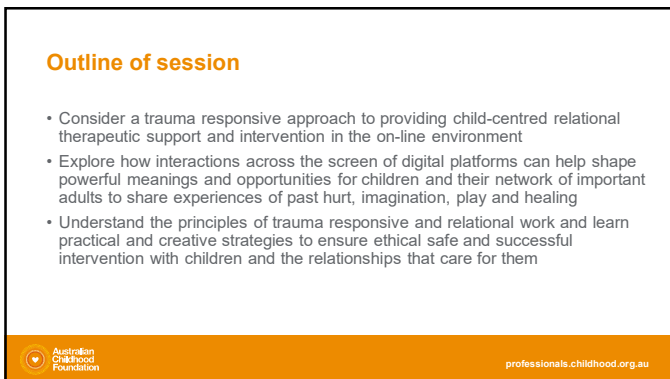




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Mr Rogers

In the recent Tom Hanks film about the 1950's children's television show, A Beautiful Day in the Neighbourhood, its host, Mr Rogers said
 " when I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, *Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping*"
 This loved character displayed a genuine representation of care and empathy to children
 He showed that interaction over a screen can offer resources to children that can shape powerful meanings and opportunities for them and the people that care for them



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Activity

- Consider a television character that connected to you when you were younger?
- What was it about that character that resonated with you?
- Have you carried anything about that character or his or her qualities from then until now?



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Digital formats: Screens as symbols

Can become

- An opportunity to experience and show mastery of a skill that most children have
- An amplification of a relationship that brings safety and comfort
- A reliable and anticipated relational presence "neural expectancy" Porges
- Proximity to trust and intimacy and intensity
- An opportunity to create and practice stories of resilience and connection
- ACF Guidelines



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Therapeutic space

- What do we want this this experience to be like for children?
- Many children are unfamiliar with counselling being in their home
- How do we negotiate the personal and private in the space?
- How do we talk to children about this new way of working?
- This can be an invention with the child of managing the proximity and intensity experienced in this way of working
- The connection will be unique to each child
- "Can we create something new together in this world that exists between us?"



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Therapeutic Space

How can children have choices?

- Playing with positioning of therapist and child
- Looking away/moving away
- Moving around in their seat
- Turning off the camera
- Muting themselves/ play music
- Sharing content on the screen
- How will being able to see themselves and others with them be difficult or a resource for them?



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Therapeutic Space

- What symbols of you do you want to show and be part of the work?
- What can change or be consistent in the space?
- What sensory regulation items might be helpful in either space?
- How will we enhance our understanding of using symbols metaphors and themes in the work?
- What will be the important rituals we develop within the sessions?
- Opening the session, closing the space
- A closing ritual



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Relationships as Resources

- During this time, relationships are being experienced differently by children both in positive an negative ways
- The meaning they make and experience children have in relationships is different

How do you think that relationships children have in general, are being affected by COVID 19?



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Relationships as Anchors

“Children internalise the people who understand and comfort them, so that they often have the felt sense of accompaniment when they are alone” Bonnie Badenoch



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Relationships as Anchors

- What are the innate qualities, essence of the relationship we want to capture, enhance and share?
- How will they see, feel those qualities in the space?
- How will we continue to
 - accompany children
 - be intuitive towards them
 - share somatic resonance and reciprocity **“warm waves of noticing each other”**
 - share meaning making experiences
- How will we communicate the intersubjective representation of them, softness comfort?



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Relationships as Anchors

Therapeutic presence is

- a child feeling heard, met, felt and understood
- a therapists resonance with the child in the present moment experience
- a shared internal embodied experience
- the creation of an expanded felt sense of compassion and understanding
- the provision of the neuroception of safety for a child



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Relationships as Anchors

Dan Siegel and Tina Payne – The Power of showing Up: How Parental Presence Shapes Who Our Kids Become and How their Brains Get Wired

- Discusses the concept of “showing up” which means
- offering a quality of presence
 - bringing your whole being, attention and awareness to your child
 - providing an experience that enables them to expect positive interactions from others and themselves
 - creating neural pathways in a child that will lead to selfhood, grit, strength and resilience



