



CDN TRAUMA-INFORMED COLLEGE PROGRAMME

ENABLING STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH ENHANCED TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

Programme Overview

In session 2023-2024, CDN will launch an ambitious new programme aimed at facilitating the creation of a **trauma-informed culture** in every college in Scotland. The programme will utilise learning from CDN's recent **Pathways from Poverty Research** and the expertise of colleagues and partners across the sector to provide training, resources and interventions that will help colleges tackle the challenges faced by learners and their communities in accessing and sustaining their participation in education.

At the heart of the programme is an understanding that colleges are already leading the way in tackling educational disadvantage in our communities and in supporting all learners, including those who have lived experience of poverty and trauma, to succeed. The programme aims to build on existing good practice and to provide a range of support to colleges and college leaders to consider what further steps they need to take to develop and embed a truly trauma-informed culture throughout their organisation.



Background

What is trauma?

Trauma 'results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual wellbeing.'

What is trauma-informed practice/ a trauma-informed culture?

A trauma-informed culture is 'a model that is grounded in and directed by a complete understanding of how trauma exposure affects service user's neurological, biological, psychological and social development'. The Scottish Government's trauma-informed toolkit identifies 5 key elements of a trauma informed practice: Safety, Trustworthiness, Choice, Collaboration and Empowerment.

Why should colleges pursue a trauma-informed culture?

There is extensive research that shows that the effects of trauma on individuals can be severe and long lasting. For those who have experienced trauma, a trauma-informed approach has the potential to provide additional support and a sense of empowerment, reducing the gap between those who deliver services and those who use them. CDN's own research into the impact of trauma-informed practice in the college sector has demonstrated the ways in which this approach can support in tackling the barriers that learners face and supporting all learners to maximise their potential.

Source: [Trauma-Informed Practice: A Toolkit for Scotland](#)

Programme Structure

There will be several complimentary strands to the programme which, in conjunction, will support the embedding of a trauma-informed culture within participating colleges. Central to the programme will be the creation of a community of college-based programme leads, who will take responsibility for cascading awareness of trauma-informed approaches within their organisation. These leads will receive a range of training and support from CDN, including a 9-week online SCQF level 5 qualification in Mental Wellbeing and Health, delivered by SMILE counselling, to support them in this work.

As well as this, all college staff will be provided with access to a short online trauma-informed training course and support resources, that will allow them to develop their awareness of trauma-informed approaches and embed them within their practice. CDN will also work with senior leadership teams within colleges by providing workshops and tailored support that will help them to plan their organisational approach to developing a trauma-informed culture, recognising that all our colleges have different contexts and are at different stages on their journey.

CDN's recently developed reflective diagnostic tool will be used to allow senior leadership teams and their programme leads to analyse the college's current approach in this area and design an action plan that will help deliver a trauma-informed culture. This process will be facilitated by the CDN team through the Step Forward programme of bespoke project-based support.

Summary of Programme Strands



Mental Wellbeing and Health training for college leads



Online short courses for all college staff



Bespoke support for institutional action plan



Senior leadership workshops



Trauma informed diagnostic tool



Ongoing events to share best practice

Why join the programme?

At the heart of this programme is student wellbeing and success. In Year 1 of the programme (2023-2024), CDN will work closely with a small group of colleges to develop a trauma-informed culture at the whole-college level.

Colleges involved in this first stage of the programme will benefit from staff receiving free CPD in the form of level 5 Mental Wellbeing and Health training, as well as the opportunity to access bespoke support from CDN and share examples of good practice in this area with others in the sector.

The programme offers a unique opportunity to develop a coherent whole-college response to the challenge of trauma that supports learner wellbeing, retention, and success.

How to join the programme

Colleges interested in being part of the first iteration of the programme in the 2023-2024 session are invited to express their interest to research@cdn.ac.uk



cdn

College Development Network

www.cdn.ac.uk

