



# GHOSTHUNTER

EDUCATIONAL SCREENING GUIDE

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**SEE THE FACTSHEETS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION TO ASSIST IN PLANNING YOUR SESSIONS.**

# About this Educational Screening Guide

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In Australia, 1 in 4 children experience sexual abuse by the time they turn 15. This most often happens in the home, and at the hands of adults that children should be able to trust. This number is twice the number of children who have asthma.

Despite these high prevalence rates, issues of child sexual abuse, childhood trauma and violence have often not received the focus and action they need. It is time to better equip the community and services to respond. Currently far too few cases are reported, and only a handful are tried in Australia's courts.

The people accountable for this abuse are those who perpetrate it, and those who choose not to stop it. Yet, those who have survived this abuse have often felt isolated and alone. This is because abuse, neglect and violence have been treated with shame and stigma. Prior community silence replicates and reinforces the silence, isolation, and shame inflicted by perpetrators.

As educators, we are faced with challenging questions: how do we talk about these issues in an impactful way? How do we maintain participant

safety? How do we speak to the humanity and complexity of childhood trauma, including child abuse and neglect? How do we instigate change so that children in Australia are safer, and that children and adults who have been abused are supported? How do we influence the cultural and social norms around violence?

We have known for a long time that our service system is under-resourced and not adequately trained to respond to the complexities of childhood trauma, abuse, and neglect. We have also perhaps struggled, as educators, to provide a face and a name to these experiences.

Now, we have GHOSTHUNTER, an authentic portrait of the complexity and impact of childhood trauma, abuse, and neglect.

We have developed this resource for tertiary and vocational educators. It outlines strategies, four learning modules, and lots of ideas that may assist educators and participants alike in navigating and learning from the film GHOSTHUNTER.

Dr Michelle S. Noon *MAPS*



**AUDIENCE: THIS RESOURCE IS FOR EDUCATORS TEACHING SOCIAL SERVICES, JUSTICE SERVICES, AND GENERALIST PARTICIPANTS.**

# About GHOSTHUNTER

## Synopsis

A Western Sydney security guard and part-time ghost hunter—Jason King—has spent two decades searching for his father to reconcile his fractured memories and piece together his past. When his search converges with a police investigation, a family secret is exposed — forcing him to confront a brutal past so that he can reclaim his future.



# The Facts



**Childhood trauma affects 5 million (1 in 4) Australian adults<sup>1</sup>**

**50k**

**Childhood abuse and neglect result in approximately 50,000 children being placed in out-of-home care in Australia, each year<sup>2</sup>**



**38 percent of Australian women and 13 percent of men have experienced childhood sexual abuse<sup>3</sup>**



**Survivors of childhood sexual abuse often do not disclose their abuse until adulthood.<sup>4,5</sup>**



**Experiencing childhood trauma can have lifelong impacts on one's mental health, physical health, and relationships.<sup>5</sup>**



**Cultural acceptance of violence to resolve conflict or in child rearing is a risk factor for future interpersonal violence.<sup>6</sup>**



**There is an urgent need for trauma-informed training across health, welfare, justice, housing, employment, and education sectors**

1. Blue Knot Foundation, 2017, [www.blueknot.org.au](http://www.blueknot.org.au). To read research about childhood trauma and its effects, see the Adverse Childhood Experiences ('ACE') study in the United States [www.americasangel.org/research/adverse-childhood-experiences-ace-study/](http://www.americasangel.org/research/adverse-childhood-experiences-ace-study/)

2 Act for Kids, 2017, <https://www.actforkids.com.au/about/>

3 Australian Institute of Criminology, 2014, <https://aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi465>

4. Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2017, [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final\\_report\\_-\\_volume\\_4\\_identifying\\_and\\_disclosing\\_child\\_sexual\\_abuse.pdf](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_volume_4_identifying_and_disclosing_child_sexual_abuse.pdf)

5. Cashmore, J., Shackel, R. (2013). The long-term effects of child sexual abuse, CFCA Paper No. 11 2013, (pp. 1 - 29). Canberra, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia.

