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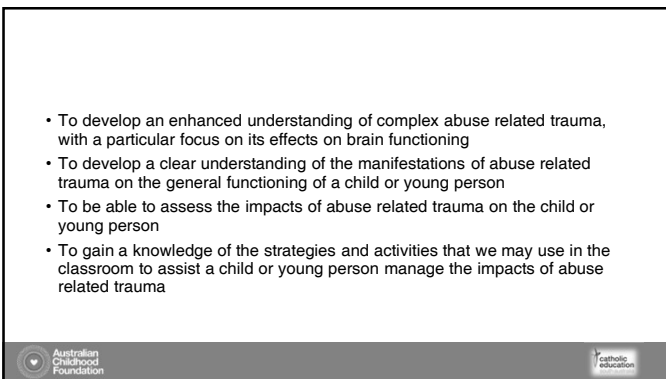
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**Safety**

The content of this training can evoke strong emotions and may trigger personal experiences of trauma.

Please be mindful of your own wellbeing during this training and if you need support please ask the facilitator.

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- We assume a knowledge of child abuse and mandatory reporting requirements.
- The emotional safety of participants is paramount in this workshop. All activities are optional. Only share what you are comfortable to share.
- Be mindful of confidentiality.
- We acknowledge this can be difficult material for a range of reasons. Feel free to chat with your facilitator if you need and take breaks as required.
- 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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**When you were growing up...**

Pick a card which helps you tell the story of a teacher who taught you when you were young and had a positive influence:

What do you remember most about them?  
 How did that person make you feel?  
 What did they do?  
 What didn't they do?



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**Understanding trauma and the developing brain**



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**As a table group discuss:**

- How do you define trauma?
- Consider what you might see in your classrooms?



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Any single, ongoing or cumulative experience which:

- Feels/is outside our control
- Overwhelms our capacity to cope
- Evokes a physiological and psychological set of responses based on fear or avoidance
- A response to a perceived threat; response is usually based in survival

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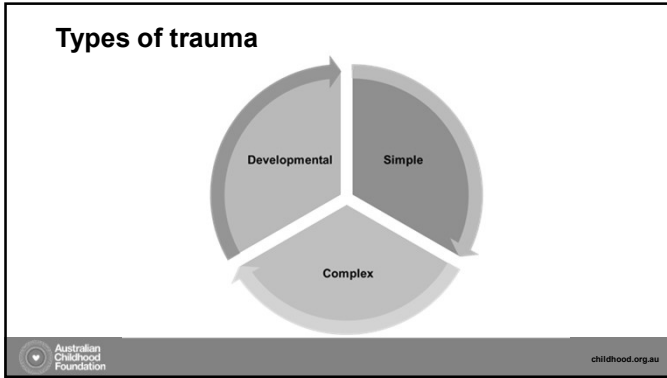
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### Complex relational trauma

- 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, often underpinned by intentionality
- Induces a sense of disconnection from others and their support

A black and white photograph of several hands being held together in a supportive grip. A semi-transparent circular overlay on the left side contains the text for 'Complex relational trauma'.

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### Transgenerational transmission and cultural impacts:

- Caregivers parenting a traumatized child frequently have unresolved trauma themselves and are frequently clinically depressed or anxious
- This makes it difficult for them to be emotionally available to their hurting child.
- Their distress is often unintentionally acted out on the child whose misbehaviour is "triggering" the caregiver's own history of victimization.
- **Our relationships influence our culture and our culture influences our relationships**

The diagram consists of two overlapping circles. The top circle is labeled 'Intergenerational' and the bottom circle is labeled 'Transgenerational'. Arrows on the circles indicate a clockwise cycle between the two concepts.

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### Understanding the developing brain



new born      3 year old      adult

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### Neurons

- Brain's building blocks
- At birth there are approximately 100 billion neurons;
- However very few neural connections at birth
- Child's brain – its job is to lay down as many neuronal connections as possible
- Adolescent brain – its job is to prune and choose the connections it needs, myelination to strengthen those connections and increase processing speed
- Neural connections are use sensitive- More often connection activated, stronger pathway. Neurons that fire together survive, those that don't, die (*'use it or lose it'*)

