

## How values-Led, quality training has the power to transform lives. | Tammy Banks | TEDxHolgate Women

(Applause)

You could hear a pin drop. There were 25 social workers in the room, and I had just told them about my childhood experience of harm, abuse, and neglect. I was delivering safeguarding training. As I shared my experiences, I connected them to the legislation. I explained how what I had experienced fitted into the acts and categories from the Children's Act. I spoke to them about how they could prevent someone else from experiencing what I had.

I then engaged them in conversation. They shared with each other what worked for them, what didn't, and what they were struggling with. I used my professional experience to discuss the times I had faced compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma, and how that had impacted me. Throughout, everything I was doing was connected to psychological theories using my personal experience and their passion and desire.

I talked about adverse childhood experiences and their long-term impact. I emphasised the importance of being trauma-informed in service delivery. At the end of the training session, I said thank you for your service, waved everyone out, and three delegates stayed behind. This isn't unusual; it happens at the end of many training sessions.

The first delegate was a newly qualified social worker. He approached me and said, "Tammy, I was going to hand in my notice at the end of the week. I'm overworked, overwhelmed, and I don't feel like I'm making a difference. This job is not what I signed up for. I went to university, put my heart and soul into this, and I don't feel like I have the right skills to engage with young people. And parents are constantly calling me, shouting because their child is still on the waiting list." He thanked me for the practical examples, the time to speak with his colleagues, and for helping him see how the legislation is relevant to his role. He walked out, planning his next working day.

The second delegate approached me slowly. She sat opposite me, looked down at her feet, and took a deep breath. "Tammy," she said, "I was harmed as a child too. That's why I wanted to become a social worker. That's why I do everything I do – to prevent others, especially children, from experiencing the pain I went through. I've been doing this for 15 years, but right now I'm scared. I'm scared because all my empathy is gone. I'm making decisions without thought. I snapped at a young mum last week for being a few minutes late for an appointment, and she left in tears. In 15 years as a social worker, no one ever told me about compassion fatigue or vicarious trauma. Please, can you send me more

information?" She told me that she was going to make a doctor's appointment straight after work.

The third delegate bounced into the room, shoulders back, a huge smile on her face. "I've been a social worker for 25 years," she said, "and I've been on safeguarding training 24 times. Year after year, it's the same old, same old. I just show up – it's mandatory, I have no choice. I usually expect to chill out." She laughed. "In fact, you ruined my day today because I was planning to write my shopping list! But you kept me engaged throughout the entire session. I shared my experiences with others in the room, particularly the newly qualified staff. I loved that." She continued, "You reminded me why I do what I do. Yes, this is hard – really hard in the current climate – but I'm here to change lives. You have motivated and inspired me, and for that, I am truly grateful."

This isn't unusual; this happens after most training sessions. "In front of you, you should also see one of these," she held up a bracelet. "This is a tool for accelerated learning. It helps you to stay engaged and retain information." The third delegate appreciated these.

What I have just described is values-led quality training – training that values the people in the room, thanks them for their work, and teaches them the skills, morals, and values to work with service users in an equitable way. It provides a safe space where they can be invested in and recognise the power they have. I believe values-led quality training can transform lives and revolutionise our public services.

Now, I want to introduce myself. My name is Tammy Banks, and I am passionate about public services. When I talk about public services, I mean police, probation, local authorities, teachers, NHS, and charity workers. I've been fortunate to work in this area for the past 20 years. They are the fabric of our country, and I am grateful that we still have access to these services. However, I am not naïve. I know they are struggling.

I've seen some of the harm caused; I've seen the news stories. I've accessed public services as a child and as an adult. My children have had brilliant teachers and some not-so-good ones. I've waited on long NHS waiting lists, only to be turned away. I know these services are struggling, and something needs to change.

Turnover in public services is at its highest – 44% in social care, as reported by Skills for Care in 2022. Did you know that 32% of charity workers report anxiety and depression? NHS trusts went to the House of Commons health committee and reported that 92% of them are worried about the mental health of their staff.

I'm talking about real people – you and me. Some of you work or have worked in public services. All of you will access public services at some point. We have a crisis, and we need to do something.

I don't think values-led quality training can solve all the problems – it's not that simple. We need policy changes, funding changes, and even whole system changes, but that takes time. What can we do today, near-immediately?

Two things are relevant to all public services: people work in them because they care, and they have to attend mandatory training. Unfortunately, training has a bad reputation – it's often boring, not engaging, and not values-led. What a waste of time, money, and opportunity.

Values-led quality training isn't difficult; it just requires time to think and prepare. Let's make the most of every second because we can do this now.

I've worked in services for 20 years, and for the past several years, I've run a training company delivering values-led training to public services. Our nearly 70 facilitators make a difference. In recent evaluations, 88% of delegates felt better and more motivated after our sessions, and 72% said their values and work with service users had become more positive and inclusive.

Training happens every day in public services, and we can make a change simply and effectively. Skills for Care reported that 94% of public service workers say good-quality training impacts their retention in a role.

Every pound wasted on training in public services is your taxpayer pound and mine. Every front-line worker who burns out is you or me. Every person in need on a long waiting list, not treated well, is your family or mine. We can do something about this.

I believe values-led quality training can transform lives and create a ripple effect across society. It has the power to change organisational culture and make a real difference. Public services should insist on values-led training and recognise its impact.

Thank you.

(Applause)