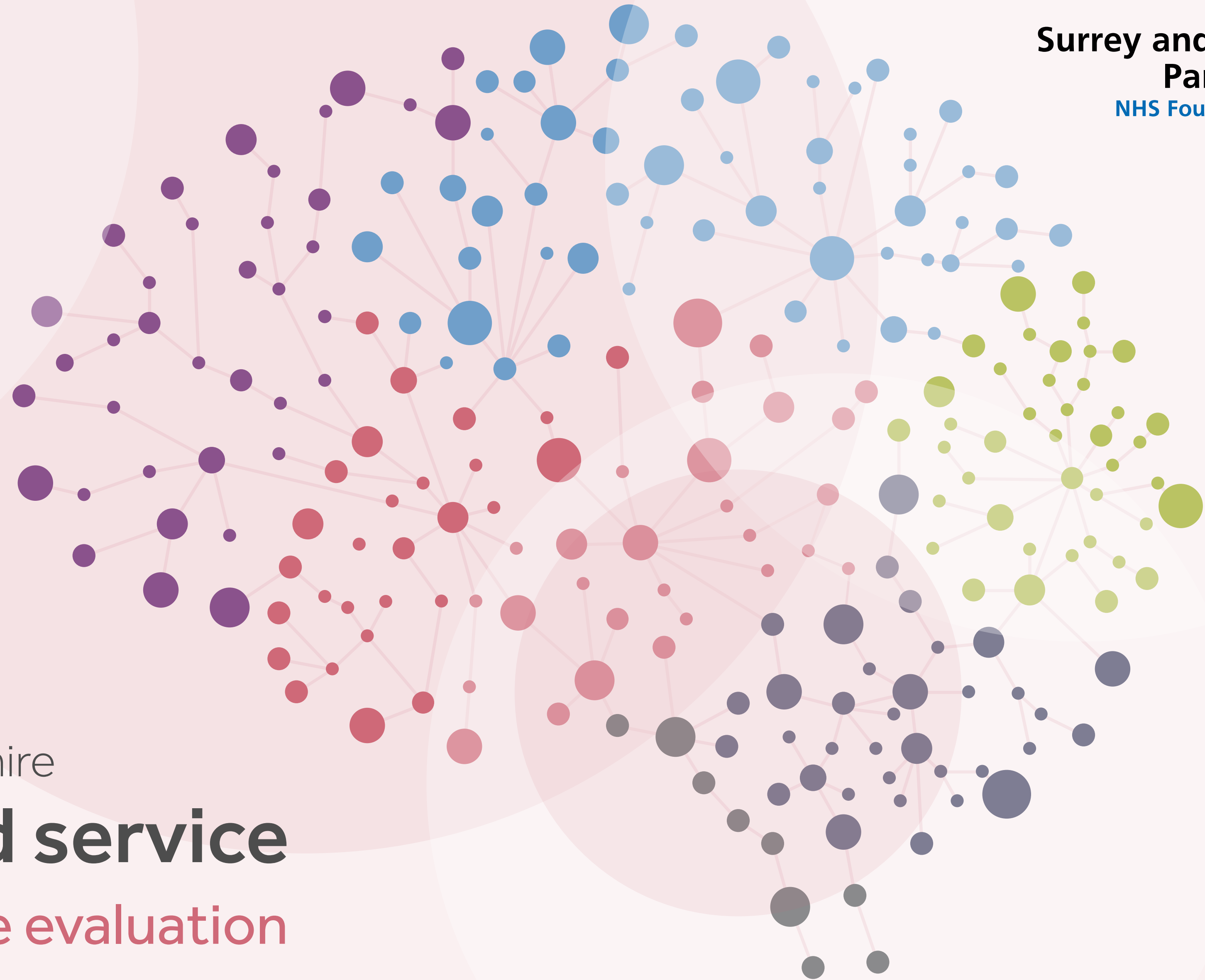




**Health
Innovation**
Oxford & Thames Valley



**Surrey and Borders
Partnership**
NHS Foundation Trust



Surrey and Northeast Hampshire

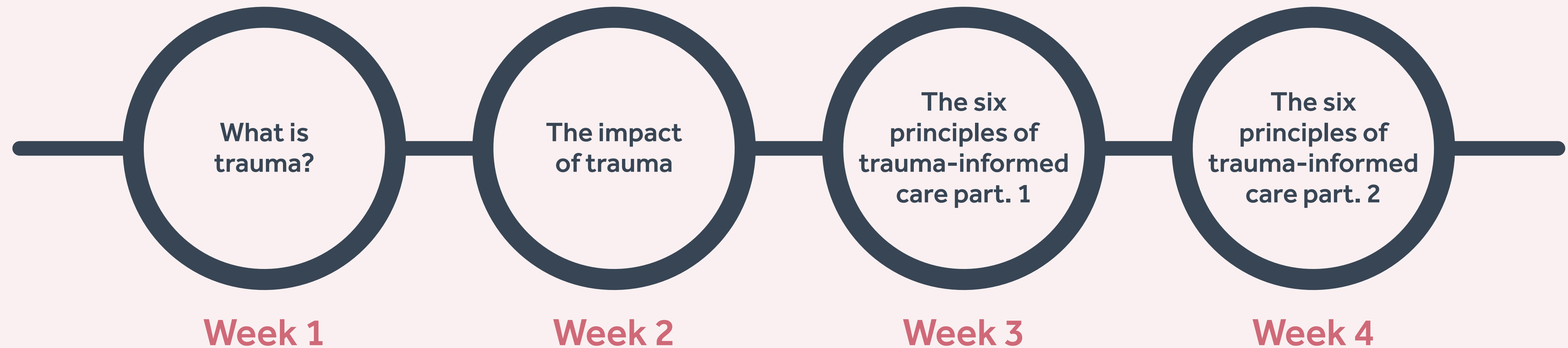
Trauma-informed service

Recovery College course evaluation

End of year one 2023

Introduction

The psychoeducational course “A Trauma-informed Approach to Care” was run by Surrey and Borders NHS Foundation Partnership Trust (SABP) through the Recovery College in September 2022 and in January 2023. The course was run online and comprised of four two and a half hour sessions.





The course was codeveloped and codelivered by SABP staff with clinical and lived experience of trauma and trauma-informed approaches. Each session was also codelivered by someone from the Recovery College.

The sessions were designed to be interactive and to provide insights into trauma and trauma-informed approaches whilst providing a safe space for open discussions. The course was predominantly tailored for people who use services and anyone in caring roles, however there were no requirements for access and the course was open to anyone enrolled as a student with the Recovery College who had previously attended the Introduction to the Recovery College (IRC) course as a minimum.

The ethos behind running the course is that a deeper understanding about trauma will aid the recovery of those who have experienced it and help them to recognise in themselves behaviours that may be a consequence of trauma. This course aimed to enlighten students about the impact of trauma, not just on those who use services but also from the standpoint of carers and professionals. Furthermore, it is hoped that this understanding will be useful for those who have experienced trauma as well as acquiring the knowledge about how common trauma is, aiding the understanding that they are not alone. It was hoped that by students understanding trauma-informed approaches that they would be more empowered to advocate for themselves and ask for what they need in interactions with services, understanding why certain things are important to them and the difference they can make if they are adhered to.

