



ACC Trauma-informed Group Programmes

THE HOLDING SPACE

Trauma-informed group programmes integrating
Internal Family Systems, Trauma Sensitive Yoga,
and Relational Safety

WHERE HEALING IS HELD, NOT FORCED



Trauma-Informed Group Programmes

WELCOME

The Holding Space offers trauma-informed group programmes that support healing by fostering understanding of the inner world, reconnecting with the body, and restoring a sense of safety within oneself and in relationships.

Our work is grounded in the belief that healing does not happen through pressure, performance, or being pushed to revisit painful experiences. Healing unfolds when people feel safe enough to slow down, listen inwardly, and make sense of their experiences with compassion and clarity.

Trauma often leaves people feeling disconnected from their bodies, confused by their emotional responses, and unsure how to trust themselves or others. Many people live with nervous systems that remain on high alert, patterns of self-protection that feel overwhelming, or a sense that their reactions do not make sense. At The Holding Space, we understand these responses not as problems to be fixed, but as adaptive strategies that once helped a person survive.

Our groups are designed to offer a calm, predictable, and respectful environment where participants can begin to understand themselves differently. We prioritise safety, choice, and nervous system pacing. Participants are never required to share personal details or talk about traumatic events. Instead, the focus is on learning, noticing, and gently reconnecting with oneself in ways that feel manageable and contained.

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WHO ARE WE

The Holding Space is co-facilitated by Angela M Carter, Alessandra Marchisio and Rebecca Foster.

Angela is a trauma therapist who works primarily with Internal Family Systems, supporting people to understand their internal world and build a compassionate relationship with the parts of themselves shaped by relational and sexual trauma. She has trained with the Trauma Research Foundation, through the IFS Institute with Richard Schwartz, in the Safe and Sound Protocol developed by Stephen Porges, with polyvagal applications informed by Deb Dana, and in sex therapy with Tammy Nelson. She brings a relational, grounded, and respectful approach to trauma recovery and creates a safe place for people to land.



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ALESSANDRA

Alessandra is a registered mental health occupational therapist and a certified Trauma Sensitive Yoga (TCTSY) facilitator, having completed her training through the Trauma Research Foundation, founded by Bessel van der Kolk. She brings a strong clinical and functional lens to body-based practice, with particular expertise in autonomic nervous system regulation, sensory integration, daily structure, and trauma-informed movement. Alessandra supports participants in reconnecting with their bodies in ways that feel safe, choice-led, and empowering, while helping them translate embodied awareness into practical changes in everyday life.



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OUR THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

At **The Holding Space**, our work is grounded in an understanding of how trauma impacts the mind, body, and nervous system. We integrate Internal Family Systems, Trauma Sensitive Yoga, and autonomic nervous system regulation, all underpinned by a trauma-informed approach and insights from polyvagal theory.

Internal Family Systems supports people to understand their inner world with compassion rather than judgment. It helps make sense of emotional responses, protective patterns, and internal conflict, allowing participants to recognise that their reactions developed for a reason and are not signs of weakness or failure.

Trauma Sensitive Yoga offers a gentle, choice-based way to reconnect with the body. Movement is invitational rather than prescriptive, supporting people in noticing sensations, making decisions, and rebuilding a sense of safety and agency.

Autonomic nervous system regulation sits beneath both of these approaches. Trauma can leave the nervous system stuck in patterns of hypervigilance, shutdown, or overwhelm. Through education, awareness, and embodied practices, participants learn to recognise these states and develop greater capacity to settle, regulate, and respond with care.

Our approach is trauma-informed and paced carefully. Sessions are structured and predictable, which supports nervous system safety. Choice and consent are central, and participants are encouraged to engage at a pace that feels right for them.

Relational safety is foundational to our work. Trauma often occurs in relationships, and healing is supported through safe, respectful connections. Sharing is always optional, and there is no expectation to disclose personal or traumatic experiences.

At **The Holding Space**, we are less focused on fixing and more focused on understanding. We believe that when people feel safe enough, healing unfolds naturally, guided by the wisdom of the nervous system and the inner world.

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WHAT IS TRAUMA SENSITIVE YOGA

TCTSY are body-based approaches that support healing through safety, choice, and awareness rather than performance or correction. It recognises that trauma lives not only in the mind, but in the body and nervous system.

For many people who have experienced trauma, the body may feel unsafe, overwhelming, or disconnected. Traditional movement practices can unintentionally replicate experiences of powerlessness or pressure. Trauma Sensitive Yoga offers a different approach. It creates a space where participants are invited, rather than instructed, to explore movement in ways that feel safe and respectful.

