

Trauma support for staff in an acute hospital

Cindi Bedor, Head of Staff
Counselling & EAP Manager





hello my name is...



Dr Kate Granger



Major acute hospital with over 5,000 staff





What's it like to work here?

- Passionate about healthcare; it's a vocation
- Standards of excellence
- Evidence-led, rigorous
- Innovative
- Fast pace of medicine
- The miracles of medicine and healing
- Compassion and genuine care
- Intense, sometimes raw, emotions: fear, anger, grief, disgust, vulnerability
- Very ill patients
- The unexpected, the uncontrollable
- Helplessness, powerlessness
- Overload
- Scrutiny
- Hostility
- A pressure-cooker environment

The continuum of trauma

- Normal daily pressure



Terry's story
Cleaner, oncology ward

*“I never thought when I came
to this job “*

The continuum of trauma

- Normal daily pressure
- Duress



Natalie's story

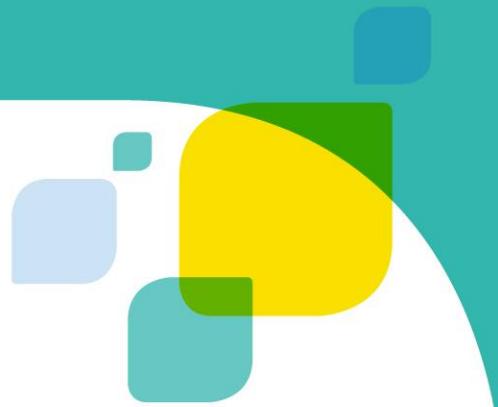
Ward nurse

“I’m an experienced nurse and I’ve coped with a lot of death before. I shouldn’t be feeling like this”

“Every time I drive in to do a shift I have a terrible fear of something going wrong”

“I feel like I’m on the edge and any minute I’m going to fall over the edge”

The continuum of trauma



- **Normal daily pressure**
- **Duress**
- **'minor' incidents**

Fiona's story

Consultant in anaesthesia and intensive care medicine



- Normalising: *"it was horribly tough, but because I knew that it was normal, that I wasn't going mad, that it would eventually get better with time and that the flashbacks and nightmares would go away, I was able to hang in there"*

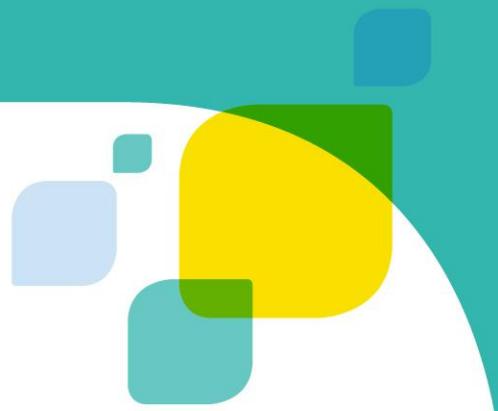
- "this was always my number 1 dream job and I very seriously did wonder whether I would have to leave, but because of the care I received I am still here!!"

Fiona's story, cont.

“You taught me some very vital life skills. Doing such a tough job, and juggling work with home life, I do really remember that I must look after myself and these days I am much kinder to myself”

“I truly believe that I have been able to use what I learned from my experience to help consultant colleagues and trainees who have been involved in traumatic events themselves.”

The continuum of trauma



- **Normal daily pressure**
- **Duress**
- **'minor' incidents**
- **Major incidents**

How we support our staff

Employee Assistance Programme *friendly and compassionate approach*



- Established and embedded on-site service for 20 years
- ***Cultivated a range of services and a diverse team of therapists***
- Offer a 'standard package' of 6 sessions (daily pressures to accumulated duress)
- ***Offer bespoke support where needed (minor to major incidents and coroner's courts)***
- Support and educate managers and teams
- ***Support our leaders, as individuals and with their roles***
- Therapeutically hold our boundaries AND therapeutically flexible
- ***Therapeutically we don't close our doors***
- Informal & compassionate interactions with the organisation



How we support our staff

Psychological Welfare Team

- A network of like-minded professionals, bringing together a wide range of skills, knowledge and contacts
- ***Primarily tasked with responsibility for supporting the families of patients involved in a major incident, and supporting hospital staff at such a time***
- Quiet monitoring role of teams and staff populations under particular pressure, responding in considered, low-key ways
- ***Initiates and drives supportive mechanisms (Reflective Review – Schwartz Rounds / debriefing – TRiM)***
- Trauma peer support for each other

How we support our staff

Reflective Review to Schwartz Rounds

- Ken Schwartz – Schwartz Centre for Compassionate Healthcare
- Regular forum for all staff to talk about, and reflect on, the emotional and social aspects of their roles
- Staff emotional wellbeing directly impacts on compassionate care
- Making the unbearable bearable
- Reduces stress by 28%

“Heartfelt, honest, moving and inspiring”

“Very thought-provoking stories”

“Such a relief to know we are not alone in our emotions”

“Although the emotions can be so hard to face, talking about them made me feel proud of what I do”

“This reflective time is invaluable”

How we support our staff

TRiM – Trauma Risk Management – March on Stress

- Developed by 2 mental health nurses in the Royal Marines
- Evidence-based, peer-led risk assessment process
- Rolled out through the Armed Forces
- RUH the first acute hospital to be trained and adopt the TRiM model
- 4th year, 14 TRiM practitioners trained
- 68 incidents, over 200 staff contacted
- *People prefer to speak to someone they know and trust*
- *Especially true where staff work closely with their colleagues in challenging environments*
- *From an organisational perspective, resilience results from bonds between individuals rather than individual internal factors*

TRiM – How it works

- Trained TRiM Manager oversees referrals and TRiM Practitioners
- ***Practitioners chosen from across the hospital***
- Anyone can refer themselves or manager referral
- ***Referrals go to a TRiM email address and the inbox is monitored daily***
- Names of ALL those involved in the incident are gathered and everyone receives an acknowledging email and TRiM post-trauma handbook
- ***Those wishing to meet with a Practitioner are seen within 3-7 days for a trauma risk assessment – both individual and groups***
- Referrals to EAP or Occupational Health for those particularly struggling, high risk
- ***Follow-up session is held 1 month later***
- Lots of informal ongoing support

Concluding points

Trauma takes many forms in the field of healthcare and it's our duty to be trauma-aware

Therapists have much to offer, as trauma practitioners and educators

The small, quiet, informed responses and acts of kindness are the most powerful

Form a network of like-minded and supportive colleagues. You'll achieve more and stay well in the process

Big, branded initiatives like #hello my name is, the Schwartz Rounds and TRiM are worth the investment



“It’s been a very emotional journey. What mattered most to me was the kindness and the right kind of support I received along the way. And afterwards I knew you were there and would quietly check in with me now and again. It was a terrible thing to have to go through but I have learned how to listen to myself and allow myself to recover, and I believe I’m a better person and a better nurse for it.”