



Centre for Developmental
and Complex Trauma

Part of St Andrew's Healthcare



Guide to words, clinical language and research terms often used in academic trauma focused conferences

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www.stah.org/cdct/

Acknowledgments

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Distribution of the guidance

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Introduction

For the last 8 years, I have gone from undergraduate to postgraduate studies and now I'm on the verge of submitting a PhD proposal. This is after over 30 years of not doing formal education. During that time, like many people, I did numerous training courses to enable me to carry out whatever position I held at the time. That was built on completing a less-than-satisfactory secondary education due to a lack of motivation, support and encouragement. Yet, I was always interested in people and learning from a young age.

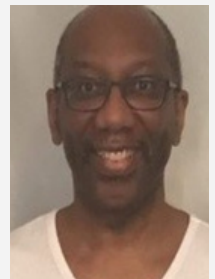
As a mature student, I have been transformed by education. This has been achieved through much blood, sweat and tears by myself and others. Even when you enjoy it, it is not always easy. Now, I am both an Expert by Experience and qualification. However, it meant entering into a new culture and learning a new language, Academia. Rita Mae Brown American writer, feminist and activist said, "Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going." Language is important. Therefore, we are putting together this introductory glossary to give active learners a little help in this new transformative and difficult environment.

We are making a start through constructing this glossary is a start which we have coproduced with Experts by Experience, thank you to them. It is not exhaustive but we want it to be helpful when attending conferences and having discussions around trauma.

In that same spirit, of coproduction, we aim to develop further resources to assist experts by experience, those who come from less traditional or disadvantaged routes, to progress toward their potential in the educational world. The benefits, we hope, will be mutual in students successfully managing their educational targets while having a sense of belonging. In addition, the world of education is being enriched and challenged by new people through new stories developing new knowledge. To use Academic speech, the telos is to employ methodologies such as ethnography to formulate new epistemologies and pedagogies. Until recently that would have been gobbledegook to me.

Mr David Gibbs

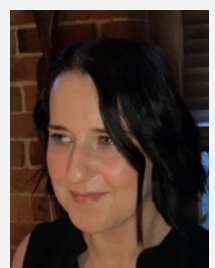
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Making sure that people, from different backgrounds, can access and feel welcome to attend our conferences is one of our key priorities. The language used in academic forums can extend our understanding of complex phenomena, help us to communicate ideas consistently and explain the outcomes from research. Yet, academic language also has the power to exclude, stigmatise and disempower. This guidance is the first step, of a series of initiatives, that we are developing to try and make academic conferences more accessible and less overwhelming to people who are not from academic backgrounds. We are conscious this is our first attempt to produce a guidance document of this type and that whilst some parts may work well, we will need to keep refining. Please send suggestions for new terms to include in the guidance and feedback on current definitions to cdct@stah.org.

Dr Deborah Morris

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How to use this guide

This glossary is, we hope, a starter guide to help those attending conferences and discussions around the subject of trauma. It is not an exhaustive list and we encourage you to use it as a foundation to develop your own glossary of helpful words, terms and definitions.

Treat this glossary like a dictionary in which words and phrases are listed alphabetically with their usage or common meaning. A blank page is included for you to add words that you find helpful.

Words and meanings will change and research will give us deeper/new meanings and innovative approaches because the desire to learn, grow and heal are part of the human experience.

The Centre offers this document as a work in progress, an invitation to co-production and ongoing curiosity.





Word / term	Definition
ACE's	This acronym stands for "Adverse Childhood Experience". This term is often used to describe traumatic / stressful or difficult experiences in childhood. Originally, 10 ACEs were described in research led by Dr X Fettieli. They included 5 direct forms of abuse and 5 types of 'household' adversities. ACEs have now become an important framework for describing childhood adversity. This list has now been extended to include wider forms of adversities that may be more likely to occur in different populations and communities.
Allostatic Load	Coined by Bruce McEwen and Eliot Stellar, it refers to the accumulated toll on the body of repeated or chronic stress.
Autoethnography	This is a type of research method where a researcher draws on personal experiences connecting it to a wider cultural context for meanings.
Auto induced PTSD	Auto-induced means PTSD that has developed by the persons own actions. This can be following a range of different incidents. For example, self harm, suicide attempt or from aggressive / violent or offending behaviour.
Avoidance	Emotional control that provides temporary relief from anxiety, guilt, shame and other uncomfortable thoughts or feelings.
CAPS 5	A structured interview that can be used to assess and diagnose PTSD.
CASP	This acronym stands for "Critical Appraisal Skills Programme", a questionnaire used to assess the quality of a journal paper.
Cisgender	Where a person identifies with the binary gender they were assigned at birth (boy/girl) based on their birth sex (male/female).
CJS	This stands for "Criminal justice system." The agencies involved in the detection and prevention of crime, the prosecution of those accused of offences, the conviction and sentencing of those found guilty, and the imprisonment and rehabilitation of ex-offenders.



