



<b>Policy Name:</b>	<b>VULNERABLE PEOPLE – TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES</b>		
<b>Policy #:</b>	OP 4.52.1	<b>Last Updated:</b>	2022-04-27
<b>Issued By:</b>	COMMUNITY POLICING BUREAU	<b>Approved By:</b>	SURREY POLICE BOARD
		<b>Review Frequency:</b>	<b>ANNUALLY</b>

**RELATED POLICIES**

OP 4.17 *Intimate Partner Violence*

OP 4.54.2 *Vulnerable People – Mental Health*

OP 4.54.3 *Vulnerable People – Sex Workers*

OP 4.54.4 *Vulnerable People – Victims of Crime*

OP 4.54.6 *Vulnerable People – Substance Use and Harm Reduction*

**1. PURPOSE**

1.1. Surrey Police Service (SPS) Employees recognize that many people experience trauma (see definitions) throughout their lives. As a result of trauma, people may experience effects and exhibit symptoms which increase their vulnerability. Incorporating Trauma-Informed Practices into all aspects of policing will minimize harm and help prevent re-traumatization of Vulnerable People.

1.2. This policy meets the standards and expectations established in British Columbia *Provincial Policing Standards* (BCPPS) section 6.0, *Promotion of Unbiased Policing*; section 6.1, *Community Partnerships & Equitable Policing*; section 3.2.5, *Training to Promote Equitable and Unbiased Policing*; and section 3.2.6 *Training to Enhance Service Delivery to Vulnerable Communities*.

**2. SCOPE**

2.1. This policy applies to all SPS Employees and should be applied in all situations where an SPS Employee has contact with a person or people who may have experienced trauma.

### **3. POLICY**

3.1. SPS Employees must provide services in a culturally safe and responsive manner and, where applicable, must consistently apply Trauma-Informed Practice principles. Trauma-Informed Practice principles include:

- i. a realization or understanding of how trauma affects people, families, and communities;
- ii. the ability to recognize the signs of trauma;
- iii. an appropriate and compassionate response to trauma demonstrated in our behaviours, language, programs and policies; and
- iv. preventing re-traumatization by avoiding the creation of conditions that will retraumatize people.

3.2. Members recognize that the people they encounter may have vulnerabilities because of trauma. Members recognize that trauma responses and behaviours can be triggered merely by the presence or sight of a police officer. Therefore, Members are educated and informed to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma and to understand how their words, gestures, or actions can unintentionally cause trauma. Members must apply their knowledge of Trauma-Informed Practices consistently while performing their duties.

3.3. Members recognize that past colonial practices have and continue to create trauma and other disadvantages for Indigenous peoples, and that Indigenous peoples experience barriers to receiving culturally safe and appropriate care in the justice system. SPS Members are educated and informed in the history of colonization and its impact on Indigenous peoples and apply their knowledge consistently in all contacts with Indigenous peoples.

### **4. PROCEDURE**

#### **General**

4.1. SPS Employees will provide services impartially and equitably, in a manner that upholds dignity and human rights, and without discrimination.

4.2. Members will recognize that a higher standard of care is owed by the police to Vulnerable People. When interacting with Vulnerable People, SPS Members will consistently apply their knowledge of Trauma-Informed Practices to those interactions, regardless of the circumstances and regardless of whether the vulnerable person is identified as a witness, victim, alleged offender, or none of these.

4.3. Members, when responding to persons with apparent mental health and/or substance use disorders and who may be exhibiting signs of or reactions to trauma, will emphasize de-escalation and where practicable, will use collaborative approaches between the police, health authorities, and /or other appropriate community or government service providers.

- 4.4. Members will consider how to remove barriers to better support vulnerable victims or witnesses when the vulnerable victim or witness is required to provide a statement or access justice services.
- 4.5. Members will seek opportunities to develop and maintain effective relationships with community agencies that provide services to Vulnerable People. SPS Members will seek positive engagement with Vulnerable People.

#### **Training – Trauma-Informed Practices**

- 4.6. All SPS Members must attest to having successfully completed the “*Trauma-Informed Practice Foundations Curriculum for Justice, Public Safety, and Anti-Violence Community Sectors in British Columbia*” online training, or a provincially approved equivalent training course, within six (6) months of being sworn in by SPS.
- 4.7. To ensure SPS training is in keeping with knowledge development and emerging best practices, this or other trauma-related training approved by the SPS Leadership Development Unit or Training Unit or their delegate will be incorporated into annual mandatory training.
- 4.8. Members assigned to specialized positions which involve working directly with Vulnerable People will repeat this training, or another Trauma-Informed Practices training program approved by SPS Leadership Development Unit or Training Unit or their delegate, within thirty (30) days of entering their specialized position (e.g., Sophie’s Place, Special Victims / Intimate Partner Violence Units, Community / Mental Health Outreach, or similar units). Additionally, Members in specialized positions will refresh their knowledge of Trauma-Informed Practices annually.
- 4.9. Experiential and interactive training concerning vulnerable community members, including active engagement to overcome biases, will be periodically provided by the Leadership Development Unit or Training Unit to all SPS Members to supplement the on-line learning curriculum.

