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Principles guiding this workshop

- We assume a knowledge of child abuse and mandatory reporting requirements
- The emotional safety of participants is paramount in this workshop and for this group. All activities are optional
- We acknowledge this can be difficult material for a range of reasons. Feel free to chat with your facilitator
- Discussion and questions only enhance the session and knowledge sharing is really important
- Abuse related trauma covers the impact of all forms of child abuse, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, family violence and neglect

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Key learning outcomes

- To develop an enhanced understanding of complex abuse related trauma, with a particular focus on its effects on brain functioning
- To develop a clear understanding of the manifestations of abuse related trauma on the general functioning of a child or young person
- To be able to assess the impacts of abuse related trauma on the child or young person
- To gain a knowledge of the strategies and activities that we may use in the classroom to assist a child or young person manage the impacts of abuse related trauma

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Consider...



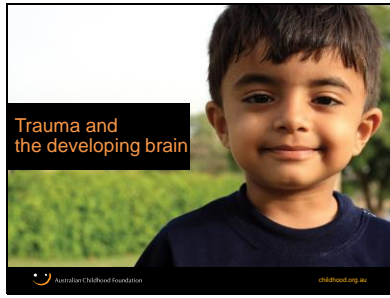
Consider a teacher who taught you and who had a positive influence on you;

What do you remember most about them?

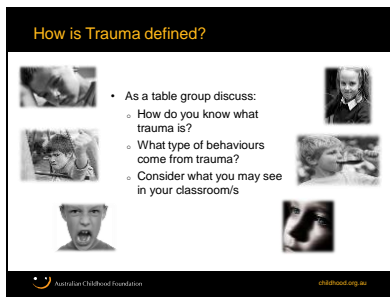
What appealed to you about them?

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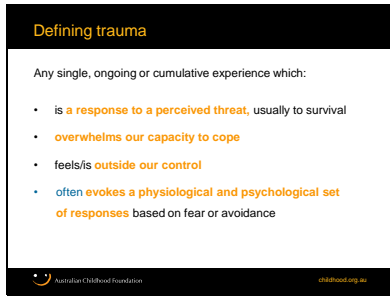
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What are the different types of trauma?

Simple

Complex } →Intergenerational


Developmental } →Transgenerational

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Simple Trauma

Simple trauma is **overwhelming and painful**



They are often single incidents, shorter in duration and involve a discrete crisis

They have less stigma associated with them, there is no societal blaming of the victims

Community responses are supportive and helpful

Examples: car accidents, house fires, bushfires, earthquakes and cyclones

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Complex Relational Trauma

Most often involves multiple incidents over an extended period of time

Is blaming or stigmatising of the victim

Based in relationship and associated with shame


Is an isolating experience due to the interpersonal element, often underpinned by intentionality

Induces a sense of disconnection from others and their support

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Developmental Trauma



Children and young people are very **vulnerable** to the effects of trauma because of their brain's **developmental immaturity** - their brains are **malleable**, so the impact of trauma is **faster to manifest** and leaves **deeper tracks of damage**

Children's development can **slow down** or be **impaired often** leading to children **experiencing splintered development**

Examples: children who are neglected, abused, forced to live with family violence or experience high parental conflict in the context of separation or divorce

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Contextualising abuse related trauma

Abuse related trauma can lead to significant difficulties in all domains


Understanding the impact of traumatization on children is a crucial step in facilitating change



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Trauma Impacts



- Trauma can impact all elements of children's development

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Trauma and children in the school context

Children are overwhelmed with internal reactions that race through their brains and bodies

They do anything to survive - Not because they want to but because they need to

They push away memories of pain


They shut down feelings

They stop trusting and believing in others

Elevated or prolonged exposure to stress or trauma rocks the very core of children and young people

They are scanning the environment constantly, leaving little space for learning

They stop relying on relationships around them to protect them




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Trauma and young people in the school context

Who are these young people in your environment and how do we speak about them?

What is the language we use?



