



Universitätsmedizin Rostock

Klinik für forensische Psychiatrie

Trauma informed care in forensic settings

Trauma informed care has begun to gain a degree of interest amongst forensic mental health practitioners in recent years, but it is still at an early stage of development. This paper will explore the idea and practice of trauma informed care in forensic settings. It will look at the various ways in which trauma and adversity of different kinds can be linked with both mental health difficulties and offending. It will highlight the importance of having a developmental account of both areas in case conceptualisations, and for interventions addressing mental health difficulties and offending behaviour. The ways in which custodial contexts can be both traumatic and trauma triggering will be considered; and the importance of building a cultural and systemic understanding of this as a way of ensuring that these contexts can be more effectively focused on reducing offending and rehabilitation will be outlined. Some of the ways in which trauma responses of different kinds play out in custodial contexts with people who have offended will be described. Offence and trauma related altered states, and offence paralleling behaviour will be considered. Trauma, diversity, and attachment informed care will be highlighted as a developing method to try and achieve these aims. The unique problems experienced by organisations in forensic settings in trying to achieve this kind of way of working and suggestions as to how these can be addressed will be described. The important role of forensic practitioners who, perhaps uniquely, hear the background stories of people who offend, in public education and influencing a public understanding of the developmental contexts of much serious offending will be suggested.

Honorary Associate **Professor Lawrence Jones**

School of Medicine

University of Nottingham