Learning about the six trauma-informed principles will contribute to students knowing what a trauma-informed approach could look like and what services are working towards, which may enhance their level of their care. The course content was accompanied by various grounding techniques enabling students to leave with skills and tools to actively contribute to their well-being.

Evaluation

Evaluation consisted of a feedback form administered at the end of each course and invitation to participate in an online interview from June 2023. Interview participants were reimbursed for their time, given an information leaflet and completed an online consent form.

11 people completed the course in September 2022 and 11 people completed the course in January 2023, two people had to withdraw part way through due to illness. Seven students completed the feedback form at the end of each course. One student participated in an online interview and one student withdrew from interview as they did not want to share their details for reimbursement. A limitation of the evaluation was the long period in between the courses ending and the follow-up contact for interview invitation. This is being considered for the evaluation of year two training.

Results

Evaluation

Students were asked to provide a goal that they wanted to achieve by the end of the course.



All students responded that they had met their goal at the end of the course. When asked on a scale of 1 (poor) - 5 (excellent), how effective did students find this course in helping them to achieve their goal five students reported 5 and two students reported 4.

Engaging in future activities

Students were asked if the course had supported them to engage with further activities relating to education, employment and volunteering. Six out of seven students reported that the course had supported them to engage with at least one activity, see Table 1.

Has your time on this course supported you to engage with any of the following?	Number of students who reported engaging
Education	2
Paid employment	2
Voluntary employment	2
Another Recovery College course	3
Volunteer at Recovery College	2

Table 1.

What was helpful about the course?

When asked what they found helpful about the course student responses included comments about the sessions themselves and how they were run:

