbc.ca](http://www.vastbc.ca) click on tab: Make a referral.

Or Call us directly (778-372-6593)

- My contact: Jhevoi Melville  
Registered Social Worker:
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