6 World Health Organisation (2002) Report on Violence and Health, Geneva.

# Curriculum Links

		<b>Social Services</b>	<b>Justice</b>	<b>Generalist</b>
<b>Example qualifications</b>	<b>Vocational</b>	Certificate of Community Services	Diploma of Policing	Becoming trauma-informed training
	<b>Undergraduate</b>	Bachelor of Social Work	Bachelor of Criminal Justice	Bachelor of Arts (Criminology)
	<b>Postgraduate</b>	Master of Psychology	Juris Doctorate	Master of Public Policy
	<b>Domain of influence</b>	Individual experiences	System responses	System reform
	<b>Key questions</b>	How can we best support people who have experienced childhood trauma?	How can we implement processes so that justice for survivors is an outcome?	What can we reform in the system so that children are safe and child and adult survivors are heard?
	<b>Example participant careers</b>	Case managers Social workers Clinicians Medical practitioners	Police members Legal services Legal representatives Correctional officers	Academics Researchers Policy developers Public servants
	<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<p>Increased understanding of the complexity of childhood trauma, abuse, and neglect.</p> <p>Enhanced empathy for the (often lifelong and complex) experiences of adult survivors.</p> <p>Build an evidence-based understanding of memory, identity, belonging, and healing for those who experience childhood trauma, abuse, and neglect.</p> <p>Devise strategies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• better support survivors to manage their distress.</li> <li>• minimize the distress survivors experience within services (secondary victimization/ re-traumatization).</li> </ul>		

# Curriculum Planning

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We have devised four modules centred around key themes. If you have time you may wish to use all the modules, or you may choose only one or two. The modules are designed to be delivered in order (e.g. Module 1 then Module 2) and to build upon one another.

## Steps

1. Brief all participants and set up safety (as per the Before Screening GHOSTHUNTER notes).
2. Screen GHOSTHUNTER.
3. Provide introductory content on childhood trauma, abuse, and neglect (see the beginning of this Educational Screening Guide for further information).
4. Implement the Module/s
  - a. Module 1: Memory and Trauma
  - b. Module 2: Identity: Who am I?
  - c. Module 3: Belonging
  - d. Module 4: Resolution and Healing
5. Conduct Assessments and Reflection.

## General Structure of a Module

You can use these Modules in whatever way works for you and your participants.

A good plan for each class/session may be to:

1. Re-establish group safety (see the factsheet on **Teaching about Trauma**).
2. **Check in** on any tasks that were assigned last session.
3. Present theoretical content as per the **Factsheets** on each topic.
4. Re-screen **Key Scene/s**.
5. Group discussion using the **Conversation Starters**.
6. Work through the recommended **Activity**.
7. Set a **Task** on which to reflect before the next class.
8. Conduct a **Group Check In** to close the session.

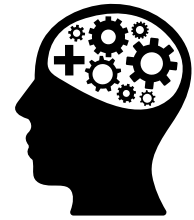


**YOU KNOW YOUR PARTICIPANTS BEST. FEEL FREE TO TWEAK, TAILOR, OR ENTIRELY TRANSFORM THIS CONTENT TO MEET THEIR NEEDS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES.**



Module 1

# Memory and Trauma



## Module 1

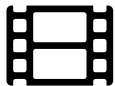
# Memory and Trauma

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## Memory and GHOSTHUNTER

Memory is a core theme in GHOSTHUNTER. As soon as we meet Jason, we are transported on a journey of mystery, investigation, and discovery. There are so many things that Jason can't remember, particularly about his childhood. Jason's memory is also "on and off," forcing us to view him as an unreliable narrator.

Jason is driven to explore his memory to help him make sense of himself and his identity. He also experiences traumatic memory, triggered by returning to places from his childhood.



