



Trauma informed training

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Experiences of trauma can impact people's capacity to cope with the challenges of daily life. This can affect the ability to form trusting relationships, manage functions such as memory and attention, and regulate emotions and behaviour. Customers who have experienced trauma and homelessness may have previously faced significant barriers when accessing financial and customer services, and these barriers can include a distrust of organisations, difficulties in navigating complicated systems, and emotional distress during customer service interactions. To work in a trauma informed way is to consider and embed the basic principles of safety, choice, collaboration, trust, and empowerment into all interactions to better support customers in getting their needs met.

Recruiting the right people and providing effective training for staff is essential to support staff wellbeing, alongside ensuring that customers receive a respectful, effective, and supportive service. Businesses benefit from improved employee satisfaction, stronger customer relationships, and more efficient inclusive services that meet the needs of all their customers.

Benefits for employees and businesses

Trained staff are better equipped to manage challenging situations, resulting in less burnout, greater job satisfaction, and improved staff retention rates. Training equips staff with valuable communication and problem-solving skills, which are also transferrable. A well-trained workforce will result in improved customer service interactions, fewer complaints, and increased customer loyalty. Having a reputation for compassionate and effective customer service strengthens a business's reputation and builds trust within a community.

Capacity to deliver training

The extent of training offered will understandably vary dependent on the size of a business, however, foundational induction training could be made accessible to all employees, and more in-depth training could be provided if a business has the resources to do so. While some businesses may have dedicated inclusion teams, smaller businesses could designate one or two trained staff members as champions who serve as points of contact for support, additional guidance and advice on inclusivity.

Recruitment of the right staff

Effective recruitment strategies ensure that financial and customer service staff have emotional intelligence, empathy, patience, and the adaptability required to work with people who may have support needs. This way businesses can build resilient teams who are more likely to provide a compassionate and effective service.

Breaking down barriers

Trauma-informed training enables staff to recognise different types of trauma, such as childhood trauma, domestic abuse, homelessness, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and how these experiences affect decision-making, trust, and behaviour.

Trauma informed training will increase staff understanding of how adverse experiences influence individuals, particularly those who have faced systemic failures and discrimination, leading to a distrust of service providers and businesses. It equips staff with skills to build rapport, actively listen, and create a welcoming environment, which promotes trust and encourages customer engagement.

Communication and empathy

Trauma-informed training and customer service techniques equip staff to communicate effectively and sensitively with customers who may have experienced trauma and homelessness. Employees will learn to recognise signs of distress, be mindful of their language, understand the importance of being non-judgmental, and respond with empathy. This approach minimises the risk of re-traumatisation, ensuring customers feel heard and respected, ultimately enhancing their experience and willingness to seek support.

Training on responding to customer issues and challenging situations

Staff should be trained in active listening, conflict resolution, de-escalation techniques, and how to respond to emotionally charged situations with professionalism and compassion. Understanding the challenges faced by people who have experienced trauma and homelessness allows staff to approach enquiries, complaints and financial difficulties with patience and offer person-centred solutions. Which means taking a collaborative approach to tailor support and services to meet an individual's specific needs, preferences, and goals. Responding to challenging situations, such as interactions with distressed or frustrated customers, requires a specific skill set. Staff must be prepared to remain calm, actively listen, and use problem-solving techniques to defuse situations.

Creating a more inclusive customer experience

Customers come from varied and diverse backgrounds and have a range of different needs. When financial and customer service staff have the right knowledge, understanding and tools, they can contribute to creating a more inclusive customer service provision. Training raises awareness of systemic inequities and unconscious biases, enabling staff to challenge stereotypes and provide fair, considered and dignified responses to all customers.

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