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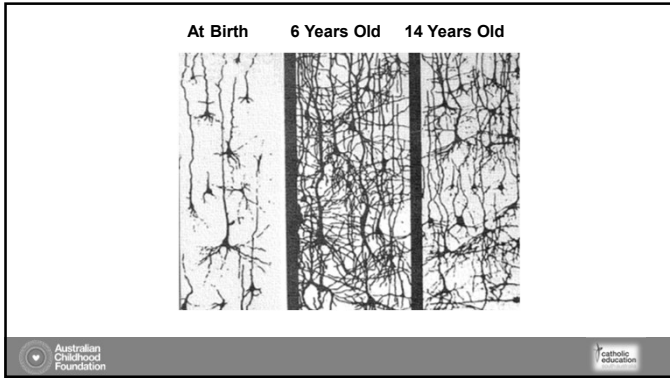
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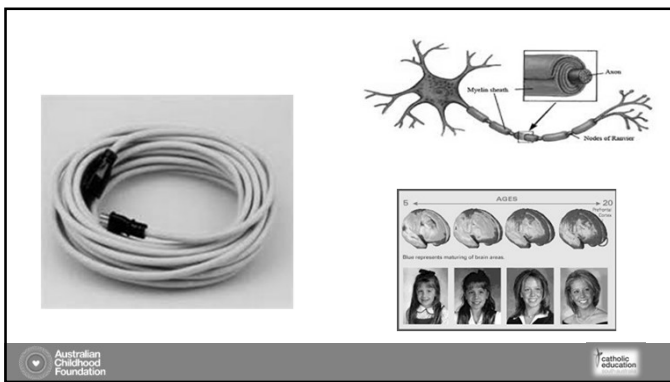
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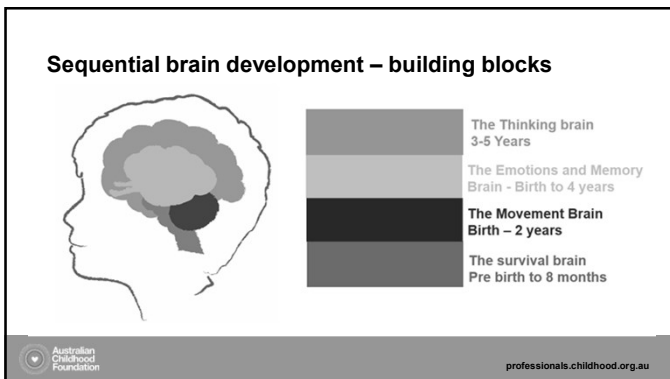
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**Brainstem - basic life functions**

- 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



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**Superior Colliculus**

- Processes visual threats – looming objects identified by cells in the retina of the eye
- Retinal neuronal input received by Superior Colliculus which engages the body in **Avoidance and defensive behaviours**



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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
- Has its own connective pathways between the 2 halves- cerebellar vermis



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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, eg, food, water, love



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**Limbic lobe- emotional gateway**

- The part of the brain that helps us attach an emotion to an experience or memory
- This part of the brain is particularly involved with the emotions of fear and anger
- Also heavily involved in attachment processes
- This area develops mainly after birth



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**Hippocampus – Brain’s historian**

- Explicit memory system
- Develops approximately 2-3 years of age
- Provides context to memory and embeds long term memory



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**Amygdala – smoke alarm**

- Detects threat
- Develops from birth
- Learns by association
- Involved in implicit memory processes



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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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**The prefrontal cortex- executive function**

- Responsible for executive functions, such as judgement, reasoning, and self awareness
- Final part of the brain to reach maturity in one's mid 20s
- Under reconstruction in adolescents from the age of approximately 12 years



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**Medial prefrontal cortex**

- Associated with perceptions of self and similar others
- Known as centre for mindfulness
- Involved in maternal bonding – the parent child dyad and inter-subjectivity



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Understanding lateral brain development



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### Lateral brain development



**Left Hemisphere**

- Evaluates language cont
- Optimistic hemisphere
- Understands beginning, i
- Learns from the past anc
- Looks for patterns



**Right Hemisphere**

- In the present moment
- Eye contact
- Facial expression
- Tone of voice
- Posture
- Gesture
- Intensity
- Is mute
- Grasps the whole

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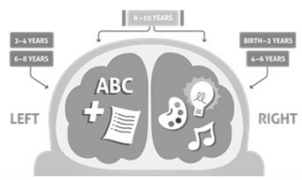
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### Hemispheric integration



**Both hemispheres required for healthy development and functioning**

- Connected through corpus callosum
- Good integration leads to coherent life narratives
- Abuse and trauma causes disconnection - results in 1 hemisphere dominating

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When a child is terrified traumatised they are likely to function predominantly from their right hemisphere.