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How Complex Trauma Affects the Developing Brain

- Reduces capacity for thinking
- Behave instinctively and sometimes inappropriately without knowing why – especially when faced with real or perceived threat
- Have difficulty in knowing, naming and expressing feelings
- Increases baseline arousal and thus they stay in a constant state of vigilance and heightened alarm
- Are easily triggered – 'overreact', 'out of the blue' responses

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Relationships are key

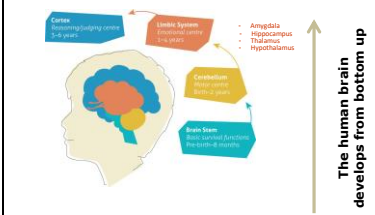
- Relationships are the key way we learn to engage with the world around us
- They are key to our survival, throughout the lifespan
- The quality of relational right – brain to right brain interactions in childhood influence our development in all areas of life



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The Brain



The human brain develops from bottom up

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The human brain



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Brainstem
- Basic Life Functions




- Basic Life Functions
- First part of our brain to develop
- This is the most developed brain part at birth
- Responsible for our heart beat, breathing, sucking, temperature control, blood pressure, regulates sleep cycle

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Cerebellum
- Movement and Balance

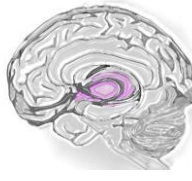


- Helps us to know where our body is in space
- Helps us with our posture and balance
- Helps us not to fall over and to control our movements

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Diencephalon
- Sorting & Sending Centre

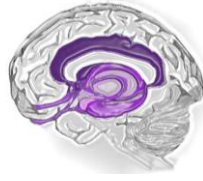


- This area of the brain develops mainly after birth
- It sorts out messages coming into the brain and sends them
- It uses hormones to send signals to body
- Hormonal signals tell your body what it needs, e.g. food, water, love

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Limbic Lobe
- Emotional Gateway

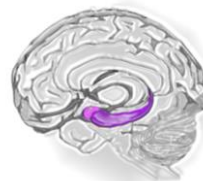


- The part of the brain that helps us attach an emotion to a thought or memory
- This part of the brain is particularly involved with the emotions of fear and anger
- This area develops mainly after birth

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Amygdala & Hippocampus



Amygdala

- the 'smoke detector' of the brain
- is mature at birth
- processes & stores implicit memories

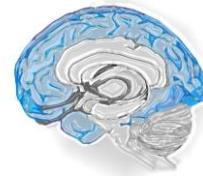
Hippocampus

- matures between 2-3yrs of age
- provides context to memories & embeds into long-term memory

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Cerebral Cortex
- Complex Thinking



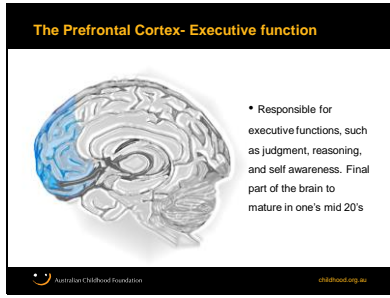
The largest part of the brain

Associated with higher brain function such as thought and action

- Examples of functions:
- Reasoning
- Logic
- Judgement
- Voluntary Movement

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Left and right hemispheres – Horizontal brain development

Left Hemisphere

- Evaluates language content
- The optimistic hemisphere
- Understands beginning, middle and end
- Learns from the past and expects the future
- Looks for patterns

Right Hemisphere

- Orientated in the present Moment
- Eye Contact

Facial Expression

- Tone of Voice
- Posture
- Gesture
- Intensity
- Is mute
- Grasps the whole

The left brain sees the trees, while the right brain takes in the whole forest!

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Age and hemispheric specialization

This is a very important finding as it has implications for how children, who are in the same family, can be differentially affected by the trauma they experience depending on which hemisphere is more active in its development at the time

0-2 years Right hemisphere
2-4 years Left hemisphere
4-6 years Right hemisphere
6-8 years Left hemisphere
8-12 years Right hemisphere

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The developing brain

- A neurobiological understanding of trauma offers explanations about the way it affects:

Memory	Emotional experience
Language	Regulation & arousal
Sociality & communication	Self systems
Sensory & motor functioning	Attention

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Integration

- Abuse is an insult/assault to integration
- Impairments to integration lead to Chaos and/or Rigidity
- Integration creates harmony
- Greater integration results in children being more adaptive and flexible
- Integration is the key to **Wellbeing**



