



TIPS, CONSIDERATIONS AND INFORMATION

Although it has been identified in previous pre-screenings of Forged from Fire that many people are spontaneously compelled to share their stories, this is not so for everyone. The ways in which people share their stories and react to the stories and experiences of others are extremely diverse. It is important to normalise this by acknowledging that everybody has a different understanding of and response to their experience of trauma. As much as possible, involve the audience/participants in decision making. For example, you might invite attendees to tell their stories in a way of their choosing (e.g., written word, online, verbally, through art). In addition, not everyone who attends the event/screening will want to be involved in discussion/activities. Providing explicit permission for people not to share if they do not want to, is essential.

The emphasis of Forged from Fire is resilience and recovery and how you will remain sensitive to your viewers experiences, while conveying this sense of community renewal, is important to consider. In itself, this film is a message of hope – hope in connection, hope in creation, hope in growth, hope in community, hope in the future, and hope in the human spirit. At the close of your event, consider emphasising the overarching message of this film, but also acknowledge that people experience loss, coping and growth in very different, individual and equally valid ways. It can also be helpful to highlight that both growth and overwhelm after trauma can co-occur and are not mutually exclusive.

Remain mindful of connectedness; social isolation is a risk factor for negative outcomes for people who have experienced significant trauma. Some ways you can promote connectedness are to acknowledge the shared experience of watching the film, while normalising and validating the diversity of responses. Provide resources for further connection (e.g., information about social media and community-based support groups) and remain alert for people who may be socially isolated and offer support.

To promote a sense of safety, providing an organised and predictable environment is important. Providing viewers with a program of the event/screening schedule, including any activities, timeline and venue orientation (e.g., screening time, exits, available support resources). Outlining what viewers can expect can also be helpful, as can ensuring that everyone is aware of what to do and/or where to go if they become distressed during the screening.

Creating a ‘Safe Space’ for discussion activities, whether online, in writing or in person facilitates open and respectful discussion and sharing of stories. Below is a list of suggested guidelines to support your viewers to remain safe when telling their stories:

- Invite people to tell their stories but also acknowledge that this is not something that everyone will want to do.
- Gently suggest ground rules for sharing:
 - Allow others to speak without interruption
 - Refrain from giving unsolicited feedback
 - Remember to use respectful language
 - Remain mindful of others in the room
- Encourage people to use “I” statements and to speak about their own experience, rather than speaking for a whole group.
- Remind attendees that everyone has their own story, interpretation and experience and that others’ perspectives may be very different.
- Indicate the amount of time available for sharing stories, or asking questions, so attendees know when the activity will finish and will not feel cut-off when this time comes to a close.
- Invite any attendees who do not wish to remain for story sharing or Q&A to leave after the film has finished. This demonstrates that some attendees will wish to stay and others will prefer to depart and will prevent attendees from feeling they pressured to remain, if they do not wish to do so.

A trauma-informed approach uses a strengths-based framework that acknowledges the impact of trauma, recognises the signs and symptoms of trauma, responds to trauma in an informed way, and actively works to resist re-traumatisation. Six key principles underpin the trauma-informed approach, these are: safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment, and respect for diversity. Trauma-informed interventions generally consider the need for respect (e.g., trauma survivors have managed the best they could), hope and optimism for recovery, the need to work with people who have experienced trauma in a collaborative way, and the importance of empowering survivors of trauma. This guide has been designed to incorporate the principles and philosophy of a trauma-informed approach.