We would like to invite you to provide feedback on these guidelines as they progress to publication. As delegates from the 2019 Trauma-Aware Schooling Conference, we respect your interest and experience and value the opportunity to respond to your thoughts and ideas. Please read through and then provide feedback via an on-line questionnaire that you can access via this link: https://survey.qut.edu.au/f/193221/a958/. You will also receive an email invitation to provide this feedback after the conference.

This document has three sections.
1. An introduction
2. Guidelines for Schools and Early Childhood Programs.

Introduction

In most Australian schools and early childhood education programs there are students who have experienced COMPLEX CHILDHOOD TRAUMA. These are the children and adolescents who have been victims of:

1. Repeated relational trauma that includes factors such as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; significant neglect; family and other forms of interpersonal violence.
2. Intergenerational trauma that includes the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and refugee families and communities.
3. Polyvictimisation (which refers to the experience of multiple victimisations of differing types) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and refugee families and communities.

THESE DRAFT NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR TRAUMA-AWARE SCHOOLING ARE BEING DEVELOPED AT A CRITICAL TIME FOR EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA VIA A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE AUSTRALIAN CHILDHOOD FOUNDATION.

DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATION SYSTEMS

1. Effective trauma-aware education practice relies on informed and supportive system leadership to develop policy and funding frameworks to support and resource the embedding of trauma-aware practice in education systems.
2. Education system, school and program law and policy should be reviewed to identify and address elements that might enhance or hinder trauma-aware schooling.
3. The embedding of a trauma-aware approach at a system level must be supported by a long-term implementation strategy and change management approach that is committed to by government.
4. Embedding a trauma-aware approach at a system level must take account of the cultural and geographic diversity of Australian states and territories, as well as the varying needs of schools/programs and communities.
5. A trauma-aware approach must be developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders to ensure the cultural strength of the approach for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
6. Particular consideration is needed for education settings:
   • in remote locations
   • that have boarding accommodations
   • that offer alternate or specialist education programs
   • with significant numbers of students from refugee backgrounds
   • with significant numbers of students living in out of home care
   • with students with a disability.
   • servicing students living with mental health concerns.
7. Cross-agency (whole-of-government and non-government) funding and staffing of training and support programs should be investigated and negotiated as a cost-effective strategy for enhancing outcomes for students accessing a number of services.
8. Collaborations between education systems and Australian universities should be explored to help with pre-service and post-graduate training provision, resource development, program evaluation, and further research.
9. Trauma-aware principles and implementation strategies should be incorporated into pre-service training and ongoing professional development for school educators and support practitioners (including: psychologists, counsellors or therapists; teacher aides, chaplains; and school-based nurses and police officers, etc.).
10. Education reform in the area of trauma-aware schooling should be quarantined from political and leadership change.
This trauma can lead to children and adolescents suffering from the effects of toxic stress which can have a detrimental impact on a child our young person's overall development and wellbeing including learning and education outcomes. Traumatised children and young people are also at significant risk of exclusion and disengagement from schooling.

There is now clear evidence (particularly from the field of neuroscience) that Complex Trauma can have a detrimental impact on learning and educational pathways due to the harmful impact of toxic stress upon the developing nervous systems. This impact can lead to detrimental emotional, relational, and behavioural outcomes that (if not resolved) can continue throughout the schooling years and extend into adulthood. It is clear from both international research and the national experience of educators and other professionals that:

- No social or cultural group is immune from the impact of complex trauma and that the prevalence is significant and of growing concern.
- The relationships that children and young people experience with those in education settings are critical to their developmental, sense of self and engagement with learning.
- Managing the needs and behaviours of students living with the outcomes of complex trauma can have a significant impact on the personal and professional well-being and consequential attrition rates of educators.
- Without knowledge and skill in trauma-aware practices, schools often defer to punitive responses including suspension and exclusion which may exacerbate rather than mediate the needs and behaviours of children and young people.
- Schools are critically positioned to be able to support the needs of children and young people with trauma through the relational and learning environments they can offer but often lack an understanding of how this can be achieved.
- Living with unresolved complex trauma can lead to intergenerational transmission of trauma. This is the context within which many children and young people are being currently being parented, and without steps to address the needs of this generation, there is an ongoing risk for future generations.
- There are important and powerful learnings regarding the impact of historical trauma on generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (including those affected by residential schooling) and the intergenerational impacts of the European colonization, the subsequent forced removal of children from families and communities, and the ongoing impacts of interpersonal and institutional racism continues to impact on these communities and families and continues to add complexity to the well-being and schooling of their children and young people.
- National and international cost-benefit analyses have identified that the long-term impacts of complex childhood trauma lead to substantial and growing costs for societies and governments, including those associated with health, welfare, education, child protection and care, and the downstream costs associated with adult mental health issues, alcohol and drug issues, crime, unemployment, homelessness and other productivity losses.

