

HOW DO WE RELATE TO CHALLENGE AND SAFETY?

Trauma-Informed Practice

Challenge, safety, and human capacity.

At Wild Hearts, we believe that meaningful growth often happens at the edge of what is familiar.

We also believe that growth cannot be forced.

This document exists to explain how we approach challenge, safety, emotional processes, and human capacity.

01 What we mean by trauma-informed

Being trauma-informed does not mean avoiding discomfort.

It does not mean protecting people from all challenge.

It does not mean removing uncertainty, vulnerability, grief, fear, conflict, or emotional intensity from human experience.

Being trauma-informed means recognizing that every person arrives with a unique nervous system, history, and capacity.

It means understanding that meaningful transformation requires both challenge and safety.

It means paying attention to how experiences are impacting people in real time rather than assuming that more intensity automatically leads to more growth.

Trauma-informed practice is not the absence of challenge.

It is the responsible relationship to challenge.

02 We do not believe healing happens through force

At Wild Hearts, we do not subscribe to approaches that rely on breaking people down, overwhelming them, humiliating them, or pushing them beyond their capacity in the name of transformation.

While some experiences may be physically demanding, emotionally confronting, or deeply uncomfortable, intensity is never the goal.

The goal is increased capacity.

The goal is deeper contact with reality.

The goal is greater freedom, responsibility, and presence.

Challenge may be part of the path.

Force is not.

03 Capacity matters more than intensity

A central principle of our work is that sustainable growth happens when challenge meets capacity.

Too little challenge often leads to stagnation.

Too much challenge can lead to overwhelm, shutdown, dissociation, or retraumatisation.

The art of facilitation is not finding the highest level of intensity.

The art is finding the edge where learning, integration, and growth become possible.

This edge is different for every person.

It may also change from day to day.

04 The nervous system is part of the conversation

We pay close attention to the signals of the body and nervous system.

Stress responses such as fight, flight, freeze, collapse, fawning, dissociation, hypervigilance, numbness, or overwhelm are not treated as failures.

They are information.

When such responses arise, our intention is not to eliminate them but to understand them.

The body is often revealing something important.

Rather than pushing through these experiences, we seek to meet them with awareness, pacing, support, and choice.

05 Choice remains essential

Participants are never required to reveal personal information, engage in emotional expression, complete symbolic exercises, or participate in experiences against their will.

People are encouraged to communicate their limits, concerns, needs, and boundaries.

The ability to say no is not considered resistance.

It is considered part of healthy participation.

Meaningful transformation requires choice.

Without choice, there is no genuine consent.

06 Nature can challenge us without harming us

Many Wild Hearts experiences take place in natural environments.

Nature can be uncomfortable.

Weather changes.

Plans change.

The terrain changes.

Silence can be uncomfortable.

Solitude can be uncomfortable.

Physical effort can be uncomfortable.

These realities are not obstacles to the work.

They are often part of the work.

However, nature is never used as a justification for unnecessary risk, neglect, or reckless exposure.

Challenge is intentional.

Safety remains important.

07 **We work with reality, not performance**

Some personal development cultures unintentionally reward performance.

People feel pressure to be vulnerable.

Pressure to be courageous.

Pressure to have breakthroughs.

Pressure to heal.

Pressure to transform.

At Wild Hearts, we are more interested in reality.

Sometimes reality looks like courage.

Sometimes it looks like grief.

Sometimes it looks like uncertainty.

Sometimes it looks like resting.

Sometimes it looks like asking for help.

There is no correct emotional outcome.

The goal is not performance.

The goal is honesty.

08 **Emotional intensity is not a measure of success**

Powerful experiences can happen.

Deep emotional releases can happen.

Significant breakthroughs can happen.

But these experiences are not used as measures of progress.

Sometimes the deepest transformation appears quietly.

Sometimes growth emerges through consistency rather than intensity.

We do not measure success by emotional drama.

We measure it by increased capacity to meet life.

09 Integration is part of the work

A meaningful experience is not automatically an integrated experience.

For this reason, we place significant importance on reflection, embodiment, community, follow-up, and practical integration.

What happens after an event, retreat, session, or program often matters as much as what happens during it.

The work does not end when the experience ends.

10 Every person is different

There is no single path that works for everyone.

There is no method that is universally appropriate.

There is no facilitator who can know exactly what another person needs.

Humility is therefore essential.

Our commitment is not to certainty.

Our commitment is to careful attention, ethical practice, ongoing learning, and respect for the uniqueness of each human being.

Wild Hearts believes that human beings are remarkably resilient.

We also believe that resilience grows through relationship, awareness, responsibility, challenge, support, and time.

Our intention is not to protect people from life.

Our intention is to help people build the capacity to meet life more fully.

With courage. With honesty. With support. And with respect for the wisdom of the body.
