

Contents

Title		Pages
About the Author and Risewell Pathways		3
Introduction		4-6
PART ONE: FOUNDATIONS		
Unit 1	Understanding the EBE Role & Trauma-Informed Foundations	7-14
Unit 2	Relationships & Communication	15-26
Unit 3	Emotional Literacy & Regulation	27-34
Unit 4	Conflict Resolution	35-44
Unit 5	Teamwork & Reflective Practice	45-55
Unit 6	Equity, Diversity & Inclusion	56-67
PART TWO: TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE		
Unit 7	What is Trauma?	68-75
Unit 8	Trauma & the Brain	76-83
Unit 9	Trauma-Informed Principles in Practice	83-94
Unit 10	Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE)	95-103
PART THREE: ASSESSMENT & APPLICATION		
Unit 11	Introduction to TIC PIE Assessment	104-113
Unit 12	The Assessment Framework	114-121
Unit 13	Preparing for Visits	122-131
Unit 14	During the Visit	132-138
Unit 15	After the Visit	139-146
Unit 16	Feeding Back Your Insights	147-153
Further Reading		154-155
Glossary		156-157
APPENDICES: <i>These appendices contain practical tools to support the TIC PIE assessment process, as well as resources for the recruitment and framework for EbE volunteers. The assessment tools can be used before, during and after visits to support observations, reflections and insights safely and meaningfully. They are designed as a supportive framework that can be adapted and used flexibly, with the most appropriate tools selected according to the specific service and context.</i>		158-193

About the Author

Sue Funge is the founder of Risewell Pathways and has been developing courses, workshops and learning programmes for nearly four decades. Her work spans trauma-informed practice, wellbeing, coaching, community development, inclusion and psychologically safe environments. Her resources have supported individuals, families, volunteers, staff teams and community groups, helping people strengthen confidence, deepen understanding and build connection.

Sue is passionate about equity, inclusion and improving outcomes for people who have faced challenges, adversity or exclusion. Her approach is grounded in lived experience, relational practice and a deep commitment to psychological safety. She believes trauma-informed and psychologically safe environments benefit everyone, creating workplaces, services and communities where people feel valued, respected and able to thrive.

Through Risewell Pathways, Sue develops practical, adaptable toolkits that build capacity rather than dependency. Her work is principled, accessible and emotionally literate, supporting wellbeing, inclusion and belonging. Sue continues to design new programmes, workbooks and community projects from her home in Oxfordshire, contributing to a growing movement rooted in dignity, humanity and lived experience.

About Risewell Pathways

Risewell Pathways creates practical, emotionally literate resources that strengthen individuals, families, communities and organisations. Grounded in lived experience, trauma-informed practice and values-led design, our tools build confidence, connection and inclusion across diverse settings.

Our publications are designed to build capacity, not dependency. Ready to use and adaptable, they support staff meetings, mentoring, classrooms, community groups, supervision, away days and training programmes.

We believe that small, steady changes create lasting impact and that trauma informed, psychologically safe environments benefit everyone. Our mission is to strengthen wellbeing, inclusion and belonging through practical resources that can be embedded and adapted over time.

Explore the full Risewell Pathways collection at: www.risewellpathways.com

Introduction

This workbook has been created to support organisations, services and community groups who invite and value the perspectives of people with lived experience to influence and improve services, systems and environments. While the term ‘Experts by Experience’ (EbE) is used throughout, many groups use different names. The principles in this workbook can be applied across different settings and contexts.

People with lived experience bring insight, courage and relational depth that cannot be learned from textbooks. Their perspectives help services understand where practice feels safe and supportive, where it may unintentionally cause harm, and how reflective practice can deepen learning and improve experiences. Structured lived-experience roles became prominent in homelessness services, particularly alongside the development of Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE). Other sectors also seek to involve people with lived experience to shape and improve services, for example, mental health services, health and social care and community support.

This workbook honours the contribution of lived experience by offering a clear, supportive structure for safe, boundaried and sustainable involvement in trauma-informed practice, supported by reflective learning throughout. It enhances these experiences by helping people develop the clarity, confidence and skills needed to share their insights in ways that are constructive and facilitate meaningful improvements and change. It also supports organisations to recognise and respond to lived-experience assessments and reflections, strengthening inclusive and psychologically safe environments that are shaped by the realities people describe.

