



Responding to a disclosure

Trauma Informed Response



SAFE ✓ FAIR ✓
INCLUSIVE ✓

When someone discloses (tells) about an unsafe or disrespectful experience, it can mean they are seeking support and trust you enough to share.

You or anyone can receive a disclosure. This can be a big responsibility, and it is important to use language that is empathetic, supportive, and helpful, and avoids causing more harm.

If someone shares an unsafe or disrespectful experience with you, focus on 3 key actions which can make someone feel safe in the moment.

01 Actively listen

What you can say

'I'm glad you told me.'

'Thank you for sharing.'

'Whatever you're comfortable sharing is enough.'

Why these phrases can be helpful

When we show that we are truly listening, people feel heard and understood.

This is one of the most important actions because it builds trust. If we don't get it right, it can create further fear or distrust.

02 Show empathy

What you can say

'Thank you for trusting me enough to share this with me.'

'You've taken an important step by talking about it.'

Why these phrases can be helpful

This step is about showing that you believe them.

Your role isn't to investigate or find evidence.

For someone who has been harmed, being believed is often the most important thing.

03 Proactively support

What you can say

'Do you feel safe at the moment?'

'I am not a specialist in this, but I am happy to help you come up with some options of what to do next.'

'If you'd like, I can suggest a few support options to consider when it feels right.'

Why these phrases can be helpful

This step can feel tricky, especially when you feel you don't have all the answers.

But you don't need them.

Be honest about what you know and what you don't, and ask if it's okay for you to reach out to others for help.