- The child will struggle to process the content of our words (a left hemisphere task)
- The child may not be able to speak (a left hemisphere task)
- The child will be tuned into our tone of voice, not the content (a right hemisphere task)



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- The young person will be processing our postures and gestures, attuned for signs of danger
- They will be registering the way we try to use eye contact (e.g: demanding a young person look at us may escalate the situation)
  - They will also be monitoring the intensity of our movements, primed to look for signs of threat
  - The young person will likely be acting in the moment and won't have a strong grasp of future or past, therefore will not likely be able to grasp the potential consequences of their actions at the time



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### Activity- Wright Family



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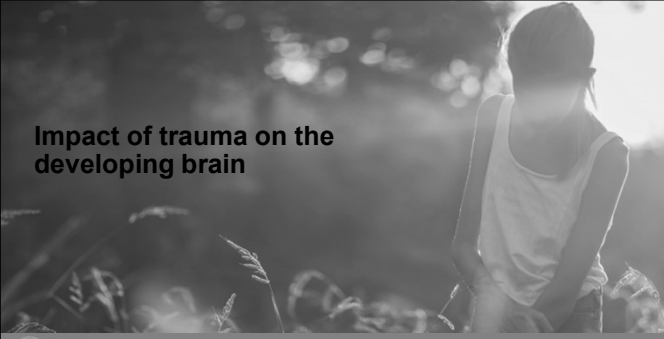
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### Impact of trauma on the developing brain



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### Trauma Impacts

Trauma can impact all elements of children's development: brain, body, memory, learning, behaviour, emotions, relationships.

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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memory                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional experience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Language                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulation & arousal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sociability & communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Belief systems       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory & motor functioning | <input type="checkbox"/> Attention            |

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Three Core Concepts in Early Development

# 3 Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development

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Center on the Developing Child HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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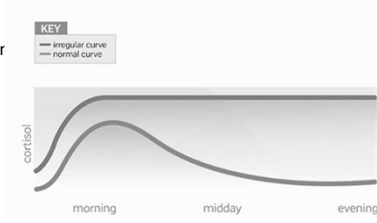
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### Cortisol

Can help:

- your body respond to stress or danger – **fight, flight, freeze, submit response**
- increase your body's metabolism of glucose
- control your blood pressure
- reduce inflammation



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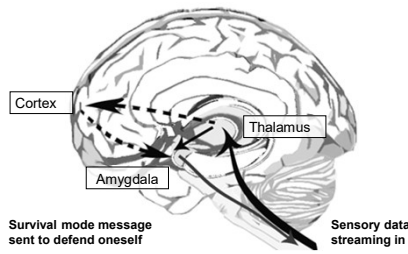
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### The importance of you



- Relationships are the key way we learn to engage with the world around us
- Through meaningful connection Oxytocin is realised, a hormone that rejuvenates cell development in the brain
- The quality of relational right – brain to right brain interactions in childhood influence our development in all areas of life

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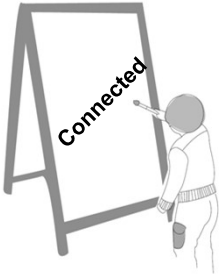
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- Traumatized children and y/people develop insecure and unstable templates for forming and being in relationships.
- They have distorted or confusing internal maps to help them navigate intimacy.
- They avoid engaging fully in relationships for fear of being hurt or rejected again.
- Strategies to support traumatized children and young people emphasise relationships with safe and consistent adults and peers as the foundation for change.

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- Be predictable
- Be consistent
- Be connected
- Be present
- Promote understanding
- Help them make meaning of their experiences
- Help children develop calming tools that make sense to them and that they can use
- Grow with them!

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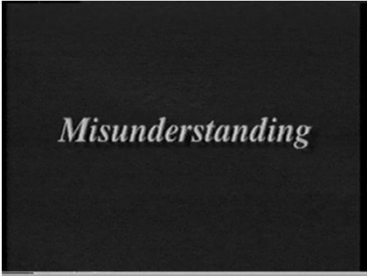
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*Misunderstanding*

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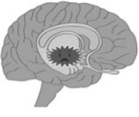
**Finding it difficult to stay (want to be) connected?**

Well-Connected Brain  
Utilizing the front part of the brain



Open Flexible and Adaptive

Stressed out Brain  
Utilizing the more primitive middle region of the brain



Closed and Rigid

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**Experience Feeling safe in relationship**



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- The brain is at its most plastic in early childhood
- In early childhood, the brain is most vulnerable to harm, but also has the greatest potential for healing
- Neuroplasticity gives us hope



The Adolescent Brain: A period of rapid maturation and remodeling. © 2016 by the American Psychological Association.

