

Entanglement and the Pursuit of Flow in Higher Education

Reflections on embedding Trauma-Informed Pedagogy in
practice

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Who are we?

The Worlds We Want Research Hub: [The Worlds We Want - Aberystwyth University](#)

TrACE Trauma-Informed University Project: [TrACE : Student Services , Aberystwyth University](#)

ACE Hub Cymru and Trauma-Informed Wales: [Resources - ACE Hub Wales](#)

Hyfforddiant Staff / Staff Training

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Organisation Content

 TRACE

 ACE Hub [ENG]

Due date: 31/07/2025, 23:59 (UTC+1)

 Hyb ACE Cymru [WAL]

Due date: 31/07/2025, 23:59 (UTC+1)

A simple question:

What happens when people
are given the tools to
understand the lives of
others differently?



What is Trauma?

Survival Trauma (Events that pose direct or indirect threat to survival)

Personal Identity Trauma (Experiences that impact on a sense of self, agency, and self-efficacy)

Attachment Trauma (Relational disruption)

Status Identity Trauma (Failure to achieve goal perceived essential to survival)

Interdependence Trauma (Uprootedness – e.g. refugee experience)

Perpetrator Trauma

Community Violence

How can trauma happen?

- Single or chain of events.
- Build up of stressors that become overwhelming.
- Vicarious (indirectly experience via someone else).
- One-step transmission – E.g. impact on child when a parent experiences trauma.
- Multi-step indirect trauma - E.g. intergenerational cycles of trauma.
- Collective cross-generational trauma transmission – E.g historic trauma/ collective complex trauma inflicted upon groups of people often because of a group identity.
- Multi-generational transmission of structural violence (E.g. Structural conditions in the past, poverty, impacting on people in the present).



Beyond Fight, Flight, Fawn, Faint and Freeze: Why Flow?



Seng, J., & Group, C. (2019). From Fight or Flight, Freeze or Faint, to "Flow": Identifying a Concept to Express a Positive Embodied Outcome of Trauma Recovery. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*, 25(3), 200-207.

ACEs: The 10 Areas of Trauma

1. Psychological Abuse
2. Physical Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Emotional Neglect
5. Physical Neglect
6. Loss of a Parent (for any reason)
7. Mother Treated Violently
8. Substance Abuse
9. Mental Illness
10. Criminal Behavior in the Household