Word / term	Definition
Collective Trauma	A shared response or emotional reaction to a catastrophic event that affects a large number of people.
Compassion focused therapy/ CFT	A type of therapy that encourages the client to be compassionate towards themselves and others and to reduce self-criticism. It is associated with Professor Paul Gilbert.
Control trial	A study design when one group receive the intervention / treatment being studied (often called the experimental group) and group who do not receive the intervention (called the control group).
CPTSD	This acronym stands for, Complex post-traumatic stress disorder. This is a new trauma diagnosis that was designed to acknowledge the range in complexity and severity in those with significant histories of exposure to traumatic events.
Co production	The explicit, full and resourced involvement of public, patient and/or Expert by Experience in decision making, service design and delivery.
Delegate	People attending a conference who are not giving a talk or presentation.
Developmental Trauma	The early traumatic experiences in children and infants due to the impact of abuse and/or neglect on development, personality and relationships.
DBT	Dialectical behaviour therapy is a type of therapy that supports people to develop skills to regulate emotions, increase their ability to tolerate and accept distress and to develop skills in managing relationships. DBT was originally developed by Professor Marsha Linehan for people diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. It is now used with people with a range of needs, outside of personality disorder and has been adapted for different populations.
Dissociation	A range of experiences which involves a detachment from reality.
DID	"Dissociative Identity Disorder" is where a person's identity is fragmented into two or more distinct personalities.



Word / term	Definition
DSM-V	This stands for "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition". The DSM is manual for diagnosing mental health problems in the US that is often used in research studies.
DSO	DSO stands for "Disturbances in Self-Organization" and forms part of the diagnostic criteria for complex PTSD. Specifically, the 'complex' part of CPTSD. DSO relates to three areas of need, problems in (1) affect dysregulation, (2) negative self-concept and (3) disturbances in relationships.
EMDR	"Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing". It is a trauma therapy which uses repeated eye movements to process traumatic memories.
Epidemiology	The study of the causes and frequency of health and disease
Epigenetics	The study of changes in gene activity occurring without altering the DNA sequence.
Epistemology	The theory of knowledge, particularly concerned with sources and limits of knowledge
EUPD	This acronym stands for, Emotionally unstable personality disorder. This term is often used interchangeably with Borderline Personality Disorder.
Expert by Experience	People with experience of using services personally or as a carer.
Functioning / functional impairment	Limitations due to illness or other conditions that impact the ability to carry out certain functions of daily living.
Gender fluid	A person whose gender identity (man/woman/nonbinary/agender) is fluid and can change during the course of their life.



Word / term	Definition
Gender Diverse and Gender minorities	These terms refer to the diversity of all gender identities. Gender Minorities include anyone who does not fall into the gender binary (man/woman). They may identify as transgender, non-binary, third gender, no gender (agender) or may a changeable mixture of genders (genderfluid). [See transgender and cisgender.]
Grey literature	Information that has been published but not reviewed or edited by a formal process such as peer review for journals. The quality and accuracy of 'grey' literature cannot be confirmed or assured. e.g. dissertations, government documents or self published reports.
Guilt	Is a social emotion. It can be described as a holding on to, a feeling of responsibility or remorse for some offense, something undone, a wrong or something against ones values. It can be warranted or perceived. Guilt can have a profound impact on how people feel about themselves and their ability to connect with others.
Heteronormative	The assumption that heterosexuality (being straight) and binary (man/woman) gender roles are seen as 'normal' or ideal, regarded as superior to those who experience sexuality or gender differently.
Historical Trauma	The cumulative emotional harm of an individual, group or generation caused by a traumatic experience or systemic oppression.
Holistic care	Where all aspects of a person are considered in their treatment (e.g. physical, psychological, social, spiritual).
Hypervigilance to threat	An intense and persistent state of heightened alertness or hyper-arousal in response to perceived threats or danger.
ICD-11	International Classification of Diseases version 11. A guide for diagnosing diseases and mental health problems for clinicians. It is produced by the World Health Organisation. In trauma, ICD-11 is important as it is the first version of the manual to include CPTSD.



