

Power Threat Meaning

The Power Threat Meaning (PTM) Framework was developed by a group of senior psychologists in UK. It builds on the trauma-informed principles to provide another way of understanding why people sometimes experience different types of distress, confusion, fear and despair, from mild to severe. This is often called 'mental illness', with a traditional psychiatric approach being based on symptoms and diagnosis.

The Framework looks instead at how we make sense of these difficult experiences and how messages from wider society can increase our feelings of shame, self-blame, isolation, fear and guilt.

The PTM Framework is based on robust biopsychosocial evidence. This evidence suggests that if we know enough about people's relationships, social situations, life stories, and their past and current struggles, then we can make sense of these experiences. And if we also think about people's strengths and supports, we may be able to come up with new ways forward.

The Framework has implications for therapeutic or clinical work. It can also offer constructive alternatives in the areas of service design and commissioning, professional training, research, service user involvement, peer support and public information. There are also important implications for social policy and the wider role of equality and social justice.

The framework is based on the following questions:

- 'What has happened to you?' (How is Power operating in your life?)
- 'How did it affect you?' (What kind of Threats does this pose?)
- 'What sense did you make of it?' (What is the Meaning of these situations and experiences to you?)
- 'What did you have to do to survive?' (What kinds of Threat Response are you using?)

The above questions can apply to individuals, families and social groups.

- 'What are your strengths?' (What access to Power resources do you have?) 'What is your story?' (How does all this fit together?)

This above question explores the skills and resources people may have and how they might pull all the ideas and response together into a personal narrative.

Because these processes can affect any of us, the Framework can apply to anyone, whether or not they have been in contact with mental health or criminal justice services.

Dr Lucy Johnstone, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and along with Professor Mary Boyle, the lead authors of the Power Threat Meaning Framework, said:

"The Power Threat Meaning Framework can be used as a way of helping people to create more hopeful narratives or stories about their lives and the difficulties they have faced or

are still facing, instead of seeing themselves as blameworthy, weak, deficient or 'mentally ill'.

It highlights and clarifies the links between wider social factors such as poverty, discrimination and inequality, along with traumas such as abuse and violence, and the resulting emotional distress or troubled behaviour, whether it is confusion, fear, despair or troubled or troubling behaviour.

It also shows why those of us who do not have an obvious history of trauma or adversity can still struggle to find a sense of self-worth, meaning and identity. “

The Power Threat Meaning Framework can be used as a way of helping people to create more hopeful narratives or stories about their lives and the difficulties they have faced or are still facing, instead of seeing themselves as blameworthy, weak, deficient or 'mentally ill'. It highlights and clarifies the links between wider social factors such as poverty, discrimination and inequality, along with traumas such as abuse and violence, and the resulting emotional distress, confusion, fear, despair or troubled/troubling behaviour. It also shows why those of us who do not have an obvious history of trauma or adversity can still struggle to find a sense of self-worth, meaning and identity.

The Framework is a set of ideas and principles which can be implemented into practice.

Presenters

Lucy Johnstone was one of lead authors of framework. John Cromby was part of team.

<https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-29/september/one-one-lucy-johnstone>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6X_TlQltXU

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/business/people/academic/john-cromby>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dqHg3WYtT8>