



Trauma Informed Working Policy

How we work with children, young people, families and each other

Assisting Parents with Children Affected by Mental Health
Registered Charity Number 1186256

Version	1.0
Adopted	March 2026
Approved by	The Board of Trustees, signed on its behalf by Lauren Ridley, Chair of Trustees
Policy owner	CEO
Next review	March 2027, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes
Applies to	All trustees, staff, volunteers, placement students and contractors

At a Glance

Our commitment: APCAM is a trauma informed organisation. Every trustee, member of staff, volunteer and placement student will be trained in trauma informed practice, and will apply it in every contact with the people we support and with each other.

- **Everyone is trained:** trauma informed training at induction, before working with service users, and refreshed every year.
- **Six principles guide us:** safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural consideration.
- **We ask "what happened to you?"** rather than "what is wrong with you?"
- **We look after our people:** reflective supervision and support to prevent and respond to vicarious trauma.

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1. Purpose

Many of the children, young people and parents who come to APCAM have experienced trauma or adversity. This may include adverse childhood experiences, domestic abuse, bereavement, bullying, exclusion from school, repeated experiences of not being listened to by services, or the daily stress of caring for a child with complex needs. Trauma can affect how people think, feel, behave and relate to others, including how they respond to professionals.

This policy sets out how APCAM embeds trauma informed practice across all of its work, so that our services help people feel safe, respected and in control, and do not unintentionally cause further harm.

2. What We Mean by Trauma Informed Practice

Trauma informed practice is an approach that recognises that trauma is common, understands how it can affect people, and changes the way an organisation works so that it supports recovery and avoids re-traumatisation. It is not a specific therapy. It applies to everyone at APCAM, not only to therapists.

APCAM follows the six principles set out in the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities working definition of trauma informed practice:

Principle	What it means at APCAM
Safety	People feel physically and emotionally safe in our spaces, sessions, online platforms and communications.
Trustworthiness	We are clear, honest and consistent. We do what we say we will do, and explain when we cannot.
Choice	People have choice and control over how they engage, what they share and the support they receive.
Collaboration	We work with people, not on them, and value their knowledge of their own lives and children.
Empowerment	We build on strengths and help people find and use their own voice, including with schools and other services.
Cultural consideration	We recognise how culture, identity, discrimination and historical experiences shape trauma and recovery, and actively challenge bias.

3. Training

Mandatory: All trustees, staff, volunteers and placement students will be trained in trauma informed practice.

Who	Training	When
All trustees, staff, volunteers and placement students	Introduction to trauma informed practice, including the impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences, the six principles, and recognising and avoiding re-traumatisation	At induction, before working with service users
Everyone working directly with children, young people or families	Applied trauma informed practice, including de-escalation, emotional regulation and trauma informed communication	Within the first three months
Therapists and clinical staff	Specialist trauma training appropriate to their modality and professional body	Ongoing continuing professional development
Everyone	Annual refresher and reflective practice session	Every year

The CEO keeps a training record for everyone and reports completion rates to the Board.

4. Trauma Informed Practice in Our Work

With children and young people

- See behaviour as communication, and get curious about what a child may be trying to tell us.
- Offer predictable routines, clear explanations of what will happen, and warning before changes.
- Support co-regulation: stay calm, lower our voice and give space before expecting a child to talk or reflect.
- Avoid shaming, sarcasm or punitive responses, and never use isolation as a punishment.
- Give children choices wherever possible, including in WeGame sessions, and respect their right to say no.
- Recognise that children with SEND may show distress differently and may be more vulnerable to re-traumatisation.

With parents and carers

- Recognise that parents may have their own experiences of trauma, including with schools, services or their own childhood.
- Avoid blame and judgement, and acknowledge how exhausting it can be to fight for support for a child.
- Explain processes such as EHCP applications, Early Help and safeguarding referrals clearly and honestly.
- Prepare parents for difficult meetings, and give them time to process information afterwards.

In our language and communications

- Use respectful, person-first or identity-first language as the person prefers.

- Avoid labels such as "challenging", "hard to reach" or "non-compliant", and describe what happened instead.
- Write records and reports as if the person will read them, because they may.

In our environments

- Make spaces welcoming, calm and predictable, with quiet areas where possible.
- Think about sensory needs, including lighting, noise and seating.
- Make sure online spaces such as WeGame are well moderated and feel safe.

5. Avoiding Re-traumatisation

Re-traumatisation happens when a situation reminds someone of past trauma and causes them to re-experience it. APCAM will reduce this risk by:

- not asking people to repeat their story more than necessary, and sharing information with consent so they do not have to tell it again;
- explaining the limits of confidentiality at the start, so people are never surprised;
- giving people control over the pace and content of conversations;
- avoiding physical restraint except as an absolute last resort to prevent immediate serious harm, in line with the Safeguarding Policy;
- handling safeguarding processes in a way that keeps the person informed and involved wherever it is safe to do so.

Trauma informed practice never overrides safeguarding. Where there is a risk of harm, staff must follow the Child Protection Policy, while still acting with compassion and transparency.

6. Supporting Our Staff and Volunteers

Working with trauma can affect the people who do it. Vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout are real risks, and some staff and volunteers will have their own lived experience of trauma. APCAM will:

- provide regular supervision for all staff, and reflective supervision for those working directly with families;
- provide clinical supervision for all therapeutic staff in line with their professional body requirements;
- offer a debrief after any distressing incident or disclosure;
- promote a culture where it is safe to say "I am struggling", and respond with support rather than judgement;
- apply trauma informed principles to how we manage, supervise and support our own people, including in recruitment, performance and disciplinary processes.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Who	Responsibilities
Board of Trustees	Champions trauma informed practice, makes sure training is resourced, and applies the principles to governance.

Who	Responsibilities
CEO	Leads implementation, makes sure everyone is trained, and builds trauma informed practice into service design, recruitment and supervision.
Head of Clinical Service	Provides clinical leadership, advises on practice, and oversees clinical supervision.
All staff and volunteers	Complete training, apply the principles in their work, and seek support when they need it.

8. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Trustees will monitor how this policy is working through regular reports from the CEO, feedback from staff, volunteers and service users, and learning from any incidents or complaints. This policy will be reviewed annually by the policy owner, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or APCAM's services change.

9. Related Policies and Legal Framework

9.1 Related APCAM policies

- Safeguarding Policy 2026 (including WeGame)
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2026
- Lived Experience Policy 2026
- Professional Boundaries Policy 2026
- Therapeutic Disclosures Policy 2026
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2026
- Health and Safety Policy 2026

9.2 Legislation and guidance

- APCAM Constitution (Foundation model CIO constitution, last amended 20 September 2019)
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities: Working definition of trauma informed practice (2022)
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (duty of care for staff wellbeing)

Approval

Approved by	The Board of Trustees, by resolution in line with clause 13 of the APCAM Constitution
Signed on behalf of the Board	Lauren Ridley, Chair of Trustees
Signature	
Date adopted	March 2026
Next review	March 2027
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