Word / term	Definition
Inter-disciplinary	This is relating to more than one branch of knowledge or areas of study.
Intergenerational trauma	The trauma that is passed from one generation to their descendants who were not exposed to the original event.
Inter-sectionality	The multiple forms of inequality which are then compounded.
ITEM	This acronym stands for, International trauma exposure measure –. This is a measure of trauma exposure across different periods of life (childhood, adolescence, adult, lifetime) developed for ICD-11.
ITI	This acronym stands for, "International Trauma Interview", which is a semi-structured clinical interview that assesses PTSD and CPTSD symptoms for ICD-11.
ITQ	International trauma questionnaire – a measure of PTSD and CPTSD for ICD-11.
Likert scale	A ratings scale often used on surveys which measures an opinion/feeling on a scale e.g. from 1 to 5.



Word / term	Definition
Meta-analysis	A statistical method of combining data from multiple quantitative (numeric) studies to help increase our knowledge and understanding. Combining many smaller studies gives a larger sample which improves the quality of the findings. For example meta analyses may combine results from treatment studies to see what the overall effect of the treatment is.
Meta-ethnography	A systematic approach to combining data from multiple qualitative (descriptive) studies. Combining ideas from many smaller studies puts all important ideas about a topic in one place and can be used to develop policy and practice.
Mindfulness	A form of meditation that is often used in mental health services. It involves being aware of what is going on inside the body (thoughts, feelings) and outside the body (sounds, smells), in the here and now.
Mixed methods study	A research design that uses both quantitative (numeric) and qualitative (descriptive) methods of collecting data.
Methods and Methodology	Methods are tools used to do research and move to a solution. Methodology is the analysis of methods, procedures and data.



Word / term	Definition
Moral Distress	It occurs when one knows the right action to take but is constrained from doing it by systemic obstacles or personal limitations.
Moral Injury	The harm that arises from a betrayal of core values, such as justice and loyalty. It's roots are in the military where someone who holds legitimate authority has betrayed what is morally right.
Narrative therapy	A talking therapy that helps people to externalise problems through retelling stories. It considers a person to be an expert in their own experience and separate from their problems. The process of retelling trauma stories can help process memories and gain a new understanding of experiences.
Neurosequential model	A way of working with children and adults that is sensitive to psychological and neurological development levels and can inform what therapies and interventions are selected to promote recovery.
Neurodiversity	This explores human differences (such as intellectual, mental health, and cognitive) without the medical mindset of deficits, celebrating differences and highlighting their need for our social ecosystem.
Non-binary	A person whose gender identity does not fall in a gender binary (man/woman). They may identify as a mixture, a third gender or as no gender (agender).
Paradigm shift	When the leading theory/concept in a field changes.



Word / term	Definition
Pedagogy	The method and practice of teaching, especially in the academic sphere and using theoretical frameworks.
Peer Review	A regulatory system designed to assess the validity and quality originality of pieces of work.
Pervasive	Something that is present or noticeable everywhere (usually something bad).
Polyvagal Theory	Dr. Stephen Porges' Theory explores how the body responds to stress, how we engage with others and interact with the world. The focus is the role of the vagus nerve in emotion regulation, social connection and fear response.
Positive Behaviour Support/ PBS	A framework for providing support to an individual with behaviour of concern by understanding the impact of their environment and developing proactive strategies.
Post-traumatic growth	Positive change/transformation following trauma.



Word / term	Definition
Pre and post measures	Where an assessment/measure is completed before and after participants complete an intervention.
Presentation	(1) A speech that is given or a talk to a group or audience. (2) How one is seen or appears to others.
Prolonged exposure therapy	A talking therapy where clients gradually approach trauma memories they may have been avoiding through a process of gradual exposure to them, combined with learning techniques to manage anxiety and distress.
Prolonged Trauma	This term describes a situation where a person has been exposed to, or experienced trauma for a significant or long period of time. This can relate to one continues trauma or an ongoing series of exposure to different traumas.
Pronouns	A word used to refer to a person instead of their name: he/she/they/you, him/her/them, his/hers/theirs/yours. Neopronouns such as xe/hir/pers/fae are used by some individuals rather than singular they/them.