In Trauma Sensitive Yoga, there is no right or wrong way to move. There are no hands-on adjustments, no expectations to push through discomfort, and no pressure to participate. Every movement is offered as a choice. Participants are encouraged to notice sensations, make decisions, and respond to their body with curiosity.

This approach supports nervous system regulation by restoring a sense of agency and control. Over time, participants may begin to feel more present in their body, more able to notice internal cues, and more confident in responding to what they need. The focus is not on achieving a particular shape or outcome, but on rebuilding a relationship with the body that is grounded in trust and safety.

Trauma Sensitive Yoga is not about fixing the body. It is about listening to it.

WHAT IS INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS

Internal Family Systems is a therapeutic model that helps people understand their inner world in a clear, compassionate, and non-judgmental way. It is based on the understanding that we are all made up of different parts, each with their own roles, emotions, and ways of responding to the world.

These parts develop over time, often in response to difficult or overwhelming experiences. Some parts work hard to manage daily life and keep things functioning. Some parts step in to protect us from emotional pain, fear, or vulnerability. Other parts carry experiences that were too much to process at the time, such as fear, shame, sadness, or loneliness.

From an Internal Family Systems perspective, there are no bad parts. Every part has a reason for existing. What may feel confusing or distressing in the present often made sense at an earlier time as a way to survive.

At the centre of the system is something called Self. Self is not a part, but a state of being: calm, curious, compassionate, and connected. When Self is present, we are able to relate to our parts with understanding rather than judgement or fear.

Internal Family Systems helps people recognise their internal patterns, understand why they exist, and develop a kinder relationship with themselves. Many people find this approach deeply relieving, as it replaces self-blame with meaning and self-compassion.

HOW WE INTEGRATE TRAUMA SENSITIVE YOGA AND INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS

At **The Holding Space**, we bring together Trauma Sensitive Yoga and Internal Family Systems to create a holistic approach that honours the mind, body, and inner world as interconnected.

Trauma does not exist in one place. It is experienced cognitively, emotionally, physically, and relationally. Healing, therefore, needs to address more than insight alone. It needs to include the body, the nervous system, and the internal patterns that shape how a person experiences themselves and the world.

Internal Family Systems provides a framework for understanding what is happening inside. It helps participants make sense of their thoughts, emotions, and protective strategies. Trauma Sensitive Yoga provides a way to experience this understanding in the body, through gentle awareness and choice-based movement.

In our groups, participants are supported to notice which parts are present, how those parts show up in the body, and how the body responds when it feels listened to rather than pushed. Journaling and reflection help bridge awareness between the inner world and embodied experience.

This integration allows healing to unfold without forcing change. Participants are not asked to relive traumatic experiences or override protective responses. Instead, they are invited to build safety, understanding, and trust from the inside out.

By combining psychological insight with embodied awareness, we support a process in which healing is not something done to a person, but something that emerges when the system feels safe enough.

This is the heart of The Holding Space.

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THE STRUCTURE OF OUR GROUPS

Participants consistently tell us that the structure of our groups is what allows them to feel safe.

Each session follows a clear and predictable flow. We begin by opening the session and helping everyone settle into the space. This orientation phase supports nervous system regulation and helps participants arrive in their bodies.

We then offer psychoeducation grounded in the Internal Family Systems model. This supports participants to understand their internal world and recognise why certain patterns exist. Many people describe this learning as deeply relieving, as it helps their experiences finally make sense without blame or judgment.

A guided Internal Family Systems meditation follows, supporting participants to notice which parts are present and how they are experienced in the body. Participants are invited to journal at this point, allowing space to reflect and integrate what they notice internally.

The session then transitions into Trauma Sensitive Yoga. This is not a traditional yoga class. Movement is gentle, choice-based, and adaptable. Participants may move, sit, or stand, or simply observe. The intention is not to change the body, but to listen to it.

After the movement practice, there is another opportunity to journal and reflect on how the body experienced the session. Sessions close with an optional group reflection. Sharing is always optional and held within clear relational boundaries.

This rhythm of learning, noticing, moving, and reflecting supports integration without overwhelm.

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PARTS IN MOTION

Parts in Motion is an eight-week, ninety-minute, in-person therapeutic group for women aged eighteen and over, based in Marlborough, and offered online for the rest of New Zealand through **The Holding Space**. This ACC-funded programme is designed to support women in understanding their internal system and reconnecting with their bodies in a safe, structured, and carefully paced environment.