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Integration and Regulation

- Integration is always present when you have regulation
- Integration in relationships involves attuned communication among people who are honored for their differences and then linked together to become 'we'
- "If you name it, you contain it" -- because this integrates two systems
- "If it's sharable, it's bearable"
- "Mention and manage your emotions" - Siegel
- Integration is health

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Developmental Trauma Healing


- Safety
- Self-Regulation
- Self-Reflection
- Relational Engagement



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How trauma impacts The Body



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Polyvagal Theory and Protective Responses by Stephen Porges

Behavioural Functions	Body Functions
Social Engagement Soothing and calming Indicates safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lowers or raises vocalization pitch• Regulates middle ear muscles to perceive human voice• Changes facial expressivity• Head turning• Tears and eyelids• Slows or speeds heart rate
Mobilization Fight or Flight Active Freeze Moderate to extreme danger	Hyper arousal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases heart rate• Sweats increases• Inhibits gastrointestinal function• Narrowing blood vessels- to slow blood flow to extremities• Release of adrenaline
Immobilization Collapse or submission Death feigning Increased pain threshold Conserves metabolic resources Life threatening situations	Hypo- arousal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slows heart rate• Constricts bronchi• Stimulates gastrointestinal function

Evolution

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Trauma and the BODY

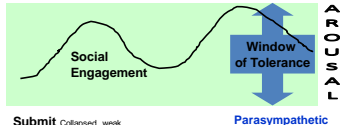


- Trauma results in a dysregulated body experience
- Traumatised children have their attention focused in the past, leaving them with reduced resources to attend to the present- *Accessing the body is always a link to the present*
- Trauma impairs children's capacities to adjust to, interpret and integrate sensory information in an adaptive fashion

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Regulated Arousal



Fight or Flight hyper-vigilant, action-orientated, impulsive, emotionally flooded, reactive, defensive, self-destructive

Freeze Physically immobilized, frozen, tense musculature

Sympathetic Hyper-arousal

Submit Collapsed, weak, defeated, flat affect, numb, empty, helpless, hopeless

Parasympathetic Hypo-arousal


Window of Tolerance

AROUSAL

Ogden, Minton, Pain 2006

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Dysregulated Arousal



Fight or Flight Hyper-vigilant, action-orientated, impulsive, emotionally flooded, reactive, defensive, self-destructive

Freeze Physically immobilized, frozen, tense musculature

Sympathetic Hyper-arousal

Submit Collapsed, weak, defeated, flat affect, numb, empty, helpless, hopeless

Parasympathetic Hypo-arousal

Window of Tolerance

AROUSAL

Ogden, Minton, Pain 2006

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Arousal

Consider:

- What does hyper-arousal look like in our school?
- What does hypo-arousal look like in our school?
- Where is the calm in our school?
- What is the calm for us?

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Transforming regulation

- Trauma has a disintegrative impact on our ability to regulate brain and body processes
- Trauma impairs children's capacities to orient to, interpret and integrate sensory stimulation in an adaptive fashion
- Regulation can be aided through
 - bottom-up, body oriented work
 - top-down, cognitive work
 - holding attention in the moment
 - experiences of positive, attuned co-regulation

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Memory

"Memory is the way past events affect future function"

Daniel Siegel
The Developing Mind




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Understanding memory development

Implicit memory is non-verbal memory, active before birth

- Implicit memory lacks conscious awareness but is fundamental to how the brain stores traumatic representations



Implicit Memory Development
Subconscious retrieval


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Understanding memory development

Explicit Memory develops after brain systems are in place and needs the Hippocampus

- Around 18 months *Semantic* then *Episodic*
- Around 2 years *Narrative/ autobiographical*

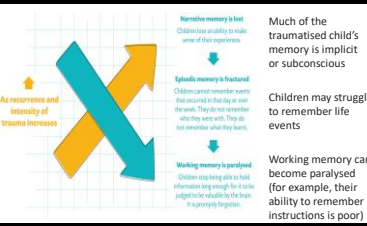


Explicit Memory Development
Conscious retrieval

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Trauma, memory & learning



As recurrence and intensity of trauma increases

Narrative memory is lost
Children lose ability to recall some of their experiences

Explicit memory is fractured
Children cannot remember events that occurred in their day or year to year intervals. They do not remember who they were with. They do not remember what they learnt.