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Schools can respond effectively to the needs of traumatised children and young people, using the five key dimensions of the acronym **SPACE**.

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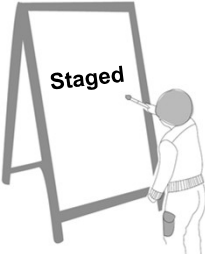
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- Brain development is sequential
- Brain functions are consolidated through repetition and practice
- Reparative strategies must follow this staged pattern of conceptualisation and implementation

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



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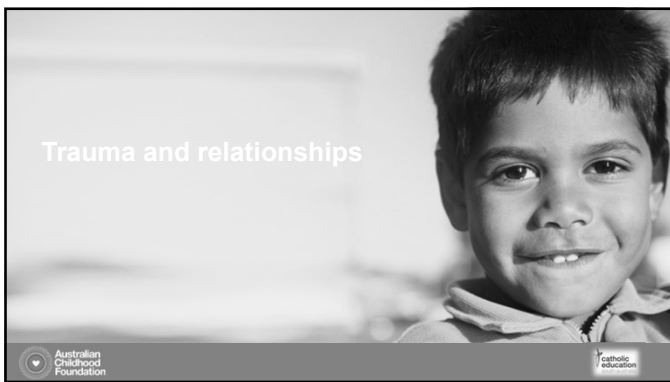
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**Activity- Heart felt**

- What I believe to be true about myself is....
- What I believe to be true about the world is...
- What I believe to be true about relationships are...

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|  | Positive internal working model   | Negative internal working model   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>View of self</b>   | I am lovable<br>I am worthy   | I am unlovable<br>I am unworthy   |
| <b>View of the world and relationships</b>  | Others are responsive<br>Others are loving<br>Others are interested in me<br>Others are available to me<br>The world is relatively safe | Others are unavailable<br>Others are neglectful<br>Others are rejecting<br>Others are unresponsive<br>The world is unsafe |

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**How might we unknowingly parallel still face in the school environment?**

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**How trauma impacts the body**



