TRAUMAWISE CHANGE AGENT FIELD GUIDE

The Trainer

You help people understand.

You're the person who can take something complicated and make it make sense. When someone is confused or overwhelmed, you find the words, the example, or the picture that helps it click. And you care about whether people can actually use what they've learned, not just whether they heard it.

At TraumaWise, we call that being a Trainer. You don't need a title or a certificate to be one. If this is how you show up, you're already doing this work. This guide is here to help you see it, name it, and care for yourself while you do it.

Healthy change happens together.

traumawise.com

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What a Trainer is

A Trainer is an educator and guide who teaches trauma-informed ideas in a way that is clear, warm, and practical. Trainers don't just deliver information. They show how trauma-informed learning feels, using pacing, tone, and structure so people feel safe enough to learn. In everyday life, that can look like:

- Explaining what's happening in the brain and body in plain, human language
- Sharing a tool and walking people through how to use it
- Noticing when a group is overwhelmed, and slowing down
- Adapting an idea so it fits the people in front of you
- Pointing people toward what they can practice next

A Trainer's goal isn't to be the expert in the room. It's to help others grow more confident and capable in their own lives and work.

Why it matters

Many people have heard the word "trauma" without ever being helped to understand it. Information alone can overwhelm, shame, or simply slide off. When learning is clear, paced, and relational, people can take it in and actually use it.

Trainers help people and communities:

- Understand how stress and trauma shape behavior and relationships
- Turn big ideas into clear, practical, human language
- Learn in a way that feels safe, not overwhelming
- Build confidence and skill, not just awareness
- Keep practicing after the session ends

Where Advocates walk with one person and Facilitators hold a group, Trainers help understanding spread.

What it looks like where you are

Teaching looks different depending on who you're helping understand. Here are a few of the places it shows up:

Where you are	What helping people understand can look like
At home and with family	Explaining to a relative why a child melts down, in a way that builds compassion instead of blame
In a school	Sharing a regulation tool with colleagues at a staff meeting, or teaching a short lesson on stress and the brain
In a congregation or faith community	Teaching volunteers or Sunday School teachers what kids from hard places may need from them
At work	Leading a lunch-and-learn on stress, burnout, or communicating when tensions run high
In your neighborhood or community	Offering a workshop for parents, caregivers, or community groups who want practical tools

You may recognize yourself in more than one row. That's common for Trainers.

What you already bring

Trainers tend to share a handful of qualities. You don't need all of them. Most people are strong in a few and growing in the rest.

- **Trauma-informed presence.** You teach with warmth, grounding, and attuned pacing.
- **Clear communication.** You explain complex ideas in plain, non-clinical language.
- **Engaging people.** You balance teaching with discussion and hands-on practice.
- **Emotional intelligence.** You notice when learners are activated, and you adjust.
- **Integrity.** You teach in ways that reflect what you're teaching.
- **Adaptability.** You meet the needs of different learners and settings.
- **A love of learning.** You keep growing, reflecting, and practicing yourself.

If you read this list and thought "that's me, on a good day," that counts. These grow with practice and support.

The TraumaWise lens

TraumaWise is built on three pillars, drawing on the work of Howard Bath. Each one shapes how a Trainer teaches:

Pillar	What it means for a Trainer
Felt-Safety	You create a predictable learning space, with grounding and gentle pacing
Connection	You help learners feel seen, valued, and supported
Co-Regulation	You bring a steady presence that helps learners stay engaged and open

Trainers also carry the TraumaWise A.R.C.H.E.S. values: Authenticity, Respect, Compassion, Humility, Expansive Leadership, and System Integrity.

How you differ from the other three roles

TraumaWise names four change agent roles. Each one matters, and change goes further when all four are present.

Role	They tend to…	As a Trainer, you tend to…
Facilitator	Guide shared group experiences and build connection	Teach structured content and build skill
Advocate	Coach one person and support real-life practice	Teach groups and shape understanding
Activator	Build the systems and structures around people	Build knowledge, so people can work within those systems

If your quiz result said you also carry another role, you may move between these. Many Trainers also walk alongside one person, hold space for a group, or start to notice the patterns that need to change around them.

The cost of carrying

Teaching is meaningful work, and it costs something. Naming the cost is part of caring for yourself, not a sign that you're doing it wrong. Trainers often find themselves:

- Hearing people's hard stories after a session, with little time to process them
- Feeling responsible for whether people actually change
- Being seen as the one who always knows, and feeling pressure to have every answer
- Teaching about rest and regulation while running low themselves

None of this means you're not cut out for this. The best teachers keep learning, and they let themselves be cared for too. Your capacity is part of the work, too.

> **A few ways to stay resourced**
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> - **Pace yourself.** Leave room to recover after you teach, especially after heavy topics.
> - **Keep learning alongside others.** You don't have to be the expert all the time.
> - **Practice what you teach.** Let the tools you share support you, too.
> - **Scaffold yourself.** The Scaffold for Sustainability workbook *(coming soon)* will offer a way to build steady support around your own life while you support others.

One thing to try this week

This week, you might notice one moment when you helped someone understand something in a way they could actually use. Then notice one moment when someone helped you understand something.

If you'd like to go a little deeper, here are a few questions to sit with:

1. Who do I find myself teaching or explaining things to?

2. What helps people learn best when I'm the one teaching?

3. Where am I still a learner?

Where to go next

There's no rush. Please take whatever step fits your capacity right now.

FREE, WHENEVER YOU'RE READY

- **The Trainer Path Library.** Podcast episodes, articles, and guides for people who help others understand. traumawise.com/trainer-path-library
- **What is Trauma-Informed Care and Why Does It Matter?** A plain-language starting point you can read, and share with the people you teach. traumawise.com/what-is-trauma-informed-care-and-why-does-it-matter

WHEN YOU'D LIKE TO GO DEEPER

- **Become a TraumaWise Trainer.** For those who feel called to teach trauma-informed workshops and trainings in their community. traumawise.com/trainers
- **TraumaWise Equip.** A community of people doing this work, with a monthly live Q&A and a six-step path you can walk at your own pace. traumawise.com/item/traumawise-equip-membership

Thank you for being someone who helps people understand.

With Unconditional Positive Regard,
Renae M. Dupuis