



Supporting People with Multiple Complex Needs



QUICK GUIDE TO MULTIPLE AND COMPLEX NEEDS



This quick reference guide provides definitions of some common terminology, as a reminder to supporting people with multiple and complex needs. These definitions are explored in the Fulfilling Lives eight-part Supporting People with Multiple Complex Needs.

Key Definitions:

Co-production

Co-production is a way of working that offers an alternative to the traditional, hierarchical top-down flow of power. It involves sharing control with those using a service, ensuring they have equal control over the design, delivery and commissioning of any service which affects them.

Multiple and complex needs (MCN) or multiple disadvantage

A person who is experiencing three or more of the following health and social care needs:

- Homelessness (rough sleeping/in temporary accommodation/sofa surfing/in hostels)
- Substance and/or alcohol misuse
- Mental ill-health
- Current or historical offending

Experience of other issues faced may also include domestic violence and abuse, physical ill-health, insecure housing, learning difficulties/disabilities, removal of children into the care system and living in poverty.



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Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE)

Services which are run and designed around the psychological and emotional needs of the people with these experiences.

Stigma

Negative attitudes (stereotypes) towards someone because of a personal trait, characteristic or health issue that is thought to be, or is a disadvantage.

'Survival mode'

A short-term way of thinking based on fear, when your 'fight-or-flight' response is triggered. When a person's basic needs are not being met, such as safety, food, shelter, and regular sleep, they live in 'survival mode'. It will be much more difficult for them to think about other needs beyond that.

Trauma

An event which leaves a person feeling helpless and terrified which involves a lack of control/ unpredictability, loss of safety, fear of serious harm/death. The experience is defined by the individual's feelings rather than the event itself. Early childhood trauma has a greater effect than only experiencing trauma as an adult. Complex trauma involves prolonged or multiple traumas usually from a caregiver in early childhood (adverse childhood experiences).

Trauma-informed care

The key principles of trauma-informed care are:

- Trauma Awareness: Understanding the widespread existence and impact of trauma among their service users and workforce. Policy and practice should reflect this awareness, for example, through staff training, consultation, and supervision. Agencies might also provide routine screening for histories of traumatic exposure, safety assessments and develop strategies to increase access to trauma-specific services.
- Safety: Policy and practice reflect a commitment to provide physical and emotional safety for service users and providers.
- Choice & Empowerment: to avoid re-traumatisation.
- Strengths Based: Approach with a focus on strength and resilience, service users and staff build skills to help them identify their own strengths and develop coping skills.



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Trauma-informed practice

A way of working that accounts for the impact trauma might have had in a person's life. The key goals in trauma-informed practice are to:

- raise awareness among staff and services about the wide impact of trauma
- prevent re-traumatisation of clients in service settings that are meant to provide support, and
- develop policies and practices that assist healing from trauma

Trauma-informed principles

Principles developed from trauma-informed practice might include safety, trust and transparency, collaboration, choice, and voice.

'Window of tolerance'

When a person is within their 'window of tolerance' they feel like they can deal with anything that's happening in their life. Although they might feel stress or pressure, it doesn't bother them too much. Stress and trauma can reduce a person's 'window of tolerance', but with treatment they can increase it so that they can cope with greater challenges.

About Fulfilling Lives

The South East Fulfilling Lives Project started in 2014 and is funded until July 2022 by the National Lottery Community Fund. The Project is one of 12 projects across England funded to (i) provide intensive support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage (ii) involve people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage at all levels (iii) challenge and change systems that negatively affect people facing multiple disadvantage.

The purpose of this initiative is to bring about lasting change in how services work with people with multiple and complex needs and we collaborate with partners to work towards this objective. We are committed to putting co-production into practice and value the voices of experience. We also recognise the value of trauma informed approaches in our work and the work of others.