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Relationships as Anchors

Principles of relational presence “showing up”

- Safe: Providing a child with a safe harbour within hard times, so that they can take the needed risks for growth and change
- Seen: Truly seeing a child, is paying attention to their emotions good and bad, and striving to be attuned to what is in their mind beneath the behaviour
- Soothed: Teaching a child how to cope when life gets hard and showing them that you will be there along the way
- Secure: Providing reliable safety, focus on seeing them and soothing in times of need. They will trust in a feeling of security and attachment



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Trauma Frame

- Trauma is the culmination of experiences of hurt, pain and fear and the effects of the ways that relationships accompanied or failed to accompany those experiences
- For children, the traumatic residue that affects them in the present derives from who was with them before, during and after the experiences of violation and how those people responded to them
- Children are left with needs that in the moment of the hurt, pain and fear are unfulfilled. These needs stay activated ready for available relationships to tend to them, see them and gradually help them to be met.
- These unmet needs are developmental and interpersonal, requiring relational investment and presence in order to be resolved.



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Trauma and the current context

- The essence of trauma is therefore more about a child’s felt sense of “aloneness” in times of pain and fear than the actual event
- Thus, those experiences and histories of children are being amplified for children in the current context. They might be feeling
Isolation, loneliness, fear, uncertainty, distance
- Children’s experiences and stories of trauma and **unmet needs** are becoming entangled with the meanings of COVID 19
- The feeling of being alone in their experience of trauma is now combined with the loneliness of the world now



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Trauma Themes

- Themes hold explanatory frames that recognise children’s specific unmet needs and offer the basis for understanding how to meet those needs. They are what the child did not receive at the time of the trauma or subsequently
- These themes emerge as organisers of a child’s life and relationships
- Therapeutic work can be articulated in the meeting of those needs or a Healing Arc relating to them
- The relationship becomes the counterpoint to the trauma experience
- It offers the experience and embodied presence that was not available to the child at the time of the trauma
- It offers a new felt sense of safety in the quality of implicit memory, and a new narrative



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Trauma Themes and Healing

Key trauma themes are being magnified by COVID 19

- Feeling alone can be met with experiences of accompaniment, comfort validation and care
- An uncertain future and felt anxiety can be met with experiences of anticipated reliability and trust knowing and protection **“embodied implicit anticipations”**
- Limited power and control can be met with choices and practice of those with relational reinforcement
- Diminished confidence can be met with experiences of mastery, participation and practice



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Trauma Themes and Healing

- Feeling small can be met with experiences of amplification of identity
- Missing fun can be met with experiences of play and imagination
“when we make room for children to play, their wisdom coupled with the safety of just playing allows embedded traumas to be held as they awaken”
- Feeling unfamiliar in relationships can be met with experiences of acceptance, safety and titrated novel relational experiences



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Trauma Themes and Healing

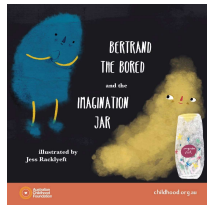
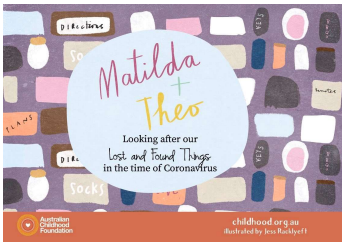
- These healing relational experiences can be captured and sent in multiple ways, prior to, during and after the session
- Therapeutic letters convey to children the commitment of the therapist and what they hold and notice about the child
- In them children experience a strong resonance of the values and commitments they have to themselves and others in their lives
- Social stories for children



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Social Stories for children



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Therapist Experience and Orientation

What do we need to consider for ourselves?

- Our own backstories of important themes
- Our experiences and stories of connection with the child
- The intersubjective representation we hold about the child
- The sense of intuition and knowing about the child
- Our experiences of trusting expectation in relationships
- Our experience of resonance and sharing that in a relationship
- What is interactional regulation for us?
- How do we look after ourselves and those around us?



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