The group is co-facilitated by Angela, an Internal Family Systems and trauma therapist, and Alessandra, a Trauma Sensitive Yoga teacher trained in TCTSY. Together, they bring complementary expertise in parts-based understanding and embodied regulation. The programme integrates psychological insight with gentle, choice-based movement practices to support safety, steadiness, and internal awareness.

This group is particularly supportive for women who experience emotional overwhelm, persistent self-criticism, dissociation, or confusion about their internal reactions. Many arrive feeling as though something is wrong with them or unsure why their responses feel so intense. Parts in Motion offers a grounded Internal Family Systems framework that helps make sense of these experiences, reframing protective responses as intelligent adaptations rather than personal failure.

Each ninety-minute session integrates psychoeducation, guided Internal Family Systems meditative practices, journaling, trauma-sensitive yoga informed by TCTSY principles, and optional group reflection. The emphasis is on safety, choice, and nervous system regulation. Participants are never required to speak about their trauma or share personal history, and all practices are invitational and paced with care.

Across the eight weeks, women often report increased self-compassion, reduced shame, greater emotional regulation, and a clearer understanding of their inner world. Many describe Parts in Motion as one of the safest group environments they have experienced, where healing unfolds steadily and without pressure.

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PARTS IN MOTION - ON LINE

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RELATIONAL SAFETY

Relational Safety is a one-day online therapeutic group offered through **The Holding Space** and open to adults of all genders aged eighteen and over. The programme focuses on understanding how trauma can shape relationships, boundaries, consent, and trust, and how these patterns continue to influence connection in the present.

The group is facilitated by Angela, a trauma therapist working from an Internal Family Systems framework, and is supported throughout the day by Alessandra, a TCTSY teacher. The structure is carefully paced to ensure safety, steadiness, and containment within the online group environment.

This group invites participants to explore relational experiences through an Internal Family Systems and nervous system lens. Protective strategies such as people pleasing, withdrawal, overcompliance, or avoidance are understood as intelligent adaptations organised around safety rather than personal failure. By reframing these responses as protective rather than problematic, participants are supported to approach themselves with greater clarity and compassion.

The day is intentionally structured and paced to support steadiness. It includes clear psychoeducation, guided reflection, embodied awareness practices, and facilitated group discussion within a contained online environment. Teaching is grounded in trauma-informed and Internal Family Systems perspectives, helping participants recognise how protective parts and autonomic nervous system responses shape relational capacity and expectations of safety.

Throughout the programme, participants are invited to notice sensory cues, emotional boundaries, and their capacity for connection in a gradual and supported way. The emphasis remains on increasing awareness, regulation, and choice rather than analysing or processing past events. Insight is encouraged to develop alongside nervous system settling and a strengthened sense of internal leadership.

Relational Safety is designed to increase understanding, reduce shame, and support safer, more conscious relationships. Trauma disclosure is not required. The focus is on building steadiness, relational clarity, and the foundations for healthier connections moving forward.

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SAFE TO BE HERE

Safe to Be Here is a three-day daytime therapeutic retreat for women aged eighteen and over, based in Marlborough and offered through The Holding Place. The retreat is delivered over consecutive days with no overnight stays, allowing participants to return home each evening while remaining part of a structured, continuous programme. It offers a deeper immersion into nervous system safety, embodiment, and internal trust within a carefully contained environment.

This retreat is facilitated by Angela, a trauma therapist working from an Internal Family Systems framework, and Alexandra, an Occupational Therapist and Trauma Sensitive Yoga teacher with specialist training in nervous system regulation. Together, they bring complementary expertise in relational trauma, embodied practice, regulation, and daily functioning. The environment is intentionally paced, collaborative, and grounded in safety.

Safe to Be Here is designed for women recovering from sexual trauma who continue to experience difficulties with regulation, disrupted sleep, emotional eating, or other trauma-related coping patterns. These responses are understood as adaptive survival strategies rather than problems to be fixed. The work is grounded in compassion and clarity, supporting participants to understand how relational trauma shapes the body, daily rhythms, and internal experience.

The retreat integrates Internal Family Systems, Trauma Sensitive Yoga informed by TCTSY principles, and occupational therapy perspectives on regulation and everyday functioning. Particular attention is given to sleep hygiene and emotional eating as part of relational trauma integration, recognising that nervous system dysregulation often shows up in patterns of rest, nourishment, and self-care. Where appropriate, invited guest clinicians may contribute to areas such as sleep or trauma-informed approaches to eating, always within a non-pathologising and supportive framework.