## Key scenes

### EXPLORING THE HOSPITAL RECORDS

Timecode 00:08:48

### VISITING OLD HOMES

Timecode 00:15:32

### EASTLAKES

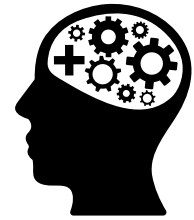
Timecode 00:20:50

### THE FISH AND CHIP SHOP

Timecode 00:28:22

### THE BRICK WALL

Timecode 00:31:09



## Key quotes

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**“I don’t remember that at all... I might be able to get some memories for myself, move on for myself... I’ve got no memories.”**

Jason

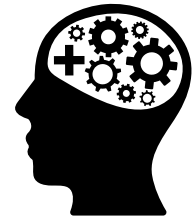
**“It was so bad for me that I just blocked it out. I just don’t want to remember.”**

Jason



## Conversation starters

- 1. How does memory work? What about traumatic memory?**
- 2. What mysteries are facing Jason when we first meet him? What did the hospital files reveal about Jason’s childhood?**
- 3. When Jason is at the Fish and Chip shop location from his childhood, what does he remember? How does he make sense of these memories?**
- 4. What would it mean for Jason to remember his childhood? Would this be a good thing, or a bad thing? How?**



## Activity

# Retrieving a Memory

## Part 1

### All participants

Ask participants to reflect on a happy memory from any point in their lives. Have them ponder on this memory for around a minute. Get them to write down what they can remember.

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## Part 2

### Social services participants

Once they have completed Part 1, ask the participants to consider what this memory might tell us about their self-identity. Does it tell us something about how they see themselves, other people, or the world?

### Justice participants

Once they have completed Part 1, ask the participants to consider the following questions: Imagine that Jason is called to testify in court in his father's trial. Would he make a good witness? Why, or why not? How could you best support Jason to tell his story, balancing the needs of the justice system with Jason's limited memory?

### Advanced participants

Once they have completed Part 1, ask participants how they would support someone such as Cathy and Jason who is struggling with memories of their childhood trauma.

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## Tasks and Assessment

### Social services participants

Although we never see a ghost, ghost hunting is a key theme of the film. How might Jason's childhood experiences relate to ghost hunting?

### Justice participants

The core business of the justice system is to respond to trauma, yet this same system is not adequately equipped to do so. Discuss.



Module 2

# Identity: Who am I?



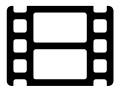
## Module 2

# Identity: Who am I?

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## Identity and GHOSTHUNTER

GHOSTHUNTER is a film that explores the many sides of self. People in the film speak of two sides of Jason, trying to understand this complexity. Jason wrestles with his own sense of self. As an audience, we also grapple with some of the things Jason does, and what this means for him and others. This mystery compounds with that surrounding his childhood, and the mysteries of ghost hunting. It may leave us, as a viewer, feeling perplexed and unsure. This portrait is an authentic portrayal of some of the possible challenges related to childhood trauma.



## Key scenes

### JASON MEETS LOUISE VOIGHT

Timecode 00:23:59

### JASON LEARNS THE TRUTH ABOUT HIS FATHER

Timecode 00:33:13

### CATHY'S STORY

Timecode 00:34:53

### CATHY EXPLAINS HOW SHE MET JASON

Timecode 00:41:11

### JASON WRITES HIS FATHER A LETTER

Timecode 00:50:44

### A DAY IN COURT

Timecode 01:05:09

### SAM AND LINDA EXPLAIN

Timecode 01:08:15

### JASON MEETS HIS SOCIAL WORKER

Timecode 01:15:03



## Key quotes

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**“You don’t know what’s real and what’s not with him. And I don’t think he knows either. It’s like he’s got two people in his body.”**

Sam

**“I need to prove to people that I’m not bad.”**

Jason

**“There is a wounded child in [Jason].”**

Julia



## Conversation starters

- 1. How do we form our identity? What makes us who we are?**
- 2. What is Cathy’s story? How might this have influenced her sense of herself?**
- 3. What is Jason’s story? How might this have influenced his sense of himself?**



## Activity

# Core Beliefs

## Part 1

### All participants

Participants are asked to review the Factsheet on Identity and Belonging. Ask participants to hypothesise what core beliefs Jason may hold, and reflect on what may have influenced their development. In thinking about Jason, also reflect on any additional factors which can influence any child's development and sense of belonging e.g. friends, family, pets, community, broader social context.