A rapidly growing body of research is driving a national and international reassessment of school and systemic approaches to supporting and educating students living with the impacts of complex trauma.

- This research draws from a combination of the science of child and adolescent development, the prevalence and impact of adverse childhood experiences, the long-term biomedical and intergenerational consequences of complex trauma, and developmental resilience.
- This research is revolutionising practice in the areas including health and mental health, social services, youth services, youth justice, and now is influencing significant change in the education of children and young people.

In response to this growing awareness, many Australian schools and early childhood education settings are now working within or aspiring to develop trauma-aware frameworks for the provision of education and learning and student support.

Trauma-aware schooling is not an extra body of work or responsibility for teachers and school leaders. Rather it is a systemic process to ensure all educators are aware of the premises underpinning this approach and are supported to engage in trauma-aware practice. These practices can reduce the time and efforts spent on addressing the challenging behaviours that can be an impact of complex trauma.

These guidelines draw on common elements derived from the growing body of evidence of trauma-aware models of practice nationally and internationally to provide best practice guidance to at both the system and school level in the development of trauma-aware education.

DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS.

Training processes are needed to ensure leaders of schools and programs are trauma-aware. These processes should engage in high quality whole-of-staff training in trauma-aware schooling and in out-of-home care but who are still living with the outcomes of complex trauma and that some of these techniques remain unidentified. Therefore, trauma-aware practices should be inclusive of all children and young people in the education setting as a means for supporting all students.

Leaders who are trauma-informed are far more likely to recognise the benefits of trauma-aware schooling and support educational reform in their schools or programs.

Leaders who are not aware of the impacts of complex childhood trauma on children and adolescents and the means to address the impacts, are far less likely to support and lead trauma-aware schooling thinking and processes.

Whole-of-school/program frameworks should be implemented that:

- Address the needs of students living with the outcomes of complex trauma
- Are also appropriate for and supportive of all students
- Are protective of the professional and personal well-being of educators
- Build capacity in the resilience of educators
- Are inclusive of all adult staff members within the school (including front office staff, education support staff, etc.) to ensure consistency of practice

Schools/programs should acknowledge the possible impact of supporting traumatised children and young people on educators and other staff and implement measures to provide support, such as models of professional support, supervision and reflective practice.

Schools/programs should engage in high quality whole-of-staff training in trauma-aware schooling and in out-of-home care but who are still living with the outcomes of complex trauma and that some of these techniques remain unidentified. Therefore, trauma-aware practices should be inclusive of all children and young people in the education setting as a means for supporting all students.

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Schools/programs should engage in high quality whole-of-staff training in trauma-aware schooling.

Schools/programs should develop constructive working relationships with parents and carers of students who are living with the outcomes of complex trauma. This includes organisations overseeing residential care programs.

Schools/programs should develop constructive working relationships with local child and adolescent support agencies and specialists who provide services to their students. Schools/programs should be prepared to take a leadership role in these collaborative opportunities where possible.

Children and young people should be involved in the design and evaluation of activities and supports that seek to meet their needs. The participation of children and young people in active feedback processes meet children’s rights principles as well as have therapeutic benefit.

Schools/programs should identify students living in out-of-home care and ensure that trauma-aware processes are available to enhance the support and education of these students, working towards a positive educational trajectory for these children and young people.

Schools/programs should acknowledge that there are students in most schools who are not living in out-of-home care but who are still living with the outcomes of complex trauma and that some of these techniques remain unidentified. Therefore, trauma-aware practices should be inclusive of all children and young people in the education setting as a means for supporting all students.