The extended format allows for repetition, rest, and integration while maintaining clear structure and safety. Practices are paced with care, and participation is always by choice. The three-day immersion supports consolidation of skills, increased internal steadiness, and greater confidence in applying regulation and Self-led awareness in daily life and ongoing therapy.

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SAFETY, CHOICE, AND SUITABILITY

All programmes offered through The Holding Space are trauma-informed and designed with nervous system safety at the centre.

Participants are never required to disclose traumatic experiences. All practices are optional, and people are encouraged to engage at their own pace. Screening and preparation are offered to support suitability and informed consent.

Our groups are intended to complement ongoing individual therapy and may not be suitable for individuals experiencing acute instability or requiring intensive one-to-one support.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS NOTICE

Participants consistently describe **The Holding Space** groups as the safest they have experienced.

Common reflections include increased self-compassion, improved emotional regulation, greater clarity about internal responses, and a reduction in shame. Many people report that their patterns around relationships, sleep, and emotional reactions finally make sense.

Over time, participants often feel more grounded, more at ease in their body, and more able to respond to themselves and others with care rather than criticism.

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REFERRALS AND CONTACT

The Holding Space offers ACC-funded group programmes. Referrals can be made through ACC or in collaboration with a treating therapist.

We welcome enquiries from clients, therapists, and referrers who would like to explore suitability or learn more about upcoming groups. Our intention is to offer spaces where healing unfolds gently, respectfully, and at the pace of the nervous system.

HOW TO REGISTER

Registration for groups offered through **The Holding Space** follows an ACC process to ensure clarity, suitability, and funding approval. Clients may be considered for more than one group; attendance is confirmed only once the required ACC purchase order has been received by the supplier and the client has completed the triage process.

There are three steps to the registration process. We will take you through the process on the following pages

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HOW TO REGISTER A CLIENT

If you would like to register a client for one or more of **The Holding Space** groups, please read the information below carefully. We are unable to confirm registration until we receive an approved purchase order and a completed registration form. As some of our groups often fill up quickly and some operate on wait lists, we recommend applying for a purchase order as early as possible to increase your chances of securing a place.

Step One: Purchase Order Request

To arrange approval for a client to attend a group, please contact your client's Recovery Partner and provide a brief clinical rationale. You will need to request approval using the following codes.

Please note that each purchase order requires **two** codes.

SCSGTT2 x1 for triage, plus one of the following depending on the programme:

SCSGT x12 for *Parts in Motion*

SCSGT x8 for *Relational Safety*

SCSGT x24 for *Safe to Be Here three-day retreat*

The supplier is Nelson Clinic

Supplier ID: VAH127

When submitting the purchase order request, please copy both of the following email addresses into your correspondence with the Recovery Partner so we are aware that a request has been made and can follow up if necessary:

Angela.Carter@NelsonClinic.nz

groups@NelsonClinic.nz

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GROUP REGISTRATION CONTINUED

Step Two: Registration

Once the Nelson Clinic receives the approved purchase order, they will contact the therapist to initiate registration and advise on the next steps. Clients cannot be registered until a completed registration form has been returned. The registration form will be emailed once the purchase order has been received.

If the registration form has not been received, please contact groups@NelsonClinic.nz.

Step Three: Triage

After the purchase order is approved and registration is complete, our lead provider will contact the client directly to assess any needs prior to the group and to discuss expectations. This ensures suitability, safety, and alignment with ongoing therapy.

Timelines and Communication

The approval process between ACC and the supplier can take several weeks. Please keep clients informed throughout and encourage them to hold availability until their place is confirmed.

We contact clients approximately two weeks before the group or retreat commences, but only once the approved purchase order and completed registration form have been received.

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GROUP RATIONALE

Parts in Motion

I would like to request approval for [Client name] to attend Parts in Motion group run by the Nelson Clinic (VAH127), commencing on [insert date]. Participation will support improved emotional regulation, increased body awareness, and reduced trauma-related self-criticism. The programme will assist the client in managing PTSD symptomology, strengthening internal stabilisation, and increasing capacity for daily functioning. Attendance aligns with the goals outlined in the well-being plan and will complement ongoing individual therapy. The client is motivated to attend.