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## Part 2

### Social services participants

Once they have completed Part 1, participants can consider the challenges a person like Jason might have to psychologically reconcile his warmth and care for others with his use of violence. What psychological tensions arise here? How could they be resolved?

### Justice participants

Once they have completed Part 1, participants can consider how a person like Jason might present, and how the system would respond. Is Jason's story a common one? What might this tell us about people accessing the system?

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## Tasks and Assessment

### Social services participants

Childhood trauma has impacted Jason's identity. Discuss.

OR

Child abuse has impacted Cathy's identity. Discuss.

### Justice participants

How can childhood trauma and abuse impact our client's identity? What does this mean for the criminal justice system?



Module 3

# Belonging



### Module 3

# Belonging

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## Belonging and GHOSTHUNTER

Jason's childhood was characterised by experiences of abuse and neglect. Carers and workers who may have been able to support Jason's safety were distant because of Jason moving so frequently. Jason seemed to find solace in his friendships with other children, only to later learn that he was a pawn in his father's perpetration of sexual abuse against Jason's female friends.

GHOSTHUNTER demonstrates the relationship challenges that can result from diverse childhood traumas, especially those perpetrated by caregivers, at different life stages, including in later life. In the film, Jason forms strong bonds and friendships quickly, forming new and safe 'families' in place of those which he never had. At times these relationships become difficult to navigate and complicated, and Jason uses violence against others. This may influence Jason's sense of belonging, particularly as he perceives that his role is to help others (whether they are being haunted, or to get fit at the gym). For the audience, this tension is—again—difficult to reconcile.



### Key scenes

#### MEETING SEAN

Timecode 00:20:39

#### THE FIRE

Timecode 00:58:21

#### SEAN SPEAKS UP

Timecode 01:01:06

#### BEN CONFRONTS JASON

Timecode 01:12:52



## Key quotes

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**“Not having a dad or mum that loves you, that hurts.”**

Jason

**“You get angry, Jason. You snap... Stop trying to hide it all and think that you can help others and not think about yourself... You’re a ticking time bomb.”**

Linda

**“[I was a] fake person. I was trying to find myself. I was trying to be that happy boy that you met...[but] it was like having an angry boy inside. It destroyed everything I had.”**

Jason



## Conversation starters

- 1. How does Jason speak about his relationships? What does he value in his relationships, and why?**
- 2. Why does Jason call all his ghost hunting team members “brothers” and “sisters”? Why is it important for him to have a sense of family?**
- 3. Where do you feel the system failed Jason? Identify the points at which he could have had help but didn’t.**
- 4. In services, what can we do to create a supportive environment for people with experiences like Cathy or Jason to find a sense of belonging and foster safe attachments?**



## Activity

# A Life Map

## Part 1

### All participants

Ask participants to draw a trajectory, timeline, or map of Jason's life from his birth to the present.

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## Part 2

### Social services participants

The early experiences of a person with experiences like Jason may influence how he tries to resolve conflict later in life, including his use of violence. At what earlier points could people/services have intervened (and how) to have prevented this further harm?

### Justice participants

Once they have completed Part 1, participants can discuss the different points at which Jason has encountered the system, and how services might have responded to minimise risk and harm.

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## Tasks and Assessment

### Social services participants

Our clients may have never had anyone be "good enough." How could we show Jason or Cathy that we are safe and can be trusted?

