



# **TRAUMA-INFORMED COACHING AND CLUBS**

# **SAFEGUARDING**

# TRAUMA-INFORMED COACHING AND CLUBS

**THE JUDO COMMUNITY HAS BEEN A WELCOMING, ADAPTIVE, INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR MANY INDIVIDUALS OVER MANY YEARS. WE KNOW THAT CLUBS ACROSS THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF GREAT BRITAIN HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD TO SUCCESSFULLY SUPPORT JUDOKA FROM DIVERSE WALKS OF LIFE WITH UNIQUE AND SOMETIMES TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES.**

**We hope this document can facilitate the continued support of judoka who have experience trauma in their lives. We hope club leaders can use this document to evaluate how they support current and/or future members of their club.**

Creating a Trauma-Informed approach to judo participation and coaching involves understanding, recognising, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. A Trauma-Informed approach emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety and helps create an environment where judoka can feel supported and thrive. Your club may already be using a Trauma-Informed approach to judo delivery but you may not yet realise it.

## WHAT IS TRAUMA

Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects.



## INTRODUCTION

### SHORT TERM

- We want to help those who have a desire to learn more about Trauma Informed Coaching.
- We also want to learn more from those who are already actively undertaking Trauma Informed Coaching / Work.

### MEDIUM TERM

- Create a group of individuals and clubs who are willing to discuss methods of support and delivery.

### LONG TERM

- Develop and implement research to better understand the role that judo can play for those who have been through or are currently living with trauma.

## GOALS





# UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRAUMA:

### Acute Trauma

Normally refers to singular one-off events.

### Chronic Trauma

Normally refers to repeated traumatic events.

### Complex Trauma

Normally refers to multifaceted and/or varied traumatic events.

## TRAUMATIC EVENTS CAN AFFECT:

- Our Mental Health
- Our Physical Health
- Our Behaviour
- Our Overall Well-being
- Overall Life Expectancy

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRAUMA AND THEIR EFFECTS](#)

## TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE – SOME CONTEXT:

**There are more people dealing with the effect of Trauma than most people expect. Did you know....**

Evidence of the full impact of trauma has been emerging now for several decades, establishing beyond doubt that its effects can be wide-ranging, substantial, long-lasting and costly. Resulting from harmful experiences such as violence, neglect, war and abuse, trauma has no boundaries with regard to age, gender, socio-economic status or ethnicity, and represents an almost universal experience across the countries of the world. The seminal Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study (Felitti, et al., 1998) suggests that childhood trauma is common: 30 per cent of the sample of over 17,000 people reported substance use in their household; 27 per cent reported physical abuse; 25 per cent reported sexual abuse; 13 per cent reported emotional abuse; 17 per cent reported emotional neglect; 9 per cent reported physical neglect; and 14 per cent reported seeing their mother treated violently.

Research exploring the distribution of traumatic events based on gender, age, ethnic background and socio-economic status has shown that traumatic events are more frequently experienced

by people in low socio-economic groups and from black and minority ethnic communities (Hatch & Dohrenwend, 2007). In Scotland, one in seven adults reported four or more ACEs, with those in the most deprived areas twice as likely than those in the least to experience this quantity of ACEs. ACEs have also been shown to be highly correlated with socio-economic disadvantage in the first year of life (Marryat & Frank, 2019). Those who reported four or more ACEs were significantly more likely to have lower mental wellbeing scores, be obese, have cardio-vascular disease and/or limited long term physical or mental health conditions (Scottish Health Survey, 2019). A study involving a systematic review of the international literature estimated that half of the people in contact with mental health services had experienced physical abuse and more than one-third had experienced sexual abuse in childhood or adulthood, indicating rates that were significantly higher than the general population (Mauritz, Goossens, Draijer, & van Achterberg, 2015). Other surveys have found that people using mental health services are substantially more likely to have experienced domestic and sexual violence in the previous year compared to the general population (Khalifeh, et al., 2015).