Relational Safety

I would like to request approval for [Client name] to attend the Relational Safety group run by the Nelson Clinic (VAH127), commencing on [insert date]. Participation will support improved interpersonal functioning, clearer boundaries, and reduced trauma-related relational avoidance or hyper vigilance. The programme will assist the client in strengthening relational safety and increasing confidence in connection, aligning with current therapy goals outlined in the wellbeing plan. The client is motivated to attend.

Safe to Be Here

I would like to request approval for [Client name] to attend the Safe to Be Here three-day retreat run by the Nelson Clinic (VAH127), commencing on [insert date]. Participation will support improved regulation of the autonomic nervous system, reduced trauma-related dysregulation that impacts sleep and emotional eating, and increased body connection. The programme will assist [Client name] in consolidating stabilisation skills, improving daily functioning, and strengthening internal trust in alignment with the wellbeing plan goals. The client is motivated to attend.

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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND EVIDENCE BASE FOR TRAUMA-INFORMED HEALING

The programmes offered through **The Holding Space** are grounded in established trauma theory and evidence-based practices that recognise trauma as an experience that affects the mind, body, nervous system, and capacity for connection.

Trauma Sensitive Yoga is informed by somatic psychology and trauma theory, particularly the understanding that traumatic experiences can disrupt bodily awareness, agency, and autonomic nervous system regulation. Research demonstrates that trauma-informed, choice-based movement practices can support reductions in post-traumatic stress symptoms, including hyperarousal, dissociation, and emotional distress. These approaches support reconnection with the body through safety, choice, and present-moment awareness, rather than through exposure or performance.

Internal Family Systems is an evidence-based psychotherapy model with a growing body of research supporting its effectiveness in the treatment of trauma-related conditions, including post-traumatic stress and complex trauma. It is grounded in the understanding that internal protective responses develop in response to threat and adversity, and that symptoms represent adaptive strategies rather than pathology. Research indicates that Internal Family Systems supports improved emotional regulation, increased self-compassion, and reduced trauma-related symptoms by fostering a non-judgmental, compassionate relationship with internal experience.

Trauma-informed approaches to autonomic nervous system regulation are underpinned by contemporary neuroscience and polyvagal theory. Trauma can lead to chronic activation of survival responses, such as fight-or-flight, freeze, or shutdown. Interventions that support nervous system regulation through awareness, pacing, and embodied practices have been shown to improve emotional stability, reduce anxiety, and increase capacity for social engagement and relational safety.

By integrating these approaches, **The Holding Space** offers a coherent and comprehensive framework that addresses trauma at cognitive, emotional, physiological, and relational levels. This integrated model supports safety and regulation while avoiding re-exposure to traumatic material, allowing healing to unfold at the pace of the nervous system.

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KEY REFERENCES

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Hodgdon, H., Anderson, S. E., and Spinazzola, J. (2021). Internal Family Systems informed treatment for complex trauma. *Journal of Trauma and Dissociation*, 22(2), 225–243.

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OUR GUIDING INTENTIONS

The work offered through **The Holding Space** is guided by a small number of clear intentions that shape how our groups are designed and facilitated.

To restore a sense of safety within the body and nervous system.

Our group's aim is to support participants to feel safer within themselves by developing awareness of nervous system states and building capacity for regulation. Through predictable structure, choice-based practices, and gentle pacing, participants are supported to move out of survival responses and into greater stability and presence.

To support understanding of the inner world with compassion rather than judgement.

We aim to help participants make sense of their internal experiences using an Internal Family Systems (IFS), informed approach. By understanding protective patterns and emotional responses as meaningful adaptations, participants can reduce self-blame and develop a more compassionate relationship with themselves.

To reconnect mind and body through embodied awareness and choice.

Trauma can create disconnection between thoughts, emotions, and bodily experience. Our groups support reconnection through Trauma Sensitive Yoga and reflective practices that encourage listening to the body, making choices, and responding to internal cues with curiosity and respect.

To reduce isolation and support safe relational connections.

Many people impacted by trauma experience social withdrawal and difficulty feeling safe with others. Our groups offer a contained and respectful relational environment where participants can experience being with others without pressure to disclose or perform. This supports a gradual return to connection and a sense of belonging.

SUITABILITY AND REFERRAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THERAPISTS

The Holding Space groups are designed for adults who are engaged in trauma recovery and who would benefit from a structured, body-based, and relationally safe group intervention alongside individual therapeutic support.

