

Course outline

DURATION: 1 two hour session

Course Content:

1. WHAT IS TRAUMA – INPUT BY COURSE PSYCHOLOGIST (CHARTERED NHS DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY)

Being trauma aware:

The clinical nature, symptoms and effects of trauma.

The unique nature and effects of trauma for individuals.

How to recognise trauma.

The best ways of working with complex traumas such as homicide and suicide.

2. TRANSACTIONAL INTERVIEWING – JOURNALISM TUTOR

Why people talk: Interviewees who have experienced trauma are giving something of themselves to journalists when they tell their story. It is important to be sensitive to the reasons why they do that in order to record their story in a way that matches the interviewee's expectations of the exchange.

Examples:

- *For many, it is their way of saying their loved one, whether child or adult, mattered. They don't want their existence to simply fall into a vacuum, unnoticed by the world.*
- *Some want to highlight an issue or failing or hold power to account.*
- *Some seek truth, explanation or further information.*

In telling journalists their story, traumatised people give something very personal to journalists and can therefore reasonably expect certain things in return. It is important to understand the story from the interviewee's frame of reference. The course will emphasise interviewee expectations and rights around:

- *Preparation.*
- *Factual accuracy.*
- *Honesty of intent and communication.*
- *Emotional insight.*
- *Sensitivity and care.*
- *Reasonable expectations of control.*

Course outline

3. INTERVIEWING TRAUMATISED PEOPLE - JOURNALISM TUTOR

The course will cover and stress person centred interviewing techniques, looking at three stages of the interviewing process:

- *Preparation*
- *The interview itself*
- *The follow-up*

Looking at each of these stages, the course will show how that one of the worst mistakes we can make as journalists is to show care for the story and not the person/people at the centre of it. Participants will be shown ways to demonstrate care for people through their interviewing approaches and techniques. These person-centred approaches will include:

- ***Appropriate questioning techniques.*** *The difference between questioning styles that hold to account, and those that encourage personal narrative. How to question in ways that gently draw out personal testimony.*
- ***Listening skills*** *and the importance of being truly heard.*
- ***Emotional intelligence*** *and understanding different communication styles.*
- ***Empathy skills.*** *Acknowledging trauma – what to say and what not to say.*
- ***Appropriate time frames:*** *talking when the interviewee is ready, and taking appropriate breaks when the narrative becomes overwhelming for them.*

4. THE BENEFITS OF PERSON—CENTRED APPROACHES

Journalists are trained to get stories. What they are not always trained in is the way to get *better* stories. **Using concrete examples** and **posing real-life scenarios**, the course will demonstrate the ways in which personal narrative changes when extra care is taken by journalists, and the ways in which this leads to more interesting stories. Eg. When people are trusting and relaxed enough they volunteer more information, more emotional response and more personal insight.

5. CASE STUDIES: INCLUDING CHILD HOMICIDE

This section will use filmed testimonies from people who have experienced trauma, including bereavement and abuse, explaining how they felt at the time, how they were treated by the media, and what effect media coverage had on them. Concrete scenarios and dilemmas will be posed to participants, with group discussions forming part of the teaching and learning process.

Course outline

6. SELF-CARE - PSYCHOLOGIST INPUT

When you care about the people you write about, the chances are it will take more of a toll on your own emotional resilience as journalists. This section of the course will show how to build self-care into journalists' professional approach.

7. Q&A – WITH COURSE PSYCHOLOGIST AND JOURNALISM TUTOR

Open Q and A session.

If any participants are distressed by the material raised, they will be given the opportunity to speak personally to the course psychologist.