



Sacred Depths Certification

Harnessing the Empowerment of Trauma Informed Skills

The Sacred Depths methodology is committed to being as trauma informed as possible.

Transformational methods that do not take trauma and survival strategies into account are at best less effective and at worst may trigger the client into shame, and further trauma responses. And, when we employ trauma-informed perspectives we get to harness empowerment – for our clients, and for ourselves!

Practitioner: Befriend your own Fears on the topic of being Trauma Informed

The topic of being trauma-informed can sometimes be activating for practitioners, bringing up fears like:

“I’m a fraud”

“I’m going to do this wrong”

“I’m scared to harm others”

If you have fears that come up around this topic, there are likely a number of reasons:

The topic of “trauma” carries so many taboos because of the ways our society has handled it and characterized it. It’s not until pretty recently that society in general has stopped speaking of trauma with hushed tones, pathologized perspectives, and as something that is not mainstream.

Another reason the topic may activate you is likely because you are a person and practitioner of integrity – that is one reason why you chose Sacred Depths in the first place!

As a practitioner of integrity, you know that there are practitioners in the industry who are not informed and may be inadvertently causing harm, and you don't want to be that practitioner.

- > **Honor and cherish your commitment to integrity. (I honor you for it).**
- > **Honor yourself for your commitment to knowing your scope and staying in your scope.**
- > **Continue to stay informed. Learn and show up with the important skills you're learning...but at the same time, do so with joy, trust, and spaciousness.**
- > **Also, become aware when your commitment to integrity starts to mingle with old beliefs about not being good enough or being wrong or a fraud, old fears about others judging you, and more. Continue to work on and address those fears and beliefs.**

➔ **REMEMBER:** When it comes to being trauma-informed and ANYTHING else - there is no Myth of Perfection for any practitioner, no matter their title, scope, practice, or background. We all make mistakes and we are all, always, learning and discovering more on the topic – personally and collectively. *I am sure at some point I will update this resource sheet on Being Trauma Informed because new information will come to light!*

➔ **REMEMBER:** You already know so much more about being trauma-informed than you are likely giving yourself credit for! It is baked into every session of Sacred Depths even when it is not named as such!

➔ **REMEMBER:** “Deep and Sacred” does not always have to equate with “heavy”. We get to choose what energy we bring to these studies, these perspectives, these skills and our clients.

Journaling:

1. *What are some unhelpful beliefs you hold when it comes to your scope on the topic of being trauma-informed?*
2. *Track those beliefs back to their simplest form (i.e., “My actions harm others”, “I’m a fraud”, “I don’t know enough”, etc.). Where did you first learn or get exposed to those beliefs?*
3. *What are some higher wisdoms/more helpful beliefs to remember and come back to?*

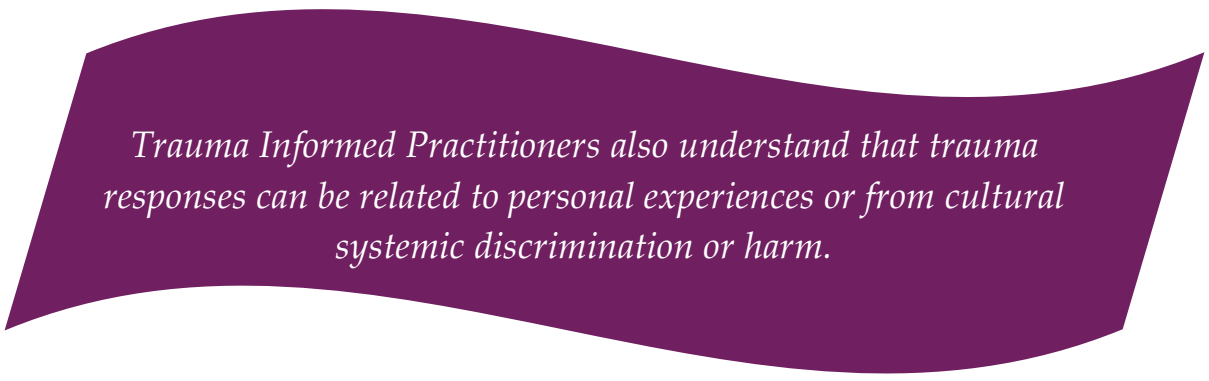
What does Trauma-Informed mean?