The questions are described on the ACE website
www.cestudy.com

Table 2. Prevalence of ACE items in the student sample

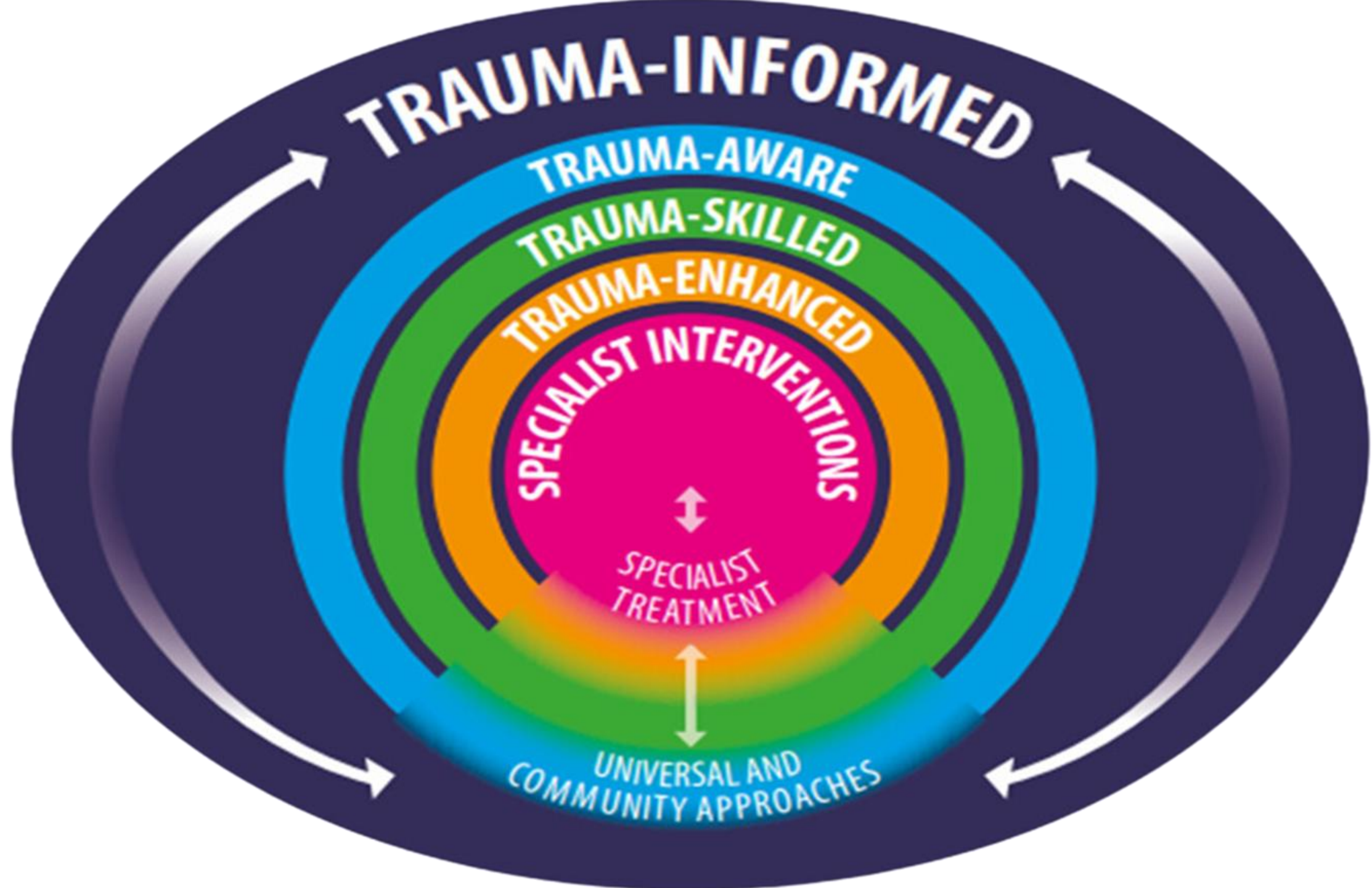
ACE category and items	Students female	Students male %	Students total
	% (<i>n</i> = 163–165)	(<i>n</i> = 20)	% (<i>n</i> = 183–185)
ABUSE			
Emotional abuse	32.1	35.0	32.4
Physical abuse	20.6	10.0	19.5
Sexual abuse	22.1	15.0	21.3
NEGLECT			
Emotional neglect	29.7	30.0	29.7
Physical neglect	7.3	5.0	7.0
HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION			
Mother treated violently	14.7	10.0	14.2
Household substance abuse	41.8	30.0	40.5
Household mental illness	50.0	45.0	49.5
Parental separation/divorce	41.8	25.0	40.0
Incarcerated family member	10.9	0.0	9.7

Note. ACE = adverse childhood experiences.