### Justice participants

The early experiences of a person with experiences like Jason may influence how he tries to resolve conflict later in life, including his use of violence. At what earlier points could people/services have intervened (and how) to have prevented this further harm?

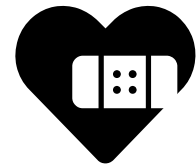
### Advanced

GHOSTHUNTER grapples with the search for the truth. What is "the truth" and what does this mean for Cathy and Jason?



Module 4

# Resolution and Healing



#### Module 4

# Resolution and Healing

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## Healing and GHOSTHUNTER

GHOSTHUNTER portrays the hunt for ghosts, for truth, for identity, for belonging, and for justice. The GHOSTHUNTER story is unusual from a legal perspective. Reports are made, a perpetrator is found, a sentencing occurs, and imprisonment follows. We see that Jason and Cathy experience some healing from this process, but perhaps it is what these events represent that invokes healing. These outcomes helped them tell their stories, be validated, and minimised the risk (and fear) that new generations would be harmed by Jason's father.

Jason and Cathy heal in other ways. In their love for their animals, in their relationship with one another, and perhaps by participating in the documentary.



### Key scenes

#### **DETECTIVE QUINN FINDS JACK KING**

Timecode 00:37:36

#### **JACK KING FACES COURT**

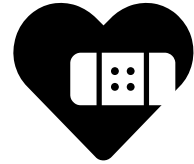
Timecode 00:40:01

#### **BEN SEEKS HELP FOR JASON**

Timecode 00:56:46

#### **JASON AND JULIA**

Timecode 01:23:38



## Key quotes

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**“I thought, it’s ruining my life and obviously affecting me. If my daughter went through this... would I want her to be ashamed, would I want her to feel guilty, would I want her to feel anything but a victim? I thought: no!”**

Cathy

**“I can’t even tell you how I felt... I howled! I went woo hoo! Then I cried again. I wish I could have saved the next generation.”**

Cathy

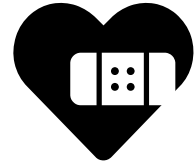
**“He’s no longer a ghost. He can no longer stalk me.”**

Cathy



## Conversation starters

1. **What are the trauma-informed principles?**
2. **What are the strategies Cathy used (both in the past and now) to cope with her child abuse impacts? How could we implement the trauma-informed principles in our work with a person like Cathy?**
3. **What are the strategies Jason used (both in the past and now) to cope with his childhood trauma impacts? How could we implement the trauma-informed principles in our work with a person like Jason?**
4. **The GHOSTHUNTER legal story is unusual: reports are made, a perpetrator is found, a sentencing occurs, and imprisonment follows. What is the more typical experience?**
5. **Legal remedies are only one tool for recovery. What are the other tools that might be restorative and help to undo the harms of childhood trauma?**



Activity

## Our Toolkits

Part 1

### All participants

Ask participants to draw a toolkit on a page. Have them brainstorm the professional strategies and tools that may support a child abuse survivor to heal from abuse and deliver justice.

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Part 2

### All participants

Once they have completed Part 1, participants can consider strategies for how to maintain the trauma-informed principles when working with survivors of childhood trauma.

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Tasks and Assessment

### Social services participants

Discuss how you would implement the trauma-informed principles if working with people like Jason or Cathy.

### Justice participants

The legal successes outlined in GHOSTHUNTER are not typical. What are other ways that we can support survivors other than legal recourse?

# Partners and Donors

GHOSTHUNTER has been made with the generous support and financing of Good Pitch Australia, Shark Island Institute, Documentary Australia Foundation and Screen Australia.



Distributed in Australia and NZ by MADMAN ENTERTAINMENT.

For more information on the film and the Impact Campaign including additional videos

**[www.GhosthuntertheMovie.com](http://www.GhosthuntertheMovie.com)**

Follow GHOSTHUNTER on social media for updates

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**[www.twitter.com/GhosthunterDoc](https://www.twitter.com/GhosthunterDoc)**

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