Being trauma informed doesn't mean that it's in your scope to go deep with a client into the crags of an event that created a trauma response for them.

Some (but not all) therapists who treat trauma *may* work deeply with the “there and then”, but coaches do not. **Coaches and transformational practitioners focus mainly on the resources and wisdom that are available to a client in the present and in the future.**

What being trauma informed does mean:

- First and foremost, we recognize as practitioners our *own* trauma and trauma responses and check ourselves as best we can to not bring it into our client containers (this is in part why working on our Energetics is so important).
- We stay aware of our feelings and what we bring to the container, and if we notice our trauma responses consistently show up in our client containers beyond our control, this is an indicator we may need therapeutic support.
- Being trauma informed also means that we recognize the likelihood of trauma in the histories and lives of the people that we serve, and that we have awarenesses and skills that will help us lower the possibility of unintentionally triggering a trauma response in our clients.



Trauma Informed Practitioners also understand that trauma responses can be related to personal experiences or from cultural systemic discrimination or harm.

Being trauma informed also means that we understand that the survival strategies our clients have - for example overworking or shying away from speaking their truth - may have developed as a result of a traumatic experience.

- Clients' traumatic responses will very much make their ways into our coaching containers – there is almost no way that they cannot.
- **As practitioners, it is our jobs to support our clients in creating awareness of these survival strategies, as well as supporting our clients to make a distinction between the “then and there” and the “here and now”. By doing this, we help clients resource themselves from the “here and now” moment versus the “there and then” moment.**

When a client is resourced from the “here and now moment”, new energy or inspiration can come forward, new solutions and brainstorming can emerge, and that is where re-commitment to aligned goals be strengthened.

As we work with and track our clients, if we see in our sessions that they consistently get pulled into the “there and then” or are unable to get grounded in the “here and now”, that is a good indicator that our client may benefit from working with a therapist. It is within a coach's scope of practice to create awareness with a client that therapy may be valuable for them.

General Trauma-Informed Best Practices



Pacing

- When it comes to co-creating strategies with clients, what is the strategy and execution pace that is aligned for your client?
- It's also important to think about the pacing of your session work with your client. You may want to go slower, especially when you are building your container and trust.

Create Strong Containers

- Setting, Agreeing on and Honoring Rules, Agreements, Expectations. Maintaining Boundaries.
- How you are holding the container energetically (including being aware of your own triggers).
- Your rapport with your client. Trust and trustworthiness are HUGE.
- Transparency
- Showing your client that they are being seen and heard.
- Create collaborative relationships.

Consent and Getting Permission

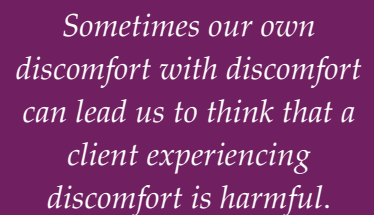
- Things to avoid:
 - > Touching body without asking for any permission
 - > Saying things like, "You MUST do this, this way..."
 - > "I went ahead and did an energy check on you...."
 - > Even something like, "Close your eyes" (vs, "close your eyes or if you don't feel comfortable with that, close the metaphoric shades on your eyes")
 - > Asking client to breathe in a particular way if you haven't agreed on it first
 - > Going past session time without getting consent (vs. "Can you hang on the line another 15 minutes? I've got the time if you do.")

