

From Trauma Informed to Trauma Transformative Practice – Changing the paradigm to create a more meaningful contemporary knowledge framework

Janise Mitchell

Australian Childhood Foundation

For more than two decades practitioners, programs, services, systems and, more recently, whole communities have been grappling with the imperative to make sense of and apply an understanding of trauma in their everyday ways of being, doing and organising themselves to better resource, support and care for those living with the consequences of trauma. Emanating from the US, this movement has seen efforts to integrate trauma informed approaches into policy, service, organisation and system design across the globe into differing political and cultural contexts with differing policy and funding drivers and constraints.

Despite its early promise, there are emerging signs that trauma informed approaches have been limited in their scope of influence (Berliner and Kolko, 2016; Hanson and Lang, 2016; Sweeney and Taggart, 2018). Practitioners and organisations alike are beginning to face dilemmas about whether the limitations of a trauma informed approach stem from its very design as it is currently conceptualised or is more reflective of failures in their application and execution.

In this presentation, I will trace and critique the history and principles of the trauma informed movement, reconceptualising it so that it is more relevant to policy, program and service design for organisations, systems and communities.

Together with Joe Tucci, I argue in favour for a movement to trauma transformative practice which is defined as

*“An inclusive set of co-ordinating constructs that aim to transform the ways that practitioners, organisations and systems function collectively with therapeutic intent to address the complex and reverberating effects of trauma so that it becomes less influential in the lives of victims and survivors of interpersonal violence to reduce the pain and suffering they experience over time.”*

Drawing on reflections of a collection of specifically curated contemporary articles papers written in conjunction with sixteen of the world’s top trauma practitioners, researchers and thought leaders, the authors propose twelve core dimensions of trauma transformative practice that, whilst described discreetly, inherently integrate with each other to enable ways to support victims and survivors to have their needs met and achieve the ambitions they hold for their life and their relationships.

The content of this presentation is based on a new book edited by the authors in addition to Steve Porges and Ed Tronick and published by Jessica Kingsley, London.