Working memory is paralysed
Children stop being able to hold information long enough for it to be judged to be valuable by the brain. It is simply forgotten.

Much of the traumatised child's memory is implicit or subconscious

Children may struggle to remember life events

Working memory can become paralysed (for example, their ability to remember instructions is poor)

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Memory - Discuss

How can educators help keep memory systems active?
What can we do to assist children and young people build positive memory systems?



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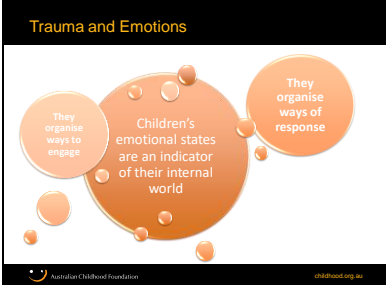
Trauma and Emotions



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Trauma and Emotions



They organise ways to engage

Children's emotional states are an indicator of their internal world

They organise ways of response


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Emotional Literacy

Traumatised children/young people:

- Have limited ability to integrate *feeling states* (RH) with *words and constructs* (LH)
- Have limited emotional literacy
- Do not easily understand their own feelings
- Have little basis to know or understand the feelings of others
- Have not been given a chance to develop empathy



How can educators help to build emotional literacy?
What activities could be put into place in the classroom?

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Trauma and Emotions

- How then do we create:
- Safety
- Calm
- Connection
- Control



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Trauma and Learning



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Trauma and Learning

The capacity of traumatised children for learning is compromised:

- Their neurobiology is stressed
- Their relationships can feel unstable
- Their emotional state is in flux
- They find it difficult to stay calm
- Change is perceived as dangerous
- Their memory is under pressure
- They are disconnected from themselves and time
- New experiences and new information carry threat and uncertainty


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Discuss

• What else might get in the way of learning?

• List as many things as you can from what you see in your students



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Trauma and Behaviour



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Trauma and Behaviour

Strategies for addressing trauma based behaviour will be most successful when they are applied purposefully across multiple settings in which children and young people live, play and learn

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Trauma and Behaviour

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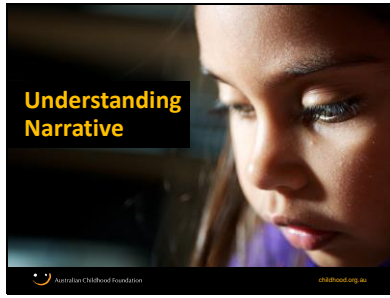
Trauma and Behaviour

Ask yourself:

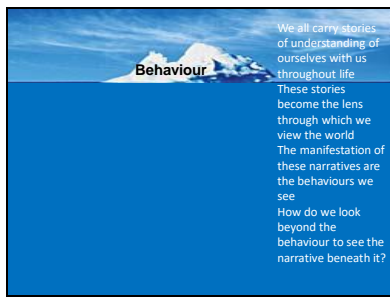
- What is the behaviour telling me?
- What might have triggered this behaviour?
- How does this behaviour serve to protect the child/young person and help him/her survive?
- What is the impact on me?

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The right hemisphere in relationship

These primary relationships contribute to:

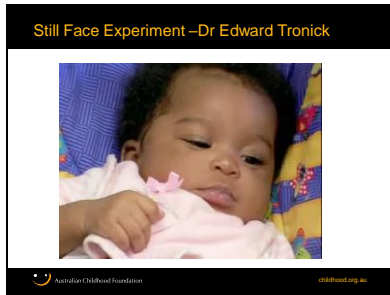
- stored internal working models of primary relationships stored in the right hemisphere
- The perception of emotion in self and others, enabling empathy and humour.

These functions depend on the use of something called 'Mirror Neurons' in the brain



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Internal working models		
	Positive internal working model	Negative internal working model
View of the world and relationships	I am lovable	I am unlovable
	I am worthy	I am unworthy
	Others are responsive	Others are unavailable
	Others are loving	Others are neglectful
	Others are interested in me	Others are rejecting
	Others are available to me	Others are unresponsive
	The world is relatively safe	The world is unsafe

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