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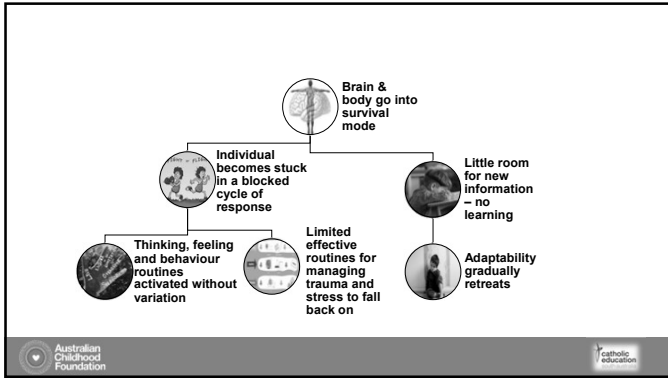
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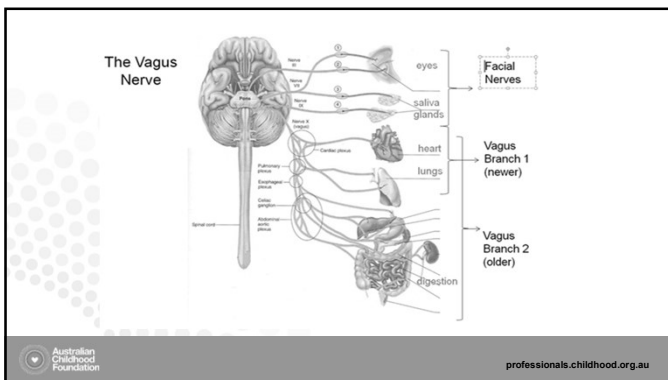
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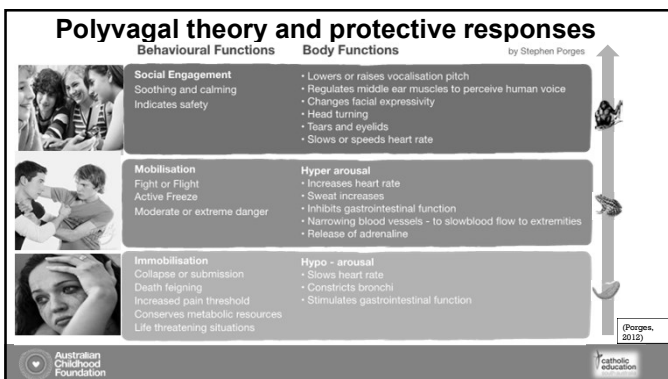
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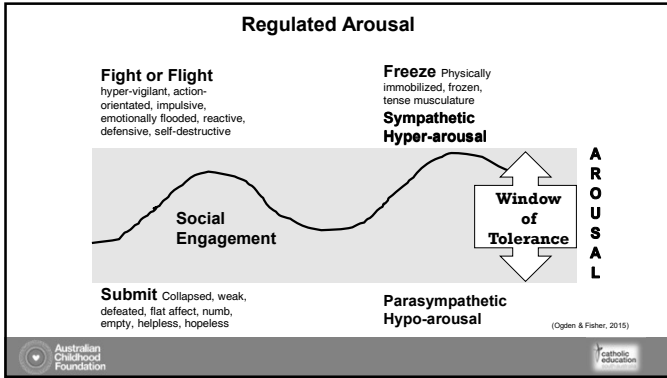
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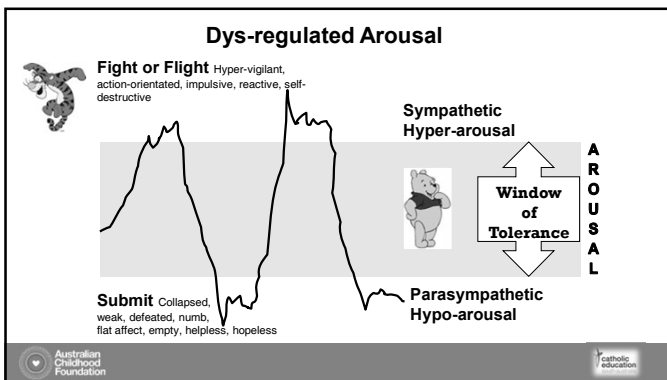
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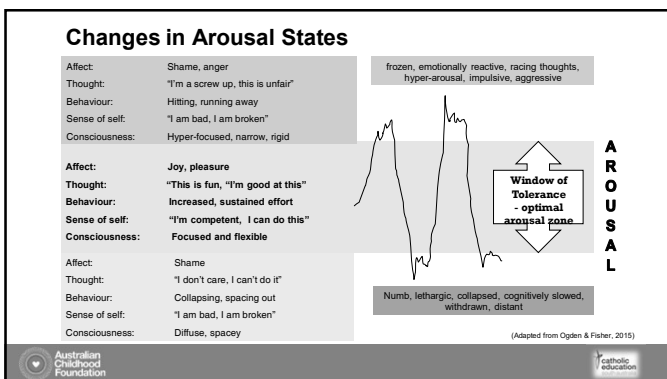
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Consider:

- What do you see when children have too much energy?
- What do you see when there is not enough energy for learning?
- Where is the calm in our centre/school?
- What helps us to get back into our window of tolerance?

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### Helping students return to their Window of Tolerance

- Stand up. Write your first name with your right foot. Write your last name with your left foot ...
- Walk once around your table without lifting your feet off the floor.
- Follow the leader tapping tempo
- Point to something \_\_\_\_, touch something \_\_\_\_.
- Check the eye colour of the person next to you.
- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you like doing

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### 2 ways to regulate

**Medial Pre-Frontal Cortex**  
(the centre of Mindfulness/ Self awareness)

**Right Orbitofrontal Cortex**  
(Regulation of Arousal)

- Mindful awareness/ meditation de-activates the amygdala
- Quality co-regulation de-activates the amygdala

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- Trauma has a disintegrative impact on our ability to regulate brain and body processes
- Trauma impairs children's capacities to orient, 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



slipstream.com/family/activities/simple-games-that-teach-your-kid-self-regulation/

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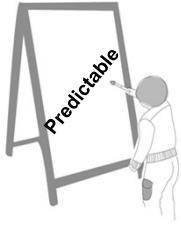
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- Changes to the routines are a source of stress to children and young people who have experienced trauma
- Brain and body are constantly hyperaroused
- Predictability in their relationships and environment deactivate the stress systems
- This then promotes flexibility and adaptability

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### Predictability increases our sense of safety

- Focus on creating an environment that is predictable
- Build a reliable framework of activity that becomes familiar over time
- Always prepare young person for what is coming up next
- Build a supportive pattern of one to one communication that explains the immediate and short term future
- Be particularly sensitive to transitions
- The more predictable the response the more confident children become in understanding the world around them.

|                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| relationships  | physical environment     |
| routines       | instructions             |
| learning tasks | behavioural expectations |

