



CSE Aware bulletin

Issue 4:

Trauma-informed support

Dear readers,

As we approach the middle of the autumn, we bring to you our latest CSE Aware bulletin, this time with a focus on trauma-informed support. Over the past years, trauma-informed has become a bit of a buzz word. Yet its benefits and positive impact for women cannot be underestimated.

In this bulletin, we deep-dive into trauma-informed practice and consider how it applies to women involved in selling or exchanging sex. Firstly, in our insights article we share women's voices on what works and what doesn't, and through an interview with practitioner Alison Scott, we explore what services can do to respond in a trauma-informed way (which includes being creative!).

Alongside these pieces, you will find a wealth of resources to expand your practice in this area, as well as upcoming events for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, interesting news and articles and a small survey at the end.

Until next time!

The CSE Aware Resource Worker

"Sometimes the lid comes off but then the lid goes back on again. It has to 'cos of the panic and the overwhelming feelings. The box is there, it's very much there and you can only open it bit by bit 'cos if you were to let all of it out, you would be in self-destruct mode. It would be an instant overload of I've done this, these things have happened to me."

– Wendy, *Inside Outside*



Trauma-informed support insights

What should trauma-informed support look like for women who sell or exchange sex?



Women involved in selling or exchanging sex often have multiple and intertwined traumatic experiences.

Although not all women involved will carry traumatic experiences, [recent research](#) has suggested that mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, PTSD and suicide are highly prevalent among them.

Looking at this context, in this article we explore how support services can offer trauma-informed support to women who have been involved in the sex trade.

[Read more](#)

A worker's perspective

Alison Scott – Trauma, adapting services to women's needs and thinking outside the box

A worker's perspective

“ It is really important that women are given choice to say “no, sorry, I'm really uncomfortable. I'd rather have female staff. I don't want to have a male doctor or midwife if possible.” All these little things that can be a bit of a nuisance for staff really matter to the women, and that's what needs to come first – being aware and giving women some control ... If people trust you, then you're more than halfway there, but you've got to think outside the box.”

Alison Scott, consultant gynaecologist



For this edition, we interviewed Alison Scott, a consultant gynaecologist at the [WISHES clinic](#) and current Head of Student Wellbeing Services at the University of Edinburgh's medical school.

Alison shares how she approaches supporting women who sell or exchange sex in a trauma-informed way, including the importance of partnership working, she reflects on why services need to be aware of trauma and discusses making sure that employers look after their support staff.

[Read more](#)

Trauma-informed practice resources

Trauma-informed practice points

In this link we've put together some steps you can take to ensure you respond to women involved in selling or exchanging sex in a trauma-informed way.

[Read more](#)



In this list you will find reports, guides, toolkits and research written by different specialists in trauma-informed practice and violence against women:

- [Gender Equality and Sexual Consent in the Context of Commercial Sexual Exploitation](#)
- [Confronting the harm](#)
- [Why Adopt a Gendered Analysis of Violence and Abuse](#)

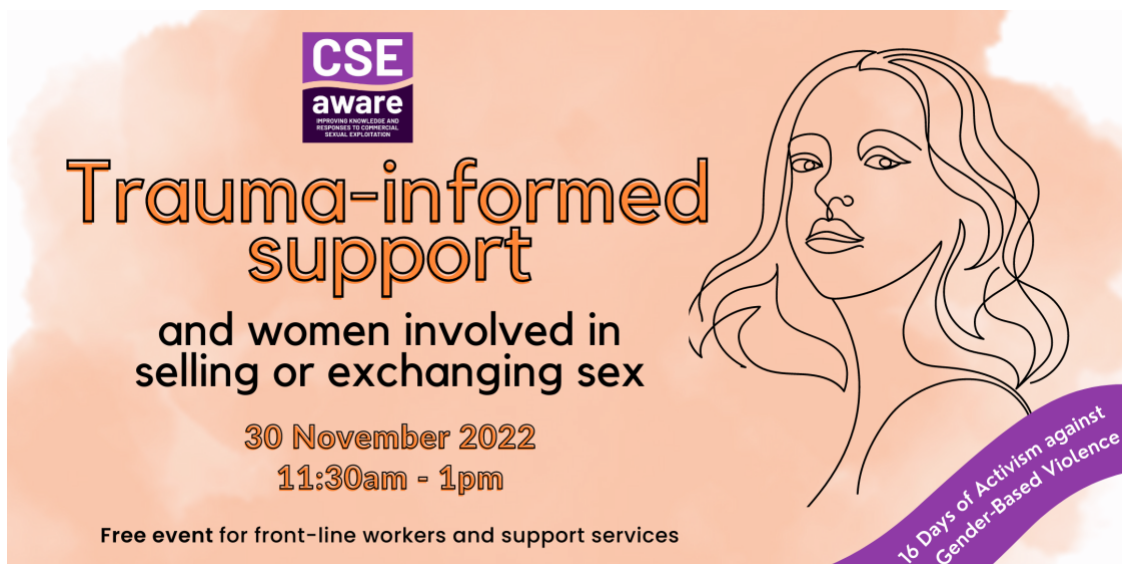
- [Mental health and trauma-informed practice: companion document](#)
- [Trauma-informed care in the UK: where are we? A qualitative study of health policies and professional perspectives](#)

[More resources](#)

Events and training

CSE AWARE EVENT

Trauma-informed support and women involved in selling or exchanging sex



The poster features the CSE aware logo at the top left, which includes the text 'CSE aware' and 'IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE AND RESPONSES TO COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION'. The main title 'Trauma-informed support and women involved in selling or exchanging sex' is written in a large, orange, sans-serif font. Below the title, the date and time '30 November 2022 11:30am - 1pm' are listed in a smaller orange font. At the bottom left, it says 'Free event for front-line workers and support services'. On the right side, there is a line-art illustration of a woman's face and shoulders. A purple ribbon at the bottom right of the illustration contains the text '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence'.