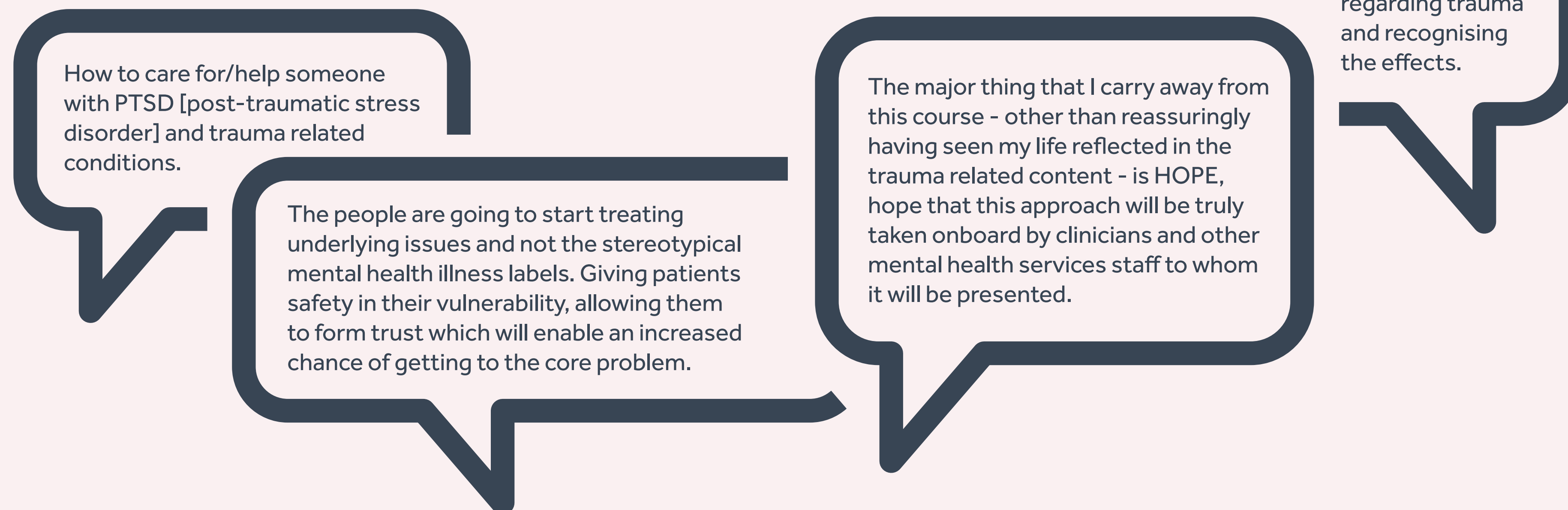
Peer support.

Lots of time for questions and comments welcomed and valued.

The course was fun and engaging, really interactive with a good balance of education and grounding exercises.

The TIAC [trauma-informed approach course] course was really amazing, hugely informative and thoroughly well presented. There was an excellent balance of information-input from facilitators and lived experience-input from attendees. There was also a well-held boundary between what were very valuable thoughts/feelings from participants and what could easily have turned into an overload of 'telling my Life story'. This boundary was held with empathy and skill.

As well as comments around the content that was taught and what this meant to them and their view of future service interactions:



The student who participated in an interview agreed that since they completed the course they have a better understanding of what trauma is and the impact of trauma and that they understand the six principles of trauma-informed care.

They also strongly agreed that since the course they have a better understanding of what to expect from care that is trauma-informed and feel more confident to speak to people supporting them about trauma-informed care and to tell those supporting them what they need.