Many people take on lived-experience roles because they want to use their experiences to create change, strengthen services and support others. This workbook recognises the emotional labour involved in that choice. Whether someone is new to this work or has been contributing for many years, the material is designed to support development over time, offering guidance that protects wellbeing and strengthens confidence in the role.

Trauma-informed practice is not simply a set of techniques; it is a way of being relational, reflective and grounded in humanity. Participants are encouraged to notice their own responses, to explore what safety and connection mean in

practice, and to consider how these principles can be embodied in everyday interactions.

This workbook brings together four strands of practice:

- 1. Foundations:** understanding the EbE role, communication, emotional literacy, boundaries, reflective practice, teamwork and equality.
- 2. Trauma-Informed Practice:** the core knowledge needed to understand trauma, the brain, the six principles of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE).
- 3. Assessment & Application:** a complete guide to the TIC PIE Assessment Framework, including preparation, observation, reflective practice, and writing feedback.
- 4. Tools, Templates & Resources:** practical materials that support safe, boundaried and effective EbE involvement.

The workbook can be used for induction, training, self-study, continuing professional development (CPD), team development, reflective practice, supervision and service improvement projects. It is designed to be flexible. Some organisations will use it as a structured training programme; others will use it as a reference guide or reflective tool.

Psychological Safety in Learning

Because this workbook explores trauma, relationships, boundaries and lived experience, psychological safety is essential. Before beginning, it is strongly recommended that organisations meet with participants for an initial conversation or interview, agree a clear working agreement, clarify boundaries, expectations and roles, discuss emotional safety and available support, identify a named person for check-ins and wellbeing, and discuss payment, expenses and practical arrangements. The tools that support these steps, including the Interview Sheet, Guidelines for Working Together and the Working Agreement, are included in Appendix A.

Learning about trauma can stir emotions, memories or physical sensations. Participants are encouraged to move at their own pace, pause when needed, and use grounding strategies. Wanting a break, fresh air or support is not a setback; it is part of working in a trauma-aware way.

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook can be used flexibly. Some organisations may want to adopt a structured programme as part of an induction, training, CPD, team development, reflective practice or service improvement. It is not necessary to complete the workbook in order. Each unit stands alone and can be revisited as needed.

Throughout the workbook you will find reflective questions, activities, spaces for notes, grounding prompts, practical tools and examples from practice. These are designed to help you connect the material to your own experience, strengths and role.

Why This Workbook Matters

Experts by Experience bring insight, wisdom and relational depth that cannot be learned from textbooks. When supported well, EbEs strengthen services by improving psychological safety, shaping trauma-informed practice, offering perspectives rooted in lived reality, supporting co-production and collaboration, and helping services understand what works and what harms. This workbook honours that contribution. It provides the structure, language and tools needed to embed trauma-informed practice in a way that is safe, boundaried and sustainable: for EbEs, for staff and for the people who use services.

Unit One: Understanding the EbE Role and Trauma-Informed Foundations

Purpose of the Unit

This unit introduces the foundations of the Expert by Experience role. It explains what the role involves, the opportunities it offers, and the values that underpin trauma-informed and psychologically informed practice. It also introduces reflective practice, a core skill that supports safe, sustainable involvement and strengthens both TIC and PIE. By the end of this unit, participants will have a clear understanding of what they bring to the role, how boundaries protect wellbeing, and how reflective practice helps them learn, grow and contribute confidently.

Understanding the EbE Role

Experts by Experience bring insight, relational depth and lived understanding that cannot be learned from textbooks. For example, people with experience of homelessness understand what feels safe, what feels dismissive, what helps, what harms, and how environments and policies affect real people. This perspective is essential for shaping services that are compassionate, effective and grounded in reality.

Being an EbE is not about being 'fixed' or 'sorted'. It is about using this experience in a safe, bounded way to influence positive change. The role is about contribution, not disclosure; insight, not emotional labour.

EbEs help organisations understand:

- how services feel to the people who use them
- what supports safety and trust
- what creates barriers or distress
- how environments shape behaviour and wellbeing

The voice of lived experience helps organisations gain clearer insight into their practice and make decisions that support psychological safety and enhance service quality.

Opportunities Within the EbE Role

As participants gain confidence, the ways they contribute may evolve. The EbE role includes a variety of opportunities, and individuals may engage with different aspects of the role as their experience develops.

Advocacy and Voice: Challenging stigma, raising awareness and ensuring that people's experiences are heard and understood. Lived experience insight can influence organisational culture and public understanding.