All participants must have an *approved ACC Sensitive Claim* and be currently engaged with a treating therapist. Our groups are intended to complement ongoing one-to-one therapy rather than replace it, and clients are expected to have therapeutic support in place before and during group participation.

Our groups are particularly suitable for clients seeking to deepen nervous system regulation, develop a greater understanding of their internal responses, and reduce isolation through safe, contained group connection. Clients do not need prior experience with group therapy, yoga, or Internal Family Systems (IFS) to participate.

Parts in Motion and Safe to Be Here are offered to women aged eighteen years and over in Marlborough. These groups are appropriate for clients who experience trauma-related symptoms such as emotional dysregulation, dissociation, heightened anxiety, body-based distress, or difficulties with self-compassion. The three-day **Safe to Be Here** retreat is suited to clients who have sufficient stability to engage in a longer daytime group format and who may benefit from deeper consolidation of regulation and embodied awareness.

Relational Safety is an online group open to all genders and those aged 18 years and over. The group are appropriate for clients who experience trauma-related relational difficulties, including challenges with boundaries, trust, attachment patterns, or social withdrawal. The online format allows clients to engage from their own environment while still participating in a structured and facilitated group experience.

Healing, Harmony, and Flow is an online group for women aged 18 and over. This group is appropriate for clients experiencing trauma-related symptoms such as hyper vigilance, emotional overwhelm, sleep disturbance, or difficulty regulating their nervous system. It is suited to women who are sufficiently stable for group participation and who would benefit from strengthening regulation and emotional stability alongside ongoing individual therapy.

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SUITABILITY AND REFERRAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THERAPISTS CONTINUED

All groups are facilitated within a trauma-informed framework that prioritises choice, consent, and predictable structure. Clients are never required to disclose traumatic experiences, and sharing is always optional. Psychoeducation, guided reflection, and embodied practices are offered in ways that support regulation rather than overwhelm.

The Holding Space groups may not be appropriate for clients who are currently experiencing acute psychological distress, significant suicidal risk, active psychosis, or severe instability that would make group participation unsafe. Clients who require intensive one-to-one containment or crisis-level intervention may be better supported through individual therapy until greater stability is established.

We encourage therapists to consider readiness, current supports, and the client's capacity to engage in a group setting when making referrals. We welcome consultation prior to referral to discuss suitability, timing, and alignment with the client's therapeutic goals.



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HOW WE HOLD THE WORK TOGETHER

Groups within **The Holding Space** are intentionally designed to provide a calm, structured, and relationally safe therapeutic environment. From arrival, clients are welcomed into a space that prioritises steadiness, predictability, and containment. Sessions are opened gently, allowing time for orientation and nervous system settling before any structured practice begins.

The groups are facilitated in a relational rather than instructional manner. There is no hierarchy and no expectation of performance or disclosure. Clients are not required to speak, share personal history, or engage beyond their capacity. Participation remains choice-based throughout, supporting agency and reinforcing a sense of control. The emphasis is on creating conditions of safety rather than eliciting content.

Practices offered within the group are invitational. Clients are supported in pausing, adapting, observing, or stepping back as needed. Self-awareness and responsiveness to internal cues are actively encouraged, reinforcing regulation and autonomy. There is no pressure to engage in a particular way or to keep pace with others.

Each session follows a clear and predictable structure. We begin with orientation and grounding, followed by psychoeducation, guided reflection, and gentle practices that support awareness of internal experience and embodied regulation. Time is intentionally built in for integration, allowing clients to reflect, journal, or consolidate learning. Sessions close with care to ensure participants leave feeling contained rather than activated.

Group reflection is offered as an option rather than a requirement. Some clients choose to speak while others engage through listening and internal reflection. Both forms of participation are respected and valued equally.

Confidentiality and clear relational boundaries are foundational. Expectations regarding privacy, respect, and safety are established at the outset to support a contained and ethically sound environment.

These groups are designed to complement individual therapy. The intention is not to process traumatic material in depth but to strengthen stabilisation, regulation, relational awareness, and self-compassion within a structured therapeutic setting.

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SUPPORTING A CLIENT'S ARRIVAL INTO GROUP

Preparing a client for group participation can significantly support their sense of safety and engagement. We recommend that therapists take time to talk with clients about what the group is and what it is not, so expectations are clear and the nervous system is not anticipating pressure or performance.

It can be helpful to let clients know that the group is structured and predictable, and that they will not be asked to talk about traumatic experiences or share personal details. Emphasising that participation is always at their own pace can reduce fear of being put on the spot or needing to manage others' responses.