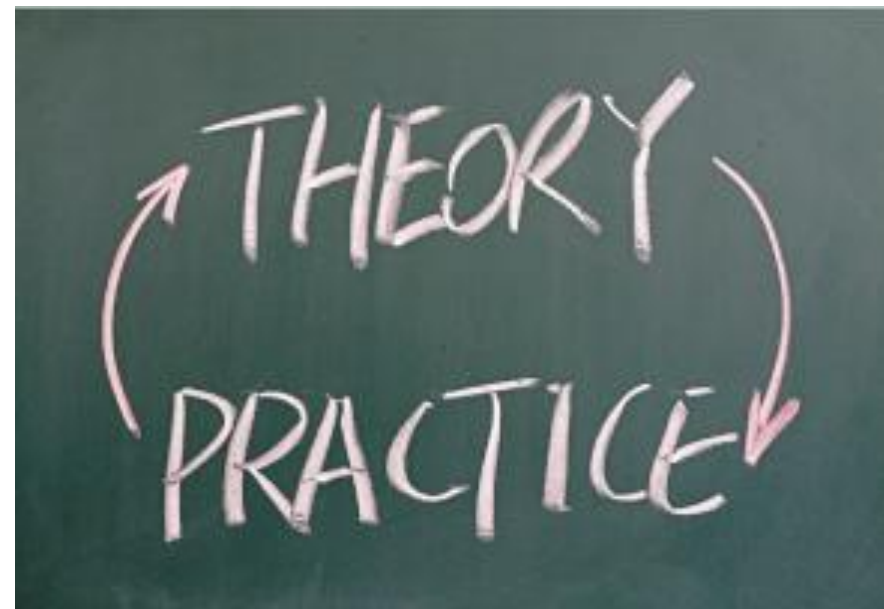
What is being Trauma Aware?

Trauma Informed Wales Framework (2022):

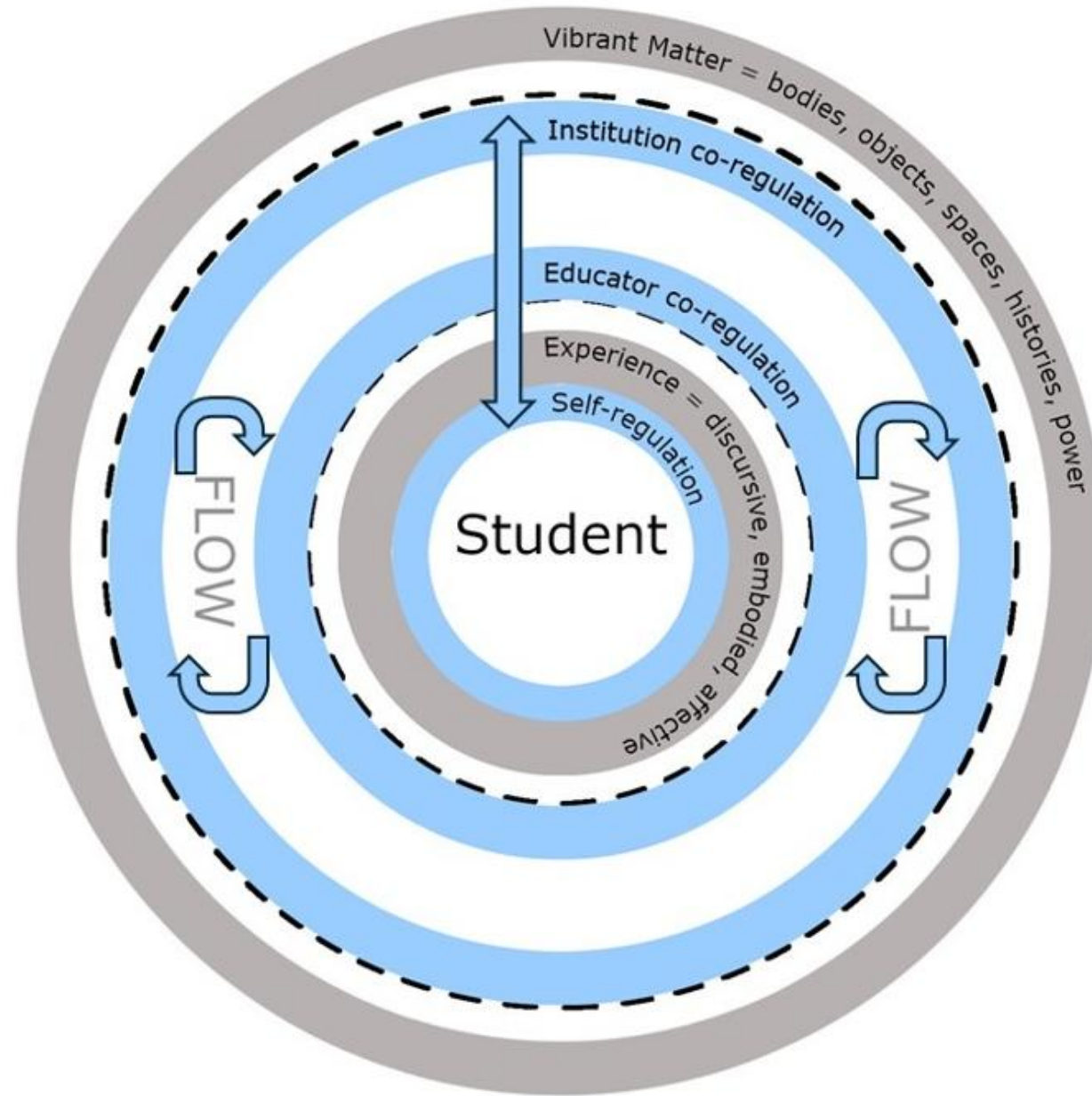
- A universal approach that does no harm
 - Person centered
 - Relationship-focused – compassionate and nurturing
 - Resilience and strengths focused
 - Inclusive
- Realize the ubiquitous nature of trauma and its manifestation in humans, society, and history;
 - Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in others;
 - Respond to trauma by incorporating what we know about trauma into effective policies, procedures, and practices;
 - Resist retraumatization in others (adapted from Gunderson, Mrozla-Toscano, and Mao 2023)