[READ MORE ABOUT TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE FROM THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT](#)

# KEY PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA-INFORMED COACHING

Trauma-Informed approaches are increasingly recognised in sports and community settings, including sports clubs, as a way to support the mental and physical well-being of members who may have experienced trauma. By adopting Trauma-Informed principles, a judo club can create an inclusive space where all members feel safe, respected, and empowered in their training journey.

## EMPOWERMENT:

**Judoka are supported in building confidence, resilience, and self-determination, by:**

- Validating and respecting the feelings, concerns, and experiences of all members.
- Encouraging individuals to set goals and take ownership of their progress.
- Providing guidance and opportunities for leadership roles within the club.
- Acknowledging that those who have experienced trauma may feel powerless or isolated, and creating an environment where they feel supported and valued.

## SAFETY:

**The physical, psychological, and emotional safety of all judoka, coaches, and staff is a top priority, by:**

- Ensuring that all members feel safe on and off the mat and asking what they need to feel secure.
- Providing a training environment free from threats, harm, or unnecessary risk of injury.
- Taking steps to prevent re-traumatisation for those with past negative experiences.
- Implementing clear safety policies, safeguarding procedures, and emergency protocols.

## TRUSTWORTHINESS:

**Trust is built through transparency in the club's rules, coaching methods, and expectations, by:**

- Coaches and staff clearly explaining the club's goals, training instruction, and club policies.
- Following through on commitments and maintaining consistency in coaching and leadership.
- Setting realistic expectations for progression and competition, avoiding false promises.

## CHOICE:

**Judoka are encouraged to take an active role in their training, development, and personal goals, by:**

- Providing opportunities for members to voice their preferences in training and competition.
- Listening to the concerns and aspirations of judoka at all levels.
- Clearly explaining options for progression, competition, and skill development.
- Recognising that those with past trauma may struggle with trust or feeling in control, and supporting them with patience and understanding.

## COLLABORATION

**The collective experience of coaches, athletes, and club members is valued in shaping a positive training environment, by:**

- Encouraging peer support and mentorship among judoka of different skill levels.
- Regularly seeking feedback from members and staff on how the club can improve.
- Actively involving members in decision-making and club activities beyond training.

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATION:

**The club fosters an inclusive and respectful environment, ensuring that all members feel welcomed and valued, by:**

- Offering training spaces and sessions that are mindful of gender, ability, and personal needs.
- Recognising and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of all members.
- Adapting policies and practices to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of individuals.

## REFLECTION POINT

Is your club successful in:

### BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS:

Developing strong, positive relationships between coaches, Welfare Officers, volunteers and judoka.

### RECOGNISING SIGNS OF TRAUMA

Be aware of signs such as anxiety, aggression, withdrawal, and changes in performance.

### RESPONDING WITH COMPASSION

Using empathetic communication and provide the appropriate support without judgment.

### ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

Creating an inclusive environment where all judoka feel they belong.





# CONSIDERING WHERE YOU AND/OR YOUR CLUB IS ON THE TRAUMA-INFORMED PATHWAY

When we work with people, no matter what our job role and remit, we are likely to come in to contact with people who have experienced trauma.

For those who are beginning to explore what trauma is and how they can intentionally support others, it may be helpful to consider the four stages of understanding in relation to Trauma-Informed support from a club perspective.

## BUILDING A TRAUMA-INFORMED JUDO CLUB

### Stage 1 Trauma-Aware

The club starts to recognise that trauma and adversity can affect members, coaches, and staff.

Coaches begin to understand that past experiences might influence how someone trains, competes, or interacts with others on and off the mat.

### Stage 2 Trauma-Sensitive

The club begins looking at ways to make training and coaching more supportive. Coaches and staff reflect on how their current approach might impact members and start making adjustments to create a more inclusive and understanding environment.

### Stage 3 Trauma-Informed

Trauma-Informed principles become part of the club's culture. Coaches actively support members who may have been affected by trauma, ensuring the training space feels physically and emotionally safe. Trust, empowerment, and inclusivity are at the heart of everything the club does.