Other things to consider

- Ask Body-Based questions rooted in the “here and now” versus the “there and then”. For example: “How does the fear of not being good enough feel in your body right now?” versus “How did it feel in your body when X (trauma) happened?”
- Remember the right to privacy. When a client shares about a painful event, listen with honor, respect, and acknowledgment. Thank your client for sharing this with you. And if you want to ask a follow-up question, first get consent: “Would it be ok if I asked a question about that?” or “Would you like to tell me more about that?”
- Be mindful to not shame your client or pathologize their fear, trauma, or resistance. Love, honor, and respect all of their experiences and responses.
- Be mindful not to see your client as a “label”: addict, abused child, etc.

Discomfort and Dysregulation

- When you work with your clients and use the Sacred Depths methods, they WILL from time to time feel discomfort. Even sometimes a lot of discomfort. This is sometimes necessary as part of the growth process.
- When we lead clients through the BYF process – or any other coaching process or conversation for that matter – it is extremely rare, but it may happen that we see our client is collapsing in the emotion of their discomfort:
 - > Their breathing becomes irregular.
 - > They are crying uncontrollably.
 - > Client has become a little spacy.
- This signals that the client is likely dysregulated and it is a trauma informed practice to support them in getting regulated again.



Sometimes our own discomfort with discomfort can lead us to think that a client experiencing discomfort is harmful.

Some things to Consider when Guiding a client who has become dysregulated:

- Ask client to open their eyes
- Invite slow physical movement like standing up or switching chairs
- It can sometimes be helpful to utilize a certain amount of joking or irreverence
- Ask client to describe three things in the room in detail
- In the case of being spacy, ask client to breathe, stretch, pat their body, or feel the ground beneath their feet.

A client becoming dysregulated in these ways will rarely, rarely happen, but it might - whether it's during a BYF process...OR... a "surface" cognitive conversation about a big vision.

As trauma-informed practitioners, we want to be aware that sometimes even an edgy conversation might activate a trauma response. This doesn't mean we avoid edgy conversations if we feel a client is in the right place for it.

- If a client does get dysregulated, you likely haven't done anything wrong and your job is to:
 - > Not get activated yourself,
 - > Remember your client is whole and complete, and
 - > Stay present with your client.

Being Trauma-Informed in the Befriend Your Fear Process (and other somatic processes)

The BYF method supports clients to resource from the “here and now” moment when a fear or survival strategy presents itself. It does this in many ways, including:

- Helping the client identify the “there and then” moment their fear and survival strategy is based in.
- Supporting the client to connect into how they feel in their body in the “here and now” while experiencing the fear.
- Bringing the fear out of the blind spot so that the client can see the fear isn’t all of them and then also become more seated in the REST of themselves and their higher wisdom.
- When you support a client to dialogue with their body in the here and now, they are engaging their current cognitive wisdom, body wisdom, heart wisdom, and spirit wisdom. They are also forward looking to the future!
- Supporting your client to co-regulate with all their current resources, even in the presence of the discomfort of the fear.

Trauma informed techniques for the BYF process:

- Before leading your client into the process, ask if the client would like to go deeper and get permission.
- Invite client to close their eyes if it’s comfortable but give them the option to keep eyes open if that’s their preference.
- Do not ask client to modulate their breathing in any way.
- Support client to feel grounded in their bodies and the seat they’re currently in.
- Go slow through the process and give ample space.
- Throughout the process, let your client know they’re doing really well, encourage them with love in your voice and let them know that you’re with them.
- When your client identifies the “then and there” moment that the fear comes from, create even further awareness as well as rootedness in the wisdom of the “here and now” by saying something like, “Ahh, so when this fear comes up it’s usually not your current self with your current resources that’s running the show.”
- Sometimes it can be helpful to ask questions of the “highest wisdom” of the fear than the fear itself.

Most importantly: ENJOY the process! The Befriend Your Fear Process can be so valuable and so satisfying not just for clients, but for us as we hold this beautiful and sacred space for another human being to connect with themselves, their resources, their strength, their wisdom, and their power. Remember to enjoy!



*If you'd like to take this
further...*

*I highly recommend the book
"Coaching and Trauma:
From surviving to thriving"
by Julia Vaughan Smith.*