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### Trauma and memory

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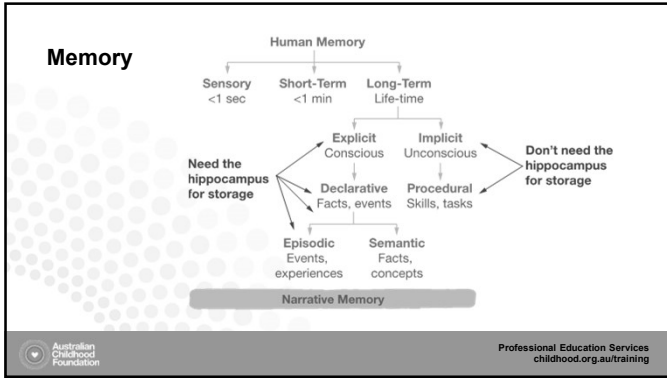
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- Much of the traumatised child's memory is implicit or subconscious
- Children may struggle to remember life events
- Working memory can become paralysed (for example, their ability to remember instructions is poor)

As recurrence and intensity of trauma increases

**Narrative memory is lost**  
Children lose an ability to make sense of their experiences.

**Episodic memory is fractured**  
Children cannot remember events that occurred in that day or over the week. 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 promptly forgotten.

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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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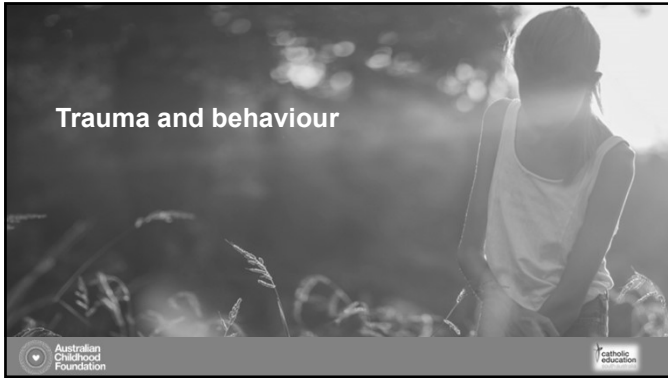
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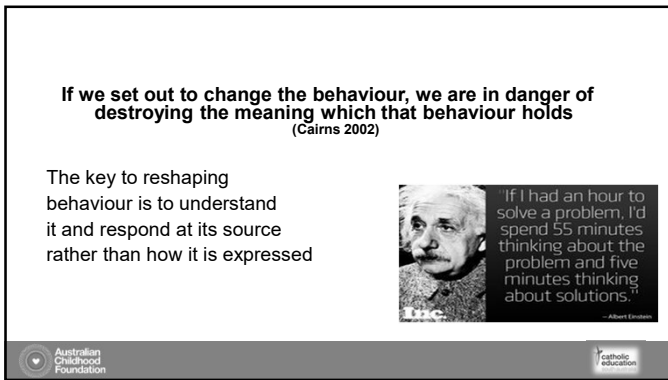
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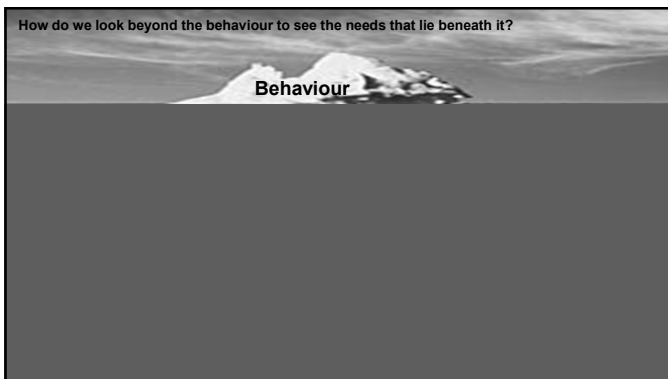
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### Reflective Activity

Roots = Underlying needs  
 Trunk = Known Trauma  
 Branches = Triggers  
 Leaves = Manifestations of trauma  
 (Behaviours we may see in the school setting and internal responses)  
 Fruit = Strengths of the child/young person



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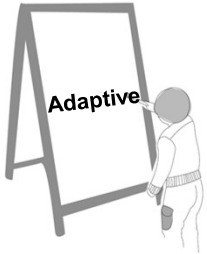
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- Traumatized children and young people rely on a limited set of behavioural routines to respond to the challenges of their context.
- These routines are sourced in the history of their physiological reaction to trauma and the experiences of relationships through which these reactions were interpreted and responded to.
- Strategies which promote adaptability in children and young people are those which are able to maintain multiple meanings for behaviour and remain open to multiple options for interventions.