#### **Training - Indigenous Knowledge**

- 4.10. SPS Members will:
  - i. complete a training course, developed and delivered in collaboration with representatives from the local First Nation(s) and/or Indigenous organizations, which includes at minimum, the history and legacies of police relations with Indigenous peoples in the community; or
  - ii. complete provincially approved training on the history and current status of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacies of police relations with Indigenous peoples in British Columbia; and
  - iii. from time-to-time, the SPS Training Unit and/or the Indigenous Policing Unit or their delegate will facilitate additional Indigenous learning to Members which will enhance their knowledge of Indigenous history and culture.

## APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

“Indigenous Peoples” is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The *Constitution Act, 1982*, Part II, section 35(2) recognizes three distinct groups of Indigenous peoples: First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

“Member” means a sworn Police Officer appointed by the Surrey Police Board.

“Trauma” is the emotional response that may result after a person lives through or is exposed to a single distressing event, or a series of events. Trauma may impact a person’s sense of safety and of self. Trauma may impact one’s ability to regulate emotions and navigate relationships. Long after the traumatic exposure, people with trauma may feel shame, helplessness, anger, powerlessness, and intense fear. The nature of trauma may include, but is not limited to:

- Traumatic events experienced early in life such as abuse, neglect, and disrupted attachment, are known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- Experiences that are out of one’s control, such as a serious accident, being the victim of violence, living through a natural disaster or war, or sudden unexpected loss, can result in trauma.
- Systemic trauma occurs when the actions or inactions of the institutions and systems that a person is part of create trauma, or compound trauma that the individual has already experienced.
- Intergenerational trauma is trauma inherited from one’s immediate ancestors, typically from unresolved events that occurred to their parents or other previous generations. For Indigenous peoples in Canada, intergenerational trauma is rooted in imposed social and legal injustices in the form of racist, colonial and genocidal policies such as the Indian Reserve System, the Indian Residential School System, the “Sixties Scoop”, and other occurrences.
- Racial trauma is trauma that affects an entire, specific race.
- Trauma may also be caused by transphobic, homophobic, and gender-based violence, as well as micro-aggressions such as objectification, dehumanization, and marginalization that many people experience daily.
- Acute trauma refers to the response to a single traumatic event.
- Some people experience multiple types or incidents of trauma or ongoing trauma. This is sometimes referred to as “complex trauma” and it may have more significant effects on emotional, physical and behavioural health than acute trauma.

“Trauma-Informed Practice” means understanding the prevalence and effects of trauma in all aspects of service delivery and prioritizing the individual’s sense of safety, choice, empowerment, and connection. It is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma and emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety. Trauma-Informed Practice means making sure that people feel safe around police and are not re-traumatized by their contact with police.

“Vulnerable Person” or “Vulnerable People” means a person who, because of their age, a disability or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, are in a position of dependence on others or are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of authority or trust relative to them. Examples of Vulnerable People include but are not limited to persons:

- with substance use disorders;

- with physical or mental health challenges;
- with disabilities or who may have communication barriers (e.g., language, hearing or speech);
- with diverse gender identity or expression;
- who are unhoused or precariously housed;
- who are victims of sexual and/or intimate partner violence;
- who are being exploited and/or are involved in subsistence sex work;
- who may be less inclined to report or speak to police because of precarious legal status (e.g., victims or witnesses who have outstanding warrants or with precarious immigration status);
- who are elderly; and
- who are children.

## **APPENDIX B: REFERENCES**

BC Provincial Policing Standards s. 6.0 - *Promotion of Unbiased Policing*

BC Provincial Policing Standards s. 6.1 - *Community Partnerships & Equitable Policing*

BC Provincial Policing Standards s. 3.2.5 - *Training to Promote Equitable and Unbiased Policing*

BC Provincial Policing Standards s. 3.2.6 - *Training to enhance service delivery to vulnerable communities*

*Guiding Principles* Related to Provincial Policing Standards 6.1, 3.2.5, and 3.2.6

Letter from Assistant Deputy Minister of Police Services re: *Provincial Policing Standards on the Promotion of Unbiased Policing*, August 19, 2021 (Ref: 622499)