Wednesday 30 November, 11:30am - 1pm

The high prevalence of trauma among women who sell or exchange sex evidences the need for support services that understand how trauma can play out and continue to be re-lived for those have been involved in the sex trade.

As part of this year's 16 Days of Activism campaign, this event will offer an introduction to trauma-informed practice when supporting women involved in selling or exchanging sex, as well as examples of good practice.

[Register here](#)

FILM PREMIERE

EXIT

Sat 5 Nov 2022

EXIT is the story of three women who were looking for a way out of their extreme poverty and found themselves at the heart of human trafficking networks. This film will premiere with an in-person screening at the University of Stirling.

[Book your tickets here](#)



FREE ONLINE TRAINING

Commercial sexual exploitation: an introductory session

Tue 13 Dec 2022, 9:30am - 12:30pm

To support learning about commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) and the needs of women involved in selling or exchanging sex, CSE Aware is organising a free introductory online session for frontline workers and support organisations.

[Register here](#)

Commercial
Sexual
Exploitation
an introductory
session

WEBINAR

From viewers to consumers: normalising men's violence against women

Mon 5 Dec 2022, 10am - 12:30pm

This free online webinar will look at how the increasing sexualisation of our culture impacts on society and explore the role pornography plays in shaping attitude and beliefs.

[Register here](#)



NEW!

Bespoke training on commercial sexual exploitation

We offer tailor made training relevant to the needs of your organisation or team. Sessions can be online or face to face and can include basic awareness of commercial sexual exploitation; it's links to abuse and violence, routine enquiry and more.

[More information](#)

Bespoke
training

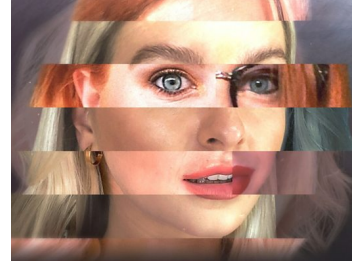
Interesting reads

DOCUMENTARY

When nudes are stolen

Watch this new BBC documentary which explores an online trend in which men share and trade women's intimate photos, with little consideration to whether the pictures were taken consensually.

[Watch online](#)



ON THE NEWS

Dundee graduate wins award for artwork inspired on women's experiences of abuse

Dana Leslie set up a website asking women to anonymously record the locations of the incidents in a "living archive", which she then photographed the locations mentioned to create artwork called Hope is a Form of Planning.



[Read more](#)

Venezuela's mining region a hotbed of sex trafficking and violence, UN says

Cost of living crisis is forcing more women into selling sex

REPORT: The pathologising of women survivors of male violence by family court experts

VIDEO: I have the right – perspectives of survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and volunteers

“Both workers I've had. Yes, they really understand. They've got perfect knowledge. Well, not perfect knowledge, they've not as far as I know [sold or exchanged sex], but they've got experience of working with women in my position and it really shows itself. It really helps.”

– Woman involved in the sex trade in Scotland



Small ways to soothe ourselves



It's common to think that caring for ourselves can be too time-consuming. But looking after oneself shouldn't always mean blocking out a whole evening. In fact, some scientists advocate for a more effective strategy: short but regular activities that could be incorporated into our daily routine.

Neuroscientist Dr. Gabija Toleikyte argues that we are exposed to multiple stressors throughout the day: information overload, missing a train, receiving criticism from a colleague... which is why it's **important** to counteract this chronic stress by doing consistent self-soothing practices. This could be a 5-minute conscious breathing, walking or listening to music.

Breathing, in particular, is a powerful way to enter a relaxation state. Psychiatrists **suggest** that the "brain listens to the lungs." We can create that restorative communication between the body and the mind through a simple breathing pattern: a sigh. Clinician Deb Dana **explains**: "Humans sigh many times an hour and those spontaneous sighs are a sign your nervous system is looking for regulation. You can intentionally sigh to engage your system in that process."

Let's try **that**: inhale through your nose, pause for a second or two, and exhale slowly and deeply through your mouth – you can also add the whispery sound *ahhhhh*.

Over to you!

How familiar are you with trauma-informed practice?

All responses are anonymous.

I'm new to this

I have initial knowledge

I have good awareness

I am fully trained in trauma-informed practice

Submit

CSE Aware

an initiative of the Women's Support Project

Adelphi Centre, 12 Commercial Rd G5 0PQ,
Glasgow
United Kingdom

www.cseaware.org

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