Clients may benefit from understanding that the group is relational but non-hierarchical. There is no expectation to speak, move in a certain way, or follow instructions. Listening, observing, or choosing not to engage at times are all respected ways of being in the group. You may wish to explore any protective concerns the client has about being in a group setting, such as fears about being seen, judged, or overwhelmed. Normalising these concerns as understandable trauma responses can help clients approach the group with greater self-compassion.

It is also important to support clients in planning the practical aspects of attendance, including travel, rest before and after sessions, and having support in place if emotions are stirred. Encouraging clients to check in with their body and energy levels following group sessions can support integration and regulation.

Reminding clients that they remain connected to individual therapy throughout the group can also provide reassurance. The group is designed to complement one-to-one work, not replace it, and therapists are welcome to support clients in reflecting on their group experience in individual sessions.

Preparing clients in this way helps them arrive feeling informed, supported, and less alone, which in turn supports the depth and safety of the group process.

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CONTINUITY OF CARE

All groups offered through **The Holding Space** are designed to sit alongside ongoing individual therapy. Group participation does not replace one-to-one therapeutic support, and all participants are expected to remain engaged with their treating therapist before, during, and after attending a group or retreat.

Group experiences can support insight, regulation, and connection, and they can also bring up new awareness or emotional material. Individual therapy provides an important space to process, integrate, and make sense of these experiences in a more personal and contained way.

We encourage therapists and clients to view group work as part of a broader therapeutic journey rather than a standalone intervention. Ongoing therapeutic support helps ensure that learning and shifts from the group are supported, integrated, and held over time.

AFTER THE SESSION

Group sessions are carefully structured to support safety and containment. It is common for participants to notice changes after attending. This may include tiredness, emotional sensitivity, increased awareness, or a need for quiet and rest.

Clients are encouraged to allow space after each session for gentle integration. This may involve slowing down, journaling, spending time in a calm environment, or engaging in grounding activities that support regulation. There is no expectation to analyse or act on what arises straight away.

Therapists can support clients by checking in about how the group experience is landing and helping them notice patterns, needs, or responses that emerge. Integration is an essential part of trauma recovery, and pacing is respected throughout the process.

WHERE HEALING IS HELD, NOT FORCED

Trauma-Informed Group Programmes

READINESS AND TIMING

Group work can be a valuable part of trauma recovery when the timing is right. Readiness is best understood as a collaborative and ongoing conversation between the client and their therapist, rather than a fixed point to be reached.

Clients who can notice internal states, tolerate some emotional activation, and remain connected to external support are often well placed to benefit from group participation. It is also important to consider current life stressors, capacity for rest, and the availability of support outside the group setting.

Choosing the right group at the right time can support integration and reduce overwhelm. We welcome consultation with therapists to support thoughtful referral decisions, group selection, and timing that aligns with a client's stage of recovery.

IN CLOSING

The Holding Space groups are designed to complement ongoing therapeutic work, not replace it. They offer structured, stabilisation-focused environments where clients can strengthen regulation, relational awareness, and internal understanding alongside individual therapy.

We understand that trauma recovery unfolds in stages and that pacing matters. Our intention is to provide group spaces that are steady, ethically grounded, and responsive to the needs of those who attend. Clear structure, predictable rhythm, and collaborative communication with referring therapists remain central to our approach.

If you are considering a referral and would like to discuss suitability, timing, or group selection, we welcome contact. Thoughtful preparation supports safety, and safety supports integration.

For enquiries or referrals, please contact:

Lead Provider, Angela Carter

Email: angela.carter@nelsonclinic.nz

Telephone: 027 625 8738

When emailing, please include **"Group Inquiry"** in the subject line.

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THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to read about **The Holding Space** and the programmes we offer.

Whether you are a therapist considering a referral or someone exploring the possibility of group work, we appreciate the care and thought that goes into these decisions. Trauma recovery is not linear, and timing matters. Choosing the right support at the right stage can make a meaningful difference.

