



# Step 3D – Trauma Informed Guide for Mediations

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## Trauma informed practices in Pathways Victoria mediations – Guide for participants

### 1. Mediation practice

Pathways is committed to supporting safety, transparency, empowerment, and collaboration in every way that our staff engage with victim-survivors of abuse. To support the best possible care experience for victim-survivors and all participants involved in the mediation process, we have established some basic guidelines for participation.

This guide will be provided to all participants involved in the Pathways mediation process and used to ensure that facilitated mediations follow trauma-informed practice principles. Facilitation principles that support relationship building and the creation of environments whereby all parties feel respected as well as physically and emotionally safe is paramount.

### 2. About trauma

Mediations where victim-survivors share their lived experience can be distressing for all parties involved and in particular trauma survivors. Individuals may experience reminders or triggers that affect their physiological, psychological and emotional states. Trauma-informed approaches that are evidence-based have demonstrated effectiveness in mitigating the risk of re-traumatisation that can negatively impact on physical, psychological and emotional health and wellbeing.

### 3. Trauma-informed mediation

Pathways is cognisant that mediations follow trauma informed practices and principles in order to minimise the risk of upsetting and destabilising interpersonal interactions within mediations.

Trauma-informed mediation is in effect the *process* that promotes an environment where communication is underpinned by the principles of person-centred, respectful and compassionate care, that is culturally and gender

sensitive. Pathways supports the establishment of mutual and collaborative relationships between all participating parties through partnership building, that is motivated by trauma-informed care.

## 4. Guiding principles

To ensure mediations facilitated are conducted in a trauma informed manner, Pathways will:

- Ensure that the environment in which mediations are conducted, whether online or in-person, is comfortable, accommodating and considerate to all parties involved
- Engage mediators who have national mediator accreditation (NMAS), who are experienced in institutional abuse matters and apply trauma-informed principles of care in their professional practice
- Assign responsibility to mediators that their mediation practice is informed by trauma principles to minimise harmful re-traumatisation
- As much as practicably possible within a mediation, monitor service delivery to ensure it is consistent with trauma-informed principles
- At the outset, ensure all parties understand that they can take a break at any point in the mediation process
- Ensure a safe private space is made available to all parties to retire to, should they need a break at any point
- Make refreshments and water available when mediation is conducted in person
- Collaborate with victim-survivors and/or their legal representatives and accommodate emotional or physical safety related requests of the victim-survivor where possible
- Collaborate with the victim-survivors and their representatives as to their choice to participate in mediation, if at all
- Invite feedback from participants post mediation

Pathways expects that all mediation participants will:

- Avoid power-over relationships and communication approaches
- Communicate with each other in a respectful, sensitive and professional manner
- Follow any directions or requests in relation to the victim-survivors emotional, psychological or physical safety