



Cymru sy'n Ystyriol o Drawma
Trauma-Informed Wales

Power of the Pulpit

You hear your name called. It's your turn to step up and stand in front of a sea of strangers and share a story. Not a fictional story. Not fantasy, sci-fi, romance or a feel-good story — but your story. A glimpse into the history you have lived. And it is scary.

It's scary because what you are about to share, is something you may have shared before in a one-to-one or small group setting — but never in a crowded room of 100 people.

You stand from your seat and instantly your mouth goes dry. With every shaky step, you can feel your voice begin to break. And you haven't even started speaking. You pull the folded paper from your pocket and place it on the pulpit stand. You clear your throat and fix your eyes on a spot at the back of the room. You dare not look at the people.

"I wish the stage would open up and swallow me whole right now," is all you can think.

But somehow, you manage a broken hello and introduction.

You take a deep breath, look at the blurry words on the paper, and remember why you are there. You begin to speak.

The words start to flow more freely. Gradually, you find the confidence to lift your head and look at the faces in front of you — listening intently. You feel relief. You feel freedom.

That's how I felt and continue to feel when I take part in speaking events.

At the Trauma Informed Wales Public Narrative event, I had the privilege of sharing the stage and the pulpit with my fellow shadow board member, Avril. Avril spoke first, and I was blown away. As I listened, I could see the subtle signs of nervousness, but I also saw what could only be described as relief. Her words flowed with freedom and instilled a sense of belief within herself and strong feelings within the crowd. I was literally lost for words to the point everything I wanted to say had slipped from my brain and replaced with thoughts of pride and amazement and Avril's moving words and bravery at sharing them.



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The power of the pulpit gives a voice back to those whose voices have been muffled, silenced, or stolen by trauma.

I want to thank Trauma Informed Wales and ACE Hub Wales for the continued opportunities, for the workshops, and for creating a platform for lived-experience voices on the day.

What does a trauma-informed nation look like to me?

Personally, it looks like a greener, more peaceful nation. A thriving nation. A nation not afraid to talk to one another. A nation united in helping each other.

A nation that understands that everyone is like a snowflake. A unique, beautiful, no two the same snowflake and a understanding that we all react differently to life's experiences.

Two people could be bitten by a dog. One may walk away petrified of dogs for the rest of their life; the other may be unfazed and unaffected.

That is trauma.

And once we are all on the same page about that — once we truly understand that trauma affects everyone differently — we can begin to heal together instead of healing alone or worst.

Aled Miles-Yates