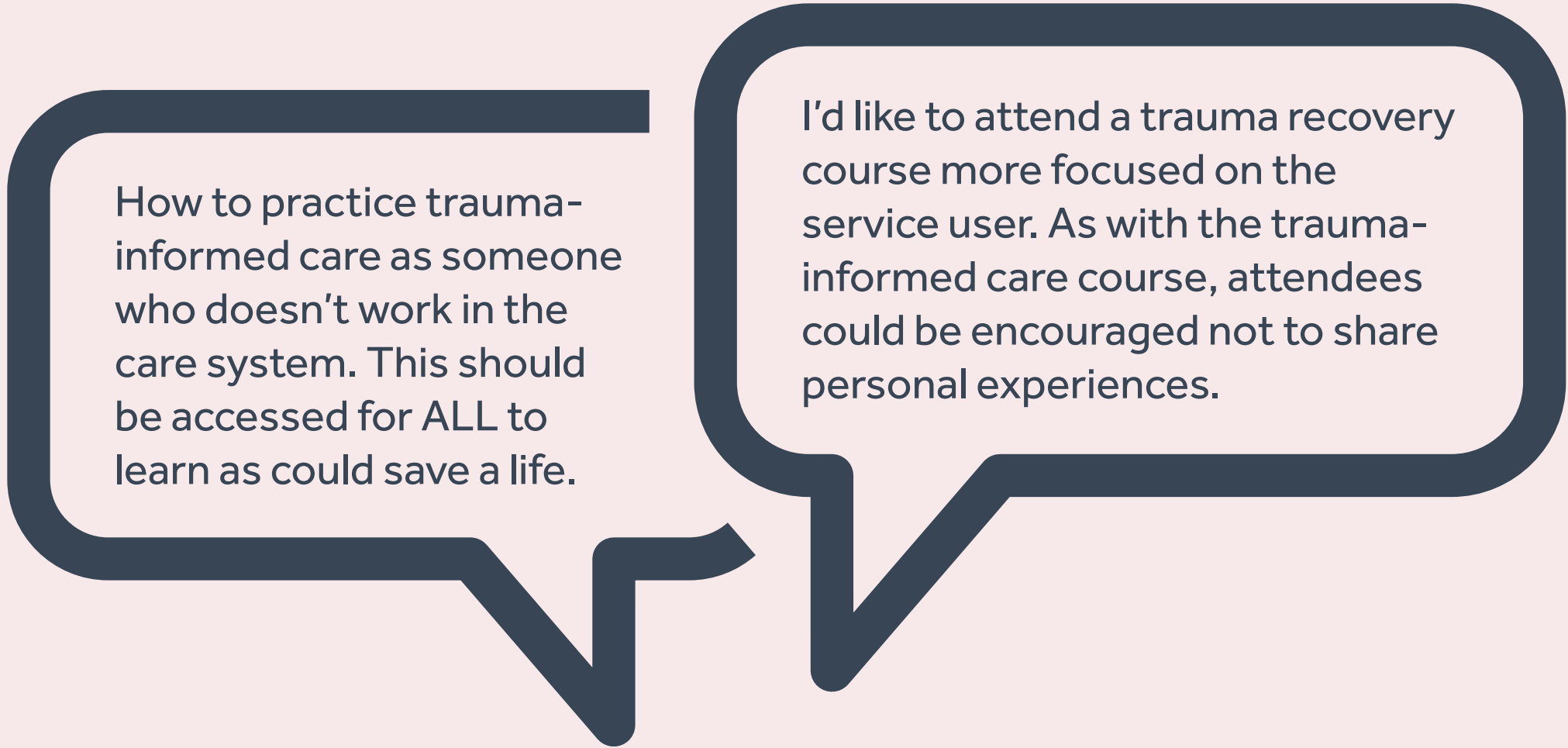
The student also commented in interview that the course had allowed them to approach services with hope and that they would feel better able to challenge things such as a medical model approach. They also stated that they felt empowered by the fact it is run within their local NHS Trust.

Suggestions for improvements

The majority of students were satisfied with online running of the course, however one student commented on the online technology and stated that they would have preferred a face-to-face course. Another student commented that the videos shown were very informative, but they found them quite triggering.

One student at interview commented that the grounding exercises were not appropriate for them as they cannot focus on the internal so a wider range of options for this would have been helpful.

Two students provided comments on how they would like the course to be tailored.



How to practice trauma-informed care as someone who doesn't work in the care system. This should be accessed for ALL to learn as could save a life.

I'd like to attend a trauma recovery course more focused on the service user. As with the trauma-informed care course, attendees could be encouraged not to share personal experiences.

Additional comments

Several students also provided additional comments that advocated for trauma-informed approaches being more widely adopted and training being available to all.

Please make this course mandatory for all trust staff.

The principles of Trauma-informed Care should be implemented across all NHS services. I've lost count of the times I've felt ignored, not believed and dismissed by hospital consultants, mainly with physical ill-health.

The course gave me a sense of self confidence to keep advocating for myself when interacting with the services but also within my work environment (school) where I believe trauma-informed care should be applied more. Hearing that the course is delivered also to the professionals made me hope that there will be more awareness on what is useful and what may not be helpful when receiving the support and that the approach will be universal across agencies and care related jobs.

I thought I had something wrong with me, so to find out the way I've reacted throughout my life is a response to things that have happened helps me go out with my head held high. It would make a huge difference to people coming into contact with services to understand the connection between life circumstances and how you are." [From interview]

You said we did for year two

- Change from four weeks of two and a half hour sessions to five weeks of two hour sessions, to reduce burden of each session on the students.
- Review all content to ensure it is up to date with the growing evidence base.
- Review all videos for any alternatives that might be less likely to trigger for people. Ensure there are additional trigger reminders and explainers of the video before these are played. Adapt order of content to include grounding exercises after videos are played.
- Ensure all grounding exercises have more of an external focus rather than internal, as these are less likely to be triggering for people.
- Consideration of running training in person.
- The training is available to all staff but not currently mandatory. We will advocate for training to be mandatory.
- Where possible, running the group in the morning so there is more time during office hours to get support if needed. As well as continuing not to run the group on a Friday, so there is time during the week to get support if needed.
- Include more content about recovery, post traumatic growth and that trauma does not always mean someone struggles or will go onto have difficulties. Include stories of people who have experienced trauma but gone on to achieve great things to give a message of hope.

Next steps for evaluation

The service is continuing to work with Health Innovation Oxford and Thames Valley as independent evaluators on the evaluation plan for the next course. Changes to the evaluation include an online questionnaire bespoke to the course in addition to the Recovery College feedback form and a shorter time period between the end of the course and invitation to interview to try and maximise participation.



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