

Trauma Informed Care

A guide of considerations and referral points for vulnerable young people with an experience of trauma

Naomi Viret¹, Jason van Ritten², Eliza Basheer³

¹Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, Wollongong, Australia, ²Central Coast Local Health District, Gosford, Australia, ³NSW STI Programs Unit, Sydney, Australia.



Background

A trauma informed approach

In February 2023, NSW Health released their Integrated Trauma Informed Care Framework: My story, my health my future. Trauma is a significant factor contributing to poor health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage. It is estimated that half to two thirds of young people will be exposed to a traumatic event by the time they turn 16. This is particularly true of young people in Out of Home Care (OOHC).

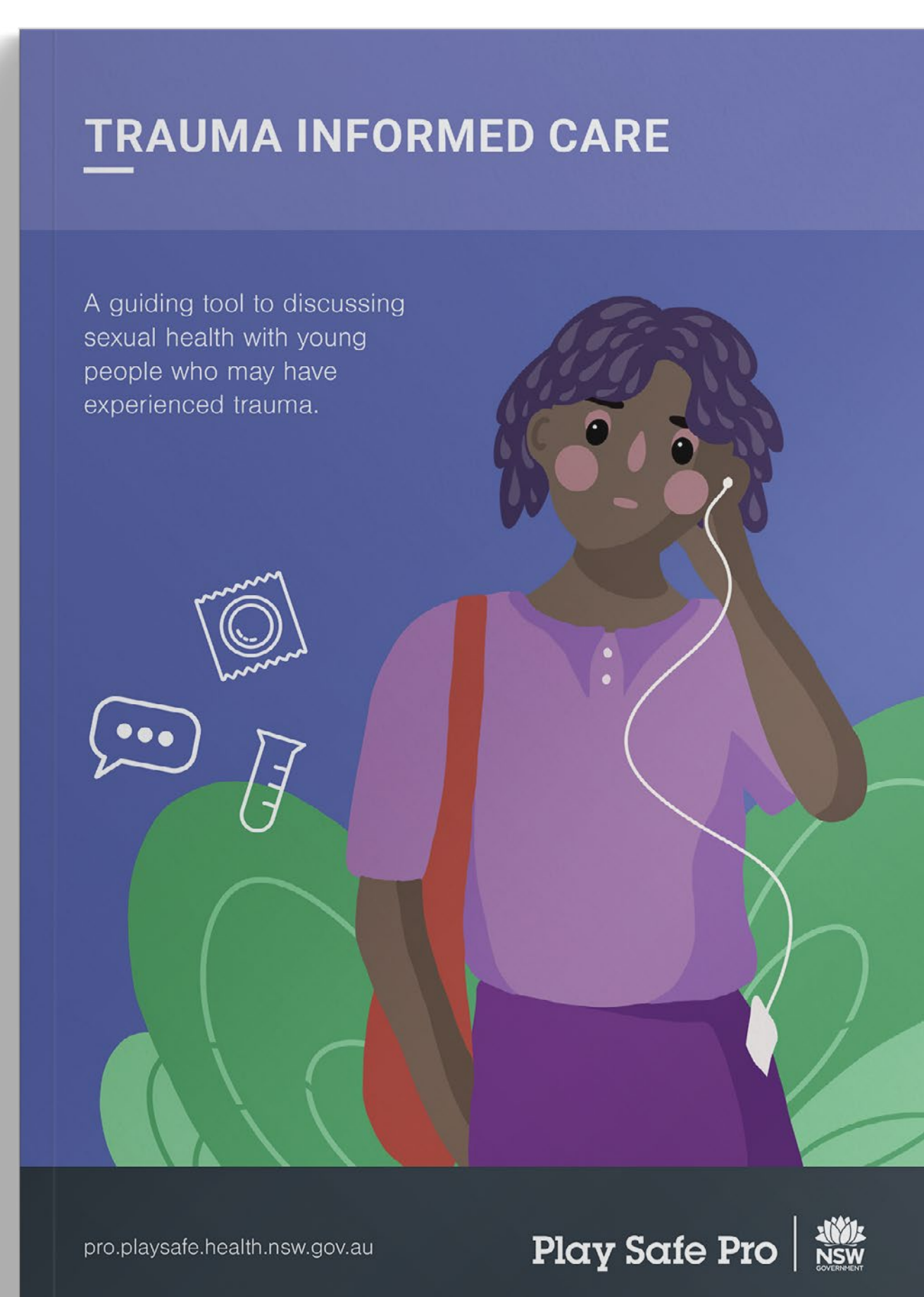
Young people in OOHC often miss out on school-based sexual health education due to the transient nature of placements and rely on carers to fill gaps.

What we did

To support provision of trauma informed sexual health education to young people in OOHC, NSW Health's Play Safe Programs OOHC Project developed a sexual and reproductive health focused trauma informed care guide for OOHC workers and carers. The guide provides:

1. **detailed information** and considerations when working with vulnerable groups of young people likely to have experiences of trauma.
2. **referral options** for further support in providing trauma informed sexual health information and education.
3. **practical strategies** on how to deliver trauma informed sexual health information and education.

The booklet was developed as part of a suite of trauma informed resources which can be found online at Play Safe Pro.



“With guidance and clinical support, young people with an experience of trauma can go on to live positive and connected lives.”

Check out the Trauma Informed Care Guide



How we did it

Consultation: The key to unlocking referral options for young people

The consultation process was paramount to the development of this resource. To develop the resource we:

- **conducted consultations** with key stakeholders to identify essential content to include in the resource.
- **undertook a review of literature** on best practice trauma informed sexual health education.

Lessons learned

1. **Identifying key stakeholders** at the beginning of health promotion work is essential.
2. **Partnering with key stakeholders**, via formal or informal means, to provide input must take a collaborative and iterative approach.
3. **Working with key stakeholders** to identify way they would like to provide meaningful feedback and contribute to health promotion work is paramount.
4. **Ensuring identified vulnerable** and marginalised groups of young people are represented with equal voice is needed to create a holistic resource.
5. **Promotion is essential** – identify your communications networks and utilise foster carer agencies to disseminate resources, information and ongoing communications.

Conclusion

It is important to engage young people with an experience of trauma, particularly those in OOHC and justice services in sexual and reproductive health conversations. Through positive experiences of education and support, these young people can experience positive sexual health outcomes. When developing resources, working with stakeholders and communities is essential.

Acknowledgement:

We would like to acknowledge Blue Knot Foundation, Twenty10, The Healing Foundation, AbSec, NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors, Australian Childhood Foundation, Children and Young People with Disability Australia and New Street Services for their invaluable feedback during the development process, for their ongoing work in the trauma informed space and their work with young people.