

DV-ACTION TRAUMA SENSE



DVACT-PAI is an independent agency specialising in providing expert opinion in the family courts on all aspects of family conflict, including, domestic abuse, sexually harmful behaviour and psychological functioning.

We also provide treatment programmes for parents where there are concerns relating to domestic abuse or sex offending, including a trauma programme for parents who have had traumatic experiences that impacts their ability to function effectively.

What is the Trauma Sense Programme?


TraumaSense is an innovative, trauma-responsive, psychoeducational programme designed to empower individuals by providing an accessible understanding of trauma.

General trauma services tend to focus on psychotherapeutic interventions and while these approaches are valuable, they often fall short of addressing the physiological nature of trauma. Many individuals who have experienced chronic trauma feel disconnected from their bodies, unaware of how trauma manifests as physical sensations, stress responses, and trauma-responsive behaviours. TraumaSense fills this gap by offering a structured programme that demystifies trauma in a non-therapeutic setting. TraumaSense is not therapy but rather a structured educational experience grounded in the principles of bio-psycho-social education which offers parents a pathway towards self-empowerment and personal growth without requiring them to disclose their past traumas or engage in conventional therapeutic disclosure.

This 12 session programme includes the following topics:

- Understanding trauma and the stress response system.
- Cultivating safety and stability.
- The long term impact of chronic stress including the impact on the brain.
- Emotional regulation and wellbeing.
- Protective factors and resilience.
- Power, control and personal agency.
- Reflection, evaluation and a personal action plan for next steps.

The programme aims to impact parents in the following areas:

- Sense of safety;
 - Knowledge and understanding of trauma and how it effects thoughts feelings and behaviour;
 - Personal agency and control;
 - Emotional regulation and well-being;
 - Readiness for change;
 - Self-compassion and empowerment.
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What does the programme include?

The programme includes:

- Weekly 1:1 sessions delivered by video calling via Zoom or similar;
- A dedicated and experienced programme facilitator allocated to the client;
- A workbook;
- Access to technology (a tablet) where required;
- A final report.

• Sessions attended and engagement;

- Progress made against the targets above;
- Where progress is not made, the reasons why;
- The likely impact of trauma on the parent;
- How trauma response can be managed in future.
- Recommendations for further treatment.

Parents can expect to:

- Learn how the body and brain responds to stress and trauma.
- Explore how trauma shapes thoughts, emotions and behaviours.
- Gain tools to understand and manage stress responses.
- Not having to discuss personal trauma.
- Develop in a non-judgemental educational space with encouragements to think critically and explore new perspectives.



It is important to note that this is not a behavioural change programme which aims to reduce the risk posed to children from domestic violence or abuse.

The Trauma Sense programme does not replace the need for a full DAPP or vulnerability programme where there are concerns that a perpetrator represents an ongoing risk to children or where a victim requires support to recognise risk and prioritise child safety.

Who is the programme suitable for?

This programme is available for both perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse who have traumatic experiences that may impact their ability to thrive and parent effectively.

It is particularly suitable for those mandated to attend as part of a court process and where the presence of trauma is causing the case to stall and has become intractable. The parent will also benefit those parents who may not be ready for therapy or feel apprehensive about disclosing their experiences.

Who developed Trauma Sense?

Martine Cotter developed the TraumaSense programme in association with DV-ACTION programmes in 2025. Martine has 20 years of experience working in the field of domestic abuse and sexual violence and is registered as an expert Domestic Abuse Risk Assessor with DVACT-PAI.

Currently a member of the Parole Board, Martine has also served as an accredited independent chair of statutory Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), overseeing critical assessments focusing on improving systemic responses. Martine previously held the position of CEO at a regional charity that established the first charity-led Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in England. This experience led to a two-year secondment to the Department of Health's National Support Team for the Response to Sexual Violence (NST/RSV), focusing on enhancing standards across the country.

Martine's specialised interest lies in psychotraumatology and the biopsychosocial effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and is a member of the Department of Education's National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel pool of reviewers.

Academically, Martine holds an MSc in Neuroscience and Psychology of Mental Health from Kings College London and a Level 7 Post Graduate Diploma in Strategic Leadership. Martine has Fellowship status with the Chartered Institute of Management and is a member of the Applied Neuroscience Association.

Referrals, timescales and costs

Always check with our office for up to date timescales. In general we have a 2 week wait from receipt of documents to start a programme.

Please note that information sharing is vital to ensuring the safety of victims and children and we require documents and a completed referral form before we can start the work.

Self-referrals from parents will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but it is designed to meet the needs of parents in child protection measures or within the family courts and we will require documents that outline the concerns.

The cost of the programme depends on the status of the case and reporting needs. A reduced cost is available for self-funding parents where requested.

Contact us



Our office is open Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm
To make a referral or an enquiry please contact
our team on **0203 9678368** or email
programmes@dvact.org

You can also visit our website for further
information and answers to frequently asked
questions.

W: <https://www.dvactprogrammes.org/>