How do we
become part
of this story?



Flow is Relational



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without permission

New Materialism conceptualises trauma and healing not as something private within an individual, but as an embodied assemblage of affect, memory, 'vibrant matter', discourse and relationships.

We consider trauma within its wider environment, emerging in the dynamic relationship between people and forces of oppression such as racism, colonialism, misogyny, deprivation, war, and exploitation.

Ti offers a reconfiguration of the socio-material conditions of teaching and learning to account for the ecosystem of trauma.

(Gordon, 2025; Lopez, 2020; Passam et al., in press)



The Intervention: Training and Intention Setting

- Understanding trauma
- What trauma-informed practice is and is not
- Practical implementation strategies
 - Trigger/ Content warnings
 - Trauma sensitive language
 - Building trust through structure and routine
 - Creating trust in the classroom
 - Emotional check-ins
 - Grounding and regulation strategies
 - Strength-based language
 - Connection and community building
 - Low-stakes activities

EXACT goal-setting exercise and commitment to change

E - Explicit = Why did you sign-up? What do you hope to achieve

X- Xciting = What interests you? How are you feeling about

A – Actionable = Where could an intervention fit?

C – Challenging = What are your barriers?

T- Trackable = What's the plan? How will you put these ideas into action?

Supporting Implementation

- Weekly JISC reflective surveys
- Monthly support meetings
- Online community space via Teams
- Final celebratory workshop



Our findings -

Theme 1: Fine Lines to Tread
Theme 2: Porous Boundaries
Theme 3: Fragility



Getting back to Flow: Small Changes, Unexpected Ripples



Reflective questions

1. Does your training attend to the psychological nature of trauma? Are you making explicit self-regulation and co-regulation aims?
2. Has attention been paid to the human, inanimate, and regulatory conditions of teaching and to how these forces may raise or lower the emotional temperature of learning?
3. What opportunities do educators have for reflection, communities of practice, mentoring?
4. Are you recognising trauma-informed teaching as a specific labour that is skilled and valued? (and if you hold power) Do you consider it in workload models, promotion criteria and recognition? Have you considered how to include TI into institutional policy and strategy?
5. Are you showing compassion? Do you know who needs help?