

2025 Treatment Modalities

A starting point... various trauma-treatment therapies/modalities. Not an exhaustive list at all, these particular treatments are ones where there has been research with positive outcomes in terms of trauma-treatment. Much of which is sourced from Bessel van der Kolk's work.

Please note:

All providers of these services aren't necessarily always 'trauma-informed'

I always recommend having a conversation or requesting information before engaging these services around what their approach to trauma-informed (or aware, sensitive, responsive etc) practice is.

Trauma-Sensitive Yoga (TCTSY)

Developed at the Trauma Center in Brookline, Massachusetts, this approach emphasises choice, interoception, and present-moment awareness. It focuses on helping individuals rebuild connection with their bodies in a safe environment.

<https://www.traumasensitivelyoga.com/facilitators>

Accessibility Note: Specifically designed for trauma survivors; research demonstrates efficacy for complex trauma and PTSD; adaptable for various physical abilities.

Sensorimotor Psychotherapy

Incorporates body awareness into the therapeutic process, focusing on physical sensations and movement patterns to process traumatic memories stored in the body.

www.sensorimotorpsychotherapy.org

Accessibility Note: Requires trained mental health professionals; can be adapted for diverse populations; suitable for those who may find traditional talk therapy challenging.

EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing)

Though primarily a psychotherapeutic treatment, EMDR incorporates somatic awareness and bilateral stimulation to process traumatic memories.

<https://emdrra.org/>

Accessibility Note: Adaptations exist for those with visual impairments; interventions can be modified for diverse needs; contraindicated for certain conditions requiring specialist consultation.

Neurofeedback

Uses real-time displays of brain activity to teach self-regulation of brain function, helping trauma survivors gain control over physiological responses associated with trauma.

<https://anfi.org.au/>

Accessibility Note: Requires specialised equipment; emerging research shows promise for developmental trauma and PTSD; requires sustained attendance for effectiveness.

Theatre Work and Drama Therapy

Provides opportunities for embodied expression, role-play, and collective rhythmic activities that can help process traumatic experiences.

<https://anzacata.org/>

Accessibility Note: Can be adapted for diverse abilities; particularly effective for collective trauma; participants must be adequately resourced to engage with emotional material.

Tai Chi

The rhythmic, meditative movements help regulate the nervous system and increase body awareness while promoting mind-body integration.

<https://www.taichiaustralia.com/>

Accessibility Note: Adaptable for seated practice and various mobility levels; research supports benefits for older adults; gentle approach suitable for various fitness levels.

Qigong

Similar to Tai Chi, these gentle movements combined with breathing exercises help restore balance to the body's energy systems disrupted by trauma.

<https://www.wtqa.org.au/>

Accessibility Note: Highly adaptable for different physical abilities; accessible to beginners; low impact makes it suitable for those with chronic pain conditions.

Rhythmic Movement Activities

Including drumming circles and communal dancing, these activities help synchronise body rhythms and provide a sense of connection.

Note: I can't find a professional association but this is an example of a provider in this space: <https://www.rhythm2recovery.com/>

Accessibility Note: Can be adapted for various physical abilities; research shows effectiveness for social engagement; provides non-verbal expression options.

Martial Arts

Practices that emphasise mindfulness, self-regulation, and controlled movement can help trauma survivors rebuild a sense of agency and safety in their bodies.

<https://maia.com.au/>

Accessibility Note: Need for trauma-informed instructors; may trigger defensive responses in some trauma survivors; adaptations available for various physical abilities.

Melbourne-based option for women:

Conscious Combat Club - <https://www.consciouscombat.club/>

Singing and Choral Work

The regulation of breath and vibration in the body during singing helps activate the social engagement system and regulate physiological arousal states.

Note: Search for local choirs in your community - eg. Community Music Victoria - <https://cmvic.org.au/>

Accessibility Note: Accessible to most ability levels; research shows benefits for respiratory function and anxiety; can be modified for differing abilities.

Body Scans and Mindfulness Practices

Guided attention to bodily sensations helps develop interoception and reconnect with the body in a gentle, controlled manner.

An excellent article on where to start in a trauma-informed way <https://blog.smilingmind.com.au/mindfulness-traumatic-stress-bes-t-practice-guidelines> - search for local mindfulness groups/teachers considering trauma-informed practice in your community

Accessibility Note: May require modification for those with severe dissociation; adaptable for various positions; research supports effectiveness across diverse populations.

Trauma-Informed Movement and Dance

Encompasses various approaches including authentic movement and contact improvisation that allow expression through spontaneous movement and safe physical connection with others.

<https://dtaa.org.au/>

Accessibility Note: Can be adapted for various physical abilities; provides option for non-verbal processing; requires careful facilitation for safety and inclusion.

Breathing Techniques

Specific pranayama practices that help regulate the autonomic nervous system, particularly those that lengthen exhalation to activate the parasympathetic response.

Note: Many breathwork practices are not trauma-informed and can be activating for people with trauma histories. People who experience panic attacks or flashbacks may find breathwork activating/unhelpful. It is critical that participants research the breathwork techniques being shared and discuss with the facilitator their approach to trauma-informed practice/trauma-support.

Accessibility Note: Likely not suitable for many with trauma-histories.

Feldenkrais Method

Gentle movement explorations that increase body awareness and create new neural pathways, bypassing habitual patterns associated with trauma responses.

<https://www.feldenkrais.org.au/>

Accessibility Note: Highly accessible regardless of age or physical ability; research shows benefits for chronic pain conditions; suitable for those who find other movement practices challenging.

Alexander Technique

Focuses on posture, coordination, and movement efficiency, helping trauma survivors release physical tension patterns associated with trauma.

<https://www.austat.org.au/>

Accessibility Note: Typically taught one-on-one allowing for personalisation; accessible to diverse ages and abilities; requires sustained practice for integration.

Tension and Trauma Releasing Exercises (TRE)

Exercises that evoke neurogenic tremors, helping to release deep muscular tension patterns held in the body from traumatic experiences.

<https://www.treaustralia.com/>

Accessibility Note: Caution advised for certain medical conditions; emerging research supports effectiveness for PTSD; can be taught in group settings or individually.

Balancing Shapes/Yoga

Within yoga practice, balancing poses that require present-moment awareness and concentration can help ground individuals in the here and now.

<https://yogaaustralia.org.au/>

Accessibility Note: Can be modified with props and supports; counterindicated for certain vestibular conditions; research supports benefits for attention regulation. Note some classes/types of yoga may suit different people better than others.