



The Young Women's Film Academy Trauma Informed Manifesto

"The YWFA ensures safe spaces for relational connection and creative exploration using story telling as a vehicle for personal and social change."

Clara Shield, CEO

Forward

"There has never been a time of more possibility for social change. The data is there for the impact of adverse life events and we can galvanise that to motivate constructive action both for individuals and communities. Solidarity of the all female YWFA supports the collective meaning making at the centre of their work. The staff not only implicitly embody trauma informed principles, but the organisation has the potential to create ripples of hope and opportunity for justice, safeness and kindness through its work and films".

Dr Angela Kennedy, Chair of YWFA.

Why The Young Women's Film Academy (YWFA) commit to an explicit trauma informed culture

"If people are transformed through the process of sharing stories, workers are transformed, systems are transformed." Kylie Burgess from Burnie Works

The YWFA works with young women in the North East of England and as such they may have experienced significant abuse, negative life events, poverty, sexism or other adversities.

These adversities in the young women accessing the YWFA may impact on their mental health, community safety, relationship style, social support, engagement with learning and cognition, time and ability to access YWFA activities.

The young women at YWFA choose to engage in projects that touch on aspects of life, that may be challenging or triggering.

The staff are drawn from the same population as the young women it serves and therefore are subject to the same traumas and adversities.

The YWFA exists as a space for marginalised lived experience stories to be co-created, and shared.

The YWFA exists as a female only organisation recognising the gendered nature of much trauma and disadvantage.

The existing YWFA values of *voluntary participation focusing on esteem, education and equality* align with the principles of trauma responsive organisations.

“Staff show up as that person for someone else that they needed at that young age.”

Rhiannon Banks, Talent & Skills Development Programme Lead

Our trauma informed pledge

- Use storytelling as a vehicle for personal and societal change.
- Place lived experience voices central to the creative process and output.
- Use the development of technical skills to engender competency, agency, confidence and grounding.
- Use the film outputs to bring communities together around issues they can identify with.
- Accept that trauma may motivate active engagement with social justice.
- Acknowledge the shared experience of being female in our society and the collective impact that has.
- Stay mindful of the range of hidden personal traumatic backstories that can impact on belonging, equity and safeness and the intersection of these with disability, neurodiversity, ethnicity, religion, poverty etc.
- Be actively anti-racist and anti-discriminatory.
- Be open, clear, timely and diligent.
- Place story-making in a social and environmental context.
- Manage and provide resources in ways that allow staff to flourish.
- Awareness that staff too may be triggered by some of the material engaged with and facilitate formal and informal conversations around the rewards and challenges of the role.
- Facilitate safeness through valued connections.
- Place physical safety first through processes and governed practice.
- Be led by the needs and interests of the young women themselves.
- Use coproduction as a method to develop shared power.
- Engender a sense of common humanity and ambition through employing staff with similar backgrounds.
- Tackle challenging issues with hope, fun and expertise.
- Amend policies and vision in line with emerging good practice.
- Work towards a reflective and supportive learning culture by including trauma related issues in supervision and board meetings in line with HSE requirements.
- Evaluate our impact, including any limitations or harms.

“The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair, and the strongest antidote to traumatic experience. Trauma isolates...” Judith Herman

Resources and further reading

[Opening Doors: Trauma Informed Practice for the Workforce on Vimeo](#)

[Supporting documents - Trauma-informed practice: toolkit - gov.scot](#)

https://youtu.be/_YSA7-xCz4k

<https://youtu.be/xYBUY1kZpf8>

<https://youtu.be/YiMjTzCnbNQ>

[Supporting staff following a traumatic Incident - HEIW](#)

[Mental health - HSE](#)

[Creative Health Blog :: North East and North Cumbria Healthier Together](#)

[National Centre for Creative Health](#)

[Storytelling - Centre for Public Impact](#)

[Research and evaluation](#)

every time i ever said i want to die

By Andrea Gibson

A difficult life is not less
worth living than a gentle one.
Joy is simply easier to carry
than sorrow. And your heart
could lift a city from how long
you've spent holding what's been
nearly impossible to hold.

This world needs those
who know how to do that.
Those who could find a tunnel
that has no light at the end of it,
and hold it up like a telescope
to know the darkness
also contains truths that could
bring the light to its knees.

Grief astronomer, adjust the lens,
look close, tell us what you see.