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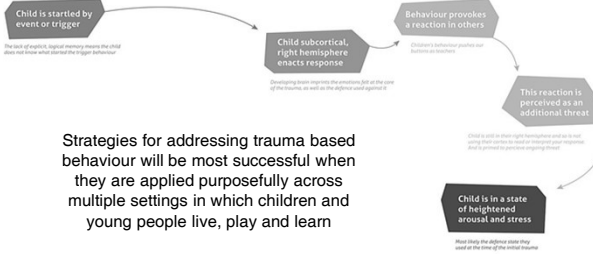
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Strategies for addressing trauma based behaviour will be most successful when they are applied purposefully across multiple settings in which children and young people live, play and learn

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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? What do I need at this time?



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### Behaviour: Things to do

- Discipline with empathy and not anger
- Help the young person to calm before anything else
- Teach the behaviours you want to see
- Use predictable consequences for unacceptable behaviour
- Be clear while being supportive and empathic
- Use time in rather than time out
- Wonder aloud
- Don't take behaviours personally
- Reflect on the possible underlying cause

Stenberg, et al., 2016, p. 107, 102

- o 1 thing your school does well?
- o 1 thing you do well?
- o How do you do that well?

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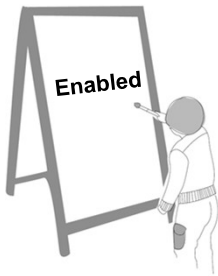
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- Traumatized children and y/ people find the process of understanding themselves difficult. They are challenged in their capacity to identify their feelings, understand them and communicate them to others.
- They struggle to piece together a coherent narrative about their qualities, their attributes and their talents.
- Strategies for responding to traumatized children and y/ people in the school context will enable them to make linkages between and give meaning to their experiences of their past & present, feelings, thoughts and actions.

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**Emotional support: Things to do**

- "Tune in" and be available
- Develop ability for fun and joy
- Initiate and supervise games, activities and conversations between students
- Fix relationships after they break down
- Provide a calm area for rest and relaxation"  
(Adapted from Golding, et al., 2016, p. 107, 112)

- 1 thing your school does well?
- 1 thing you do well?
- How do you do that well?

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**Neuroception**

Cues of risk and safety are continually monitored by our nervous system (Porges, 2015).




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**Trauma and learning**



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- Traumatized children's memories have been impaired
- They struggle to stay engaged in the classroom
- They have little SPACE left for learning
- Traumatized children often have a limited sense of self

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The capacity of traumatized 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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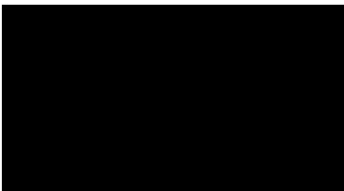
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**Dan Siegel – hand model of the brain**



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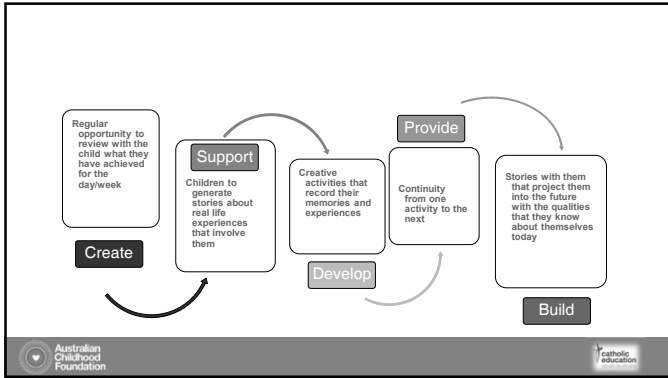
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### Learning: Things to do

- Be predictable and consistent with routines and structure
- Prepare the student for any change in routine in advance
- Provide boundaries to help the student feel safe
- Be flexible and adapt to the student's needs
- Give the student short periods to practise independence
- Give consistent, clear and simple instructions
- Look for opportunities to build self-esteem
- Celebrate success and good choices, e.g. photographs

(Selling, et al., 2016, p. 112)

- o 1 thing your school does well?
- o 1 thing you do well?
- o How do you do that well?

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### Apply

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**Reflective activity**


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**Creating a “trauma sensitive” school**

- What does 'trauma sensitive' mean?
- How do we create a 'trauma sensitive' school?
- What do we need to consider, from a whole school perspective, to continue to keep 'trauma sensitive' practices embedded in the culture of the school?