### Stage 4 Trauma-Responsive

At this stage, being Trauma-Informed is just how the club operates—it's second nature. It's no longer just a few people driving the change; everyone understands and applies these principles. The club regularly checks in on how things are working and ensures all members feel safe, valued, and supported.

By moving through these stages, a judo club can create an environment where all members feel welcome, confident, and able to reach their full potential, no matter their past experiences.

## REFLECTION POINT

Does your club provide?

**Training and Education:** Educate coaches, staff, and volunteers about Trauma and its effects.

**Policies and Procedures:** Developed and implemented policies that support Trauma-Informed practices.

**Safe Physical Spaces:** Ensure dojos and training facilities are safe, welcoming, and accessible.

**Consistent Routines:** Provide predictable schedules and routines.



## SIGNS OF TRAUMA AND HOW IT MAY MAKE PEOPLE FEEL

People who have experienced trauma in the past, or are going through it now, may behave or express emotions in ways that are out of character for them. However, everyone reacts to trauma differently, and the way someone feels or displays behaviours can change over time — even months or years after an event.

Trauma may display itself through but not limited to:

- Physical Trauma, bruising, injury or a change in movement
- Anger
- Numbness or difficulty feeling any strong emotions
- Loss of identity or a sense of who they are
- Fear or panic
- Grief
- Worry
- Irritableness
- Confusion
- Restlessness
- Unsure of needs or wants
- Hypervigilance - overly alert and aware of surroundings.
- Shock or horror
- Shame

## SOMETIMES UNFAMILIAR AREAS OF COACHING CAN BE DAUNTING, SO, LET'S CONSIDER WHAT TRAUMA-INFORMED COACHING IS AND ISN'T.

**IT IS** building on lots of work that is already taking place in judo clubs across Great Britain.

**IT ISN'T** about us all becoming 'therapists' or trauma experts.

**IT IS** relevant to us all, 'trauma is everyone's business'

**IT ISN'T** about 'Them' and 'Us'.

**IT IS** a journey of learning

**IT ISN'T** easy, there are no shortcuts.

**IT IS** about starting where you are, doing what you can, with what you have

**IT ISN'T** about changing your job or role.

**IT IS** all about building and managing relationships.

**IT ISN'T** about trying to 'fix' people



# STEPS TOWARD A TRAUMA-INFORMED JUDO CLUB

**Small actions. Big impact. Start where you are.**

## 1. Start the Conversation

Share this guide with coaches and volunteers  
Bring it to a club meeting  
Take on learning/CPD and discussions

## 2. Review What You Do

How are new members welcomed?  
Is your coaching approach clear and consistent?  
Do your policies support different needs?

## 3. Build Knowledge

Take part in trauma-awareness or safeguarding training  
Learn how trauma can affect behaviour and engagement

## 4. Listen to Members

Ask for honest feedback  
Make space for people to share experiences  
Use what you learn to make small changes

If you would like to discuss any of the subject matter within this document please contact:

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We are eager to learn and connect with others in the community who are already supporting, or aspire to support, individuals who have experienced trauma. If you or your club are involved in this important work, we would love to hear from you. Please feel free to reach out to us at either or both of the email addresses above.

## CONTACTS

## RESOURCES



Sowing Seeds:  
Trauma Informed  
Practice for Anyone  
Working with  
Children and Young  
People

[CLICK HERE](#)



Opening Doors:  
Trauma-Informed  
Practice for the  
Workforce

[CLICK HERE](#)



Training and  
Resources in  
Safeguarding and  
Child Protection, to  
View Training and  
CPD Offering

[CLICK HERE](#)



Key Principles  
of Trauma-  
Informed Practice

[CLICK HERE](#)



Trauma-Informed Sport  
and Physical Activity  
Training Module

[CLICK HERE](#)



Abuse Awareness in  
Sport Training Module

[CLICK HERE](#)



Trauma-Informed  
CPD

[CLICK HERE](#)