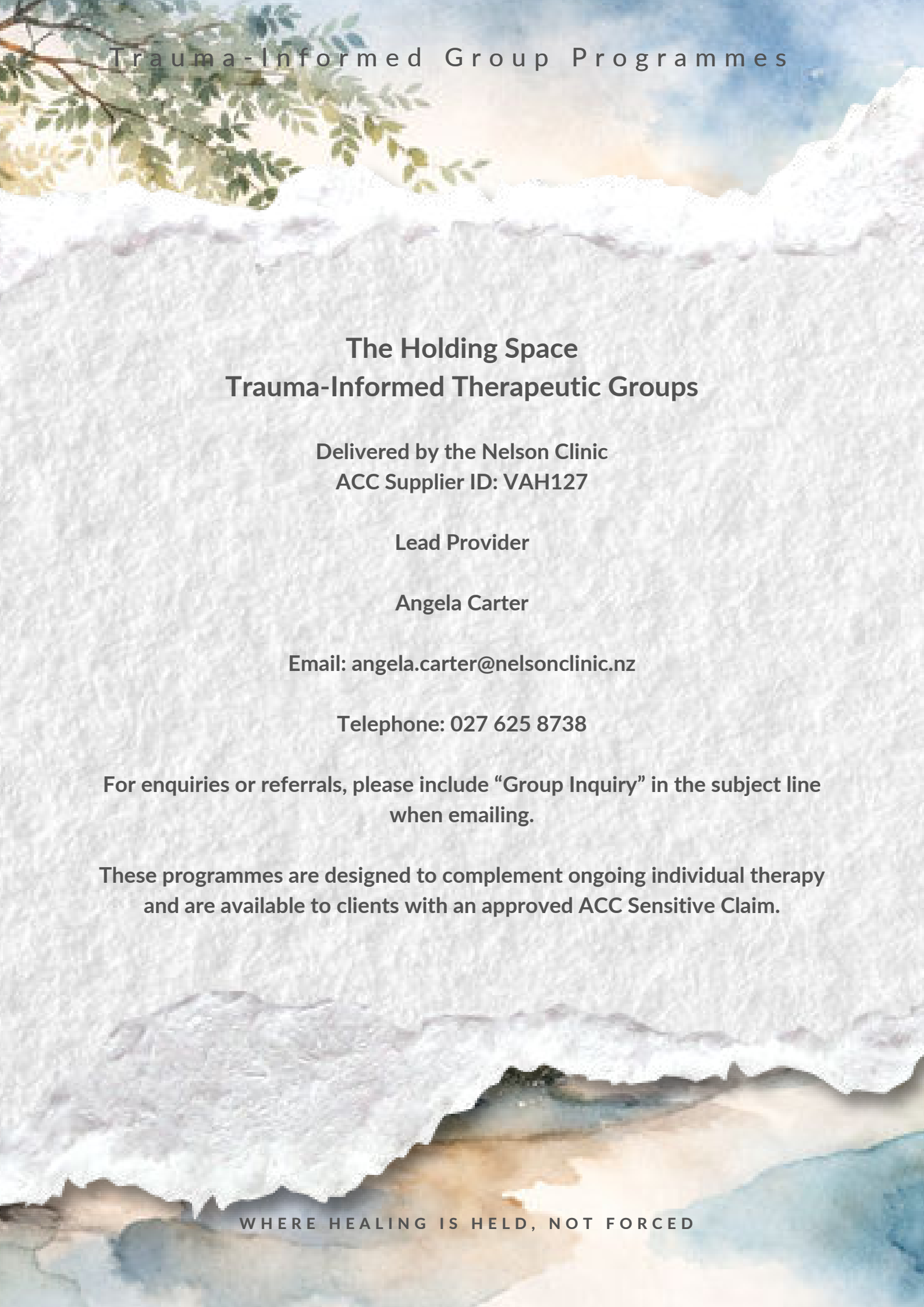
It is a privilege to facilitate spaces where safety, steadiness, and relational respect come first. We approach this work with humility and deep regard for the courage it takes to engage in healing.

With appreciation,

Angela and Alessandra



WHERE HEALING IS HELD, NOT FORCED

The background of the entire page is a scenic landscape featuring a snow-capped mountain range under a blue sky with soft, white clouds. In the foreground, there are green trees and foliage. A prominent visual element is a large, irregular white shape that resembles torn paper, layered over the landscape. This shape contains the main text of the flyer.

Trauma-Informed Group Programmes

The Holding Space Trauma-Informed Therapeutic Groups

Delivered by the Nelson Clinic
ACC Supplier ID: VAH127

Lead Provider

Angela Carter

Email: angela.carter@nelsonclinic.nz

Telephone: 027 625 8738

For enquiries or referrals, please include “Group Inquiry” in the subject line when emailing.

These programmes are designed to complement ongoing individual therapy and are available to clients with an approved ACC Sensitive Claim.

WHERE HEALING IS HELD, NOT FORCED