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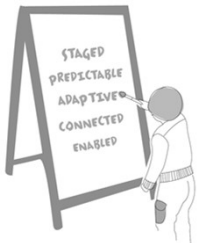
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Schools can respond effectively to the needs of traumatised children and young people, using the five key dimensions of the acronym **SPACE**.

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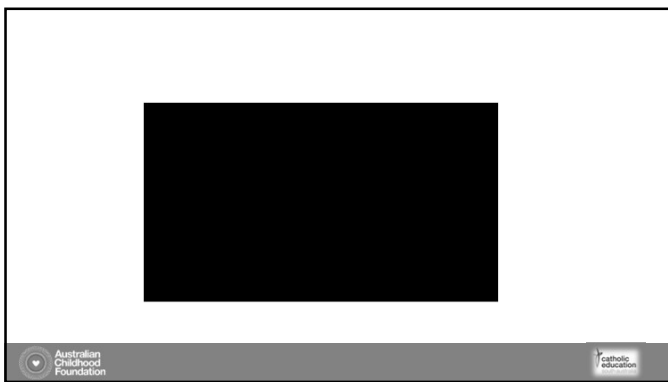
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**Staged**

- Brain development is sequential
- Brain functions are consolidated through repetition and practice
- Reparative strategies must follow this staged pattern of conceptualisation and implementation

Logos for 'Australian Childhood Foundation' and 'Catholic Education' are at the bottom.

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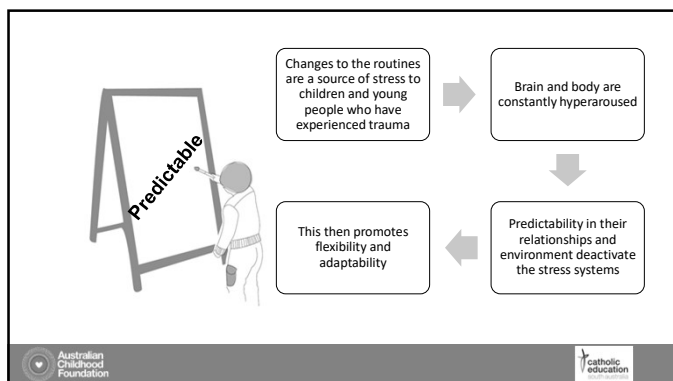
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- Traumatized children and y/people develop insecure and unstable templates for forming and being in relationships.
- They have distorted or confusing internal maps to help them navigate intimacy.
- They avoid engaging fully in relationships for fear of being hurt or rejected again.
- Strategies to support traumatized children and young people emphasise relationships with safe and consistent adults and peers as the foundation for change.

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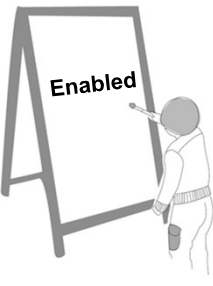
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**Making SPACE for Learning – Site Audit Tool**

This audit tool can be used to evaluate the policies and practices of a school that resource and equip different levels of the school structure to undertake trauma informed practices. In the following table, list strategies, policies or other provisions currently undertaken that support traumatized students at your school.

|                         | Whole Site | Staff | Classroom / Group | Small Group | Individual Student / Child |
|-------------------------|------------|-------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| <b>S</b><br>STAGED      |            |       |                   |             |                            |
| <b>P</b><br>PREDICTABLE |            |       |                   |             |                            |
| <b>A</b><br>ADAPTIVE    |            |       |                   |             |                            |
| <b>C</b><br>CONNECTED   |            |       |                   |             |                            |
| <b>E</b><br>ENABLED     |            |       |                   |             |                            |

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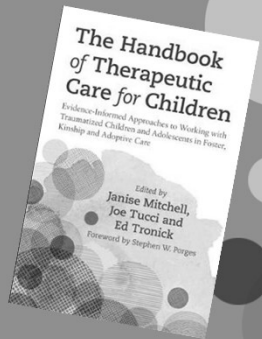
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**A valuable resource**

Includes chapters from:

- Martin Teicher
- Ed Tronick
- Allan Schore
- Bruce Perry
- Dan Hughes & Jon Baylin
- Kim Golding
- Cathy Malchiodi
- Joe Tucci
- Janise Mitchell
- Glenda Kickett
- Noel Macnamara



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**Thank you for your participation!**

To find out more about the Australian Childhood Foundation please visit our website:  
[www.childhood.org.au](http://www.childhood.org.au)  
Training enquiries:  
[training@childhood.org.au](mailto:training@childhood.org.au)

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