Word / term	Definition
(applied) Psychologist	A trained mental health professional who draws on scientific knowledge, direct observation and psychological techniques. Specialities exist within psychology involving different training routes and scope of professional practice e.g. clinical psychologist, forensic psychologist, counselling psychologist.
Psychiatrist	A speciality within medicine concerning the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness
Psychoeducation	Information about mental health conditions or interventions that aims to improve understanding and to empower people to be more involved / expert in their needs and treatment.
PTSD	This acronym stands for, Post-traumatic stress disorder.
PTSS	This acronym stands for, Post-traumatic stress symptoms.
PTSR	This acronym stands for post traumatic stress response. It is often used in place of PTSD, as the d (disorder) may be perceived as negative and invalidating.



Word / term	Definition
Quantitative	Numerical data that can be counted or measured e.g. height, age or scores on a questionnaire.
Qualitative	Descriptive data. This can often be gained from interviews or written feedback and is often a rich source of information about people's experiences.
RCT/ Randomised controlled trial	A study design where participants are randomly split into an experimental group who receive the intervention being studied and a control group who do not receive the intervention.
Research Design	The method chosen to answer a research question/conduct a study.
Re experiencing	Unwanted intrusive traumatic memories where experiences are relived through flashbacks or nightmares for example.
Resilience	The ability to manage in a crisis and return to a healthy state.
Survivor guilt	It was originally used to describe feelings experienced by Holocaust survivors. It has developed to include people who have survived a life-threatening situation when others have died, or when it is perceived that they have not experienced as much harm as others in the same situation.
Symposium	A collection of research papers presented at a conference that reflect similar ideas or themes. Conferences often have symposiums, with 2-4 similar papers.
Systematic Review	This is a method allowing detailed, comprehensive searching of published literature/information to help summarise the literature to increase our understanding of a topic.



Word / term	Defintion
Systemic	Present in all parts of an item, system or structure.
Transformative	A holistic positive approach to personal growth and development focusing on behaviours, emotions and thoughts.
TIC	This acronym stands for, Trauma Informed Care.
Transgender	Where a person identifies with a different gender than the binary gender they were assigned at birth (boy/girl) based on their birth sex (male/female) and / or recorded on birth certificate.
Traumatic Grief	The response to an unexpected loss which is compounded by trauma in addition to the mourning of what was lost. This is related to prolonged grief disorder which is a new.
Vicarious or Secondary Trauma	Trauma resulting from hearing or learning about another person's trauma.



Additional words that may be helpful to include.



Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma

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About us

The Centre for Developmental and Complex Trauma (CDCT) was established in 2020 and is based in Northampton. The core aim of the CDCT is to drive better outcomes for people who have experienced repeated incidents of trauma across the lifespan.

Our values

Our values integrate contemporary frameworks of working with trauma; combined with a high level of academic rigour to deliver research, further education and CPD activities that are theoretically underpinned and focused on developing data-driven approaches to understanding trauma and delivering personalised care.

Central to our values are the role of co-production and empowerment. The CDCT operates a highly collaborative working model, prioritizing developing relationships with stakeholder groups to ensure that our work is co-produced, relevant, impactful and translatable to clinical services.

Our CPD events, research and service development activities are conducted through an intersectional lens, with the differential impact of gender, neurodiversity and ethnicity playing a central role in the design and reporting of our activities.

Contact Us

Please contact us for an information discussion about opportunities to work together: please email us at CDCT@stah.org or visit www.stah.org/cdct/

Portfolio of activities

To achieve our goals, the CDCT delivers a growing portfolio of activities and services that seek to advance knowledge, skills and clinical practice.

The CDCT's portfolio of current activities



Student and professional clinical and research placements



Comprehensive research, service development and evaluation programme covering 8 areas of trauma and over 20 current projects



International conference programme



Postgraduate education programme in psychological trauma with the University of Buckingham



Research skills for clinicians CPD programme



Hosting special interest groups



Consultation and supervision



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