



# Trauma-Informed Practice in Aquatics

Ebook - Brought to you by  
Janine Ramsey



DEVELOPED BY  
*Laurie Lawrence*



# Welcome

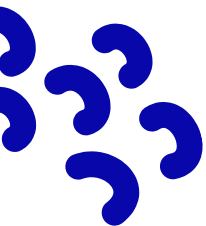
Welcome to our ebook on the topic of Trauma-Informed Practice in Aquatics.

This resource is designed to introduce the partnership between WWSS and Janine Ramsey and to provide you with an overview of trauma-informed practice in aquatics. It will also give you a greater understanding of why it is important for aquatic professionals (from swim teachers to managers) to develop knowledge and skills in this fundamental area of professional practice.

## About Janine Ramsey

Bachelor of Science, Diploma of Counselling, Certified Trauma Professional, Trauma-Informed Aquatics Specialist @Trauma Informed Aquatics.

Janine is an aquatics specialist and aquatic trauma therapist with over 40 years of professional experience in the aquatics industry, including swim teaching and school ownership for 25 years. She is an international presenter and consultant to the aquatics industry with a special focus on trauma-informed practice in aquatics.



# Topics

1. WWSS collaboration with Janine
2. What is trauma-informed practice in aquatics?
3. What is involved in trauma-informed practice in aquatics?
4. What is trauma and how does it develop?
5. Why is trauma-informed practice important in aquatics?
6. Next steps in becoming a trauma-informed aquatics professional



# 1. WWSS Collaboration with Janine - Purpose

- To deliver leading-edge professional development in trauma-informed practice to the aquatics industry worldwide.
- To develop trauma-informed aquatics professionals and swim schools.
- To improve safety and wellbeing for children, staff, parents and caregivers, and all engaged in the aquatics industry.

## 2. What is Trauma-Informed Practice in Aquatics?

"Trauma-informed practise is about conducting all organisational activities in such a way as to minimise the risk of inadvertently causing trauma or retraumatization for anyone that engages with the organisation, including workers and clients." (1,3)



"Trauma-informed services are 'informed about, sensitive and responsive to', trauma-related issues."(1)





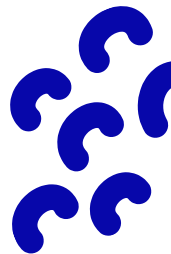
### 3. What is Involved?

1. Trauma-informed practice involves a whole of organisation, strengths-based framework for human service delivery. (2)

It is based on **5 core principles**, being: (2)


1. Safety (physical, emotional, psychological)
2. Trustworthiness
3. Choice
4. Collaboration
5. Empowerment

These principles are underpinned by Respect for Diversity in all its forms and operationalised at all levels within the organisation. (2)





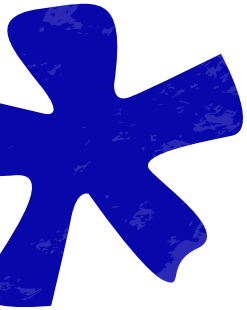
## What Else Does it Involve?

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2. Having the recognition that many people are living with the legacy of one or more forms of trauma in their lives, whether or not you or they may be aware of this (3)
  3. Understanding the neuroscience of traumatic stress, what trauma is and how it develops, survivors in the context of their lives, and the role of coping strategies (7)
  4. Developing the knowledge and skill to recognise traumatic stress and to respond in a manner that eases the stress response; in other words becoming trauma-aware, trauma-sensitive and trauma-responsive (1,3)
  5. Integrating trauma-informed practice into the organisational culture, philosophy, policies, procedures and practices (1,2,3)



## In Other Words...

“Becoming trauma-informed necessitates a cultural and philosophical shift across every part of a service and is applicable to all human and health service systems.” (7)



## 4. What is Trauma and How Does it Develop?

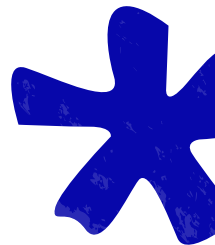
Trauma can be defined as:

1. The emotional, psychological and physiological residue left over from heightened stress that accompanies experiences of threat, violence and life-challenging events as perceived by the individual. (5)
2. The impact of any negative life event that occurs in a position of relative helplessness. (6)
3. Arising from single or repeated adverse events that threaten to overwhelm a person's ability to cope. When trauma is repeated and extreme, occurs over a long time, or is perpetrated in childhood by caregivers it is called complex trauma. (7)



## 5. Why is it Important to be Trauma-Informed in Aquatics?

1. Duty of care – First do no harm (3)
2. Best practice in the provision of all human services, informed by three decades of intensive research in the interdisciplinary field of neuroscience. (3)
3. Many people are living with the legacy of past and/or current trauma. EG. 1 in 3 girls, 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before age of 18yrs; more than 1 in 4 Australians are living with complex trauma. (8)
4. 2016 - The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has released a discussion paper examining the growing interest in trauma-informed care and the implementation of trauma-informed approaches to support survivors of trauma, including survivors of child sexual abuse. (4)
5. 2020 – Covid-19; “Guidelines for trauma-informed service-delivery are now needed for organisations to which they were not previously seen to apply. Trauma-informed practice is urgently needed for all areas of service provision in the ‘new’ age of the Coronavirus pandemic”. (3)





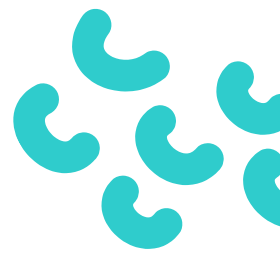
6. Unique environment, stressors, and vulnerabilities present in aquatics

- Very young age of participants – developmentally vulnerable (0-3)
- Learners and teachers in swimsuits
- High physical contact environment
- Power imbalance dynamics
- Element of water
- Performance pressures – parent/caregiver conditioning
- Vicarious trauma and burnout risk for teachers
- High trigger environment conducive to inadvertent re-enactment of unrecognised/unresolved trauma dynamics in adults.

7. 2020 Research - The most commonly reported place for children to experience a negative aquatic experience is in a swimming lesson. (9)



# 6. Next Steps in Becoming a Trauma-Informed Aquatics Professional



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# Final Words

In the best interests of your wellbeing and care we advise that if you feel triggered by the material presented in this ebook in a way that causes distress, confusion, or feelings of overwhelm, you consider seeking support.

Sources of support can include the following persons and Australian-based organisations on our next slide. If you are not located in Australia, please refer to your local support organisations.



# Further Support

A mental health professional such as a trauma-informed counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist or your GP

**Blue Knot Foundation Trauma Helpline and Redress Service** (PH: 1300 657 380) <https://blueknot.org.au/> (all trauma-informed counsellors)

**Blue Knot Foundation National Counselling and Referral Service – Disability** (PH: 1800 421 468) <https://blueknot.org.au/> (all trauma-informed counsellors)

1800-Respect 24/7 service (PH: 1800 737 732) National Sexual Assault Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service <https://www.1800respect.org.au/> (all trauma-informed counsellors)

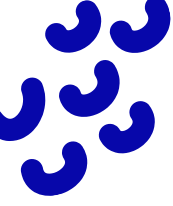
**Kids Helpline 24/7 service** - for help-seekers up to 25 years of age (PH:1800 55 1800); <https://kidshelpline.com.au/> (person-centred, strengths-based professional counselling)

**Mensline 24/7 service** (PH:1800 041 612) <https://mensline.org.au/> (professional counselling)

Lifeline (PH: 131114) <https://www.lifeline.org.au/> (person-centred, strengths-based crisis support)

A trusted friend or family member with whom you feel safe.





# References



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