Co-Production and Service Design: Working alongside staff to design or improve services, helping policies, environments and processes reflect real needs and lived experience.

Training and Education: Contributing to staff training, supporting professionals to understand the emotional, relational and practical realities of homelessness.

Assessment and Feedback: Participating in structured assessments of services or environments, offering feedback that helps organisations improve safety and accessibility.

Peer Support: Offering informal peer support, helping people feel understood, respected and less alone.

Research and Evaluation: Contributing to research projects, helping organisations understand what works, what doesn't, and where change is needed.

Participants do not need to know at this stage which roles they will take on. This unit simply introduces the possibilities so they can begin to imagine where they might want to contribute.

Healthy Boundaries

Boundaries are essential for safe, sustainable involvement. They protect EbE contributors, the people they work with, the team and the organisation. Boundaries help individuals stay grounded, avoid burnout and work in ways that feel safe and manageable. There are different types of boundaries:

- **Emotional boundaries** help individuals recognise when they need to step back.
- **Role boundaries** support clarity about what is and is not part of the EbE role.
- **Time boundaries** help prevent overwhelm and support sustainable involvement.
- **Relational boundaries** help maintain connection without becoming over-involved.

Boundaries are not barriers; they are supports. They enable safe, sustainable and grounded contribution.

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is a core part of trauma-informed and psychologically informed work. It describes the process of taking time, both individually and as a team, to think about the role, what is going well, what feels difficult, how people are feeling, and how actions may affect others. Reflective practice should provide a supportive environment where experiences can be explored honestly and respectfully, providing an opportunity to continually review progress.

Reflecting on experiences supports learning and growth. It involves noticing what happened, how individuals responded, and what might be approached differently in the future. Reflective practice can feel unfamiliar or uncomfortable at first, especially for those who are not used to examining their own responses in detail. Over time, it becomes easier. The more reflection is practised, the more natural it becomes, and the more insight is gained into strengths, patterns and needs.

Reflective practice is not only an individual activity. Group reflection is equally valuable. When people reflect together, they build collective wisdom through sharing ideas, experiences and perspectives. Group reflection helps individuals understand how their work impacts others, and how different experiences shape different viewpoints. It also helps identify common challenges across an organisation and supports collaborative problem-solving.

Reflection is a powerful tool for personal and professional development. It strengthens decision-making, deepens emotional awareness and improves wellbeing. It also supports psychological safety by creating space to pause, notice and respond thoughtfully rather than reactively.

One helpful model for reflective practice is Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, which offers a structured way to explore experiences. The model includes six stages:

- describing what happened
- noticing feelings
- evaluating what went well or not so well
- analysing why things unfolded as they did
- drawing conclusions
- planning what might be done differently next time

It is not necessary to answer every question within the model; it simply provides a framework to support deeper thinking about experiences.

Reflective practice underpins Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) and

strengthens Trauma-Informed Care (TIC). It helps individuals stay grounded, understand their responses and work in ways that are safe, thoughtful and relational. Throughout this workbook, reflective practice will support learning and help build confidence in the EbE role.

Values That Underpin Trauma-Informed & Psychologically Informed Practice

Before exploring the full TIC and PIE frameworks later in the workbook, it is helpful to understand the values that sit underneath them. These values shape how EbEs communicate, share experiences, support each other, give feedback and work with staff. The values include:

Safety

Safety means creating environments where people feel physically, emotionally and psychologically secure. It involves predictable interactions, clear boundaries and a culture where people are not shamed, judged or exposed to harm. Safety is the foundation of trauma-informed practice because people can only think clearly, participate and connect when they feel safe.

Compassion

Compassion is the ability to respond with kindness, understanding and humanity. It means recognising distress, listening without judgement and offering support in ways that do not overwhelm or over-step. Compassion helps build trust and strengthens relationships.

Respect

Respect means valuing people's experiences, perspectives and autonomy. It involves listening carefully, acknowledging differences and treating everyone with dignity. Respect helps people feel seen, heard and understood.

Curiosity

Curiosity is a gentle, open-minded interest in someone's experience. It means asking questions with care, seeking to understand rather than assume, and noticing what might be happening beneath the surface. Curiosity helps avoid judgement and supports deeper understanding.

Empowerment

Empowerment means supporting people to recognise their strengths, make choices and have a voice in decisions that affect them. It involves creating opportunities for people to contribute confidently and safely. Empowerment helps people feel capable, valued and in control.