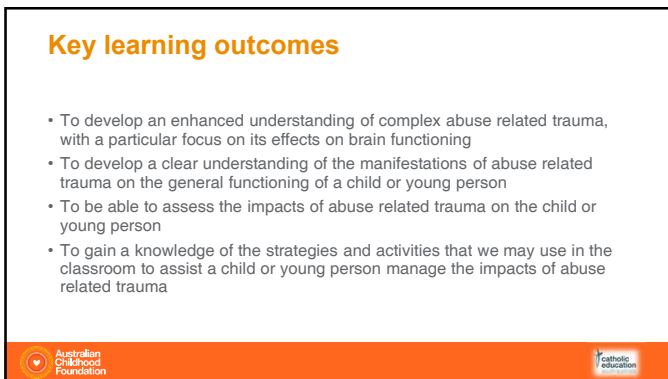




1



2



3

Key learning outcomes

- develop an enhanced understanding of complex abuse related trauma, with a particular focus on its effects on brain functioning.
- apply a framework for assessing the impact of complex abuse related trauma on young people.
- consider our practice skills and apply key models of intervention which promote recovery for young people in an education setting.

4

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.

5

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. 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

Australian Childhood Foundation 

6

Safety & relationships are key...

It is important to remember that safety – feeling and being safe and having safe, connected and attuned relationships are key to supporting a child or young person who has experienced trauma.

These primary relationships contribute to:

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

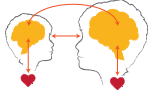

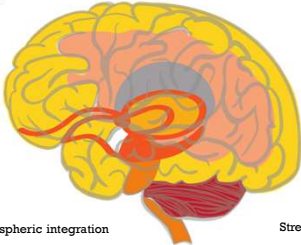


Image source: ©ACF2020


Australian Childhood Foundation 

7

What do you remember about the key areas of the brain?



Sequential Hemispheric integration Stress response system

Australian Childhood Foundation 

8

Trauma impacts



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

Australian Childhood Foundation 

9

Slide 8

MP1 Melissa Powney, 21/04/2021

The vagus nerve and neuroception

Cues of risk and safety are continually monitored by our nervous system.

“Before we can engage in social behaviour and learning we must first feel safe.”

(Porges, 2015, p.115).

Parasympathetic System

http://www.nature.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/img_2849628.jpg

Australian Childhood Foundation

10

Polyvagal theory and protective responses

Behavioural Functions	Body Functions
Social Engagement Soothing and calming Indicates safety	• Lowers or raises vocalisation pitch • Regulates middle ear muscles to perceive human voice • Changes facial expressivity • Head turning • Tears and eyelids • Slows or speeds heart rate
Mobilisation Fight or Flight Active Freeze Moderates or extreme danger	Hyper arousal • Increases heart rate • Sweats increases • Inhibits gastrointestinal function • Narrowing blood vessels - to slow/blood flow to extremities • Release of adrenaline
Immobilisation Collapse or submission Death feigning Increased pain threshold Conserves metabolic resources Life threatening situations	Hypo - arousal • Slows heart rate • Constricts bronchi • Stimulates gastrointestinal function

(Porges, 2012)

Australian Childhood Foundation

11

Trauma and behaviour – adaptive to maladaptive

Trauma based behaviour is functional at the time in which it develops as a response to threat.

Australian Childhood Foundation

12

Impact of complex trauma on behaviour

- When a student is feeling 'unsafe' and feeling a sense of powerlessness, then we may see:
- Aggression
- Overactive stress responses
- Withdrawal
- Agitation
- Tired due to lack of sleep
- Loss of fine motor skills (might stutter when talking)

Australian Childhood Foundation


13

Under stress and trauma....

Young people, who have had experiences of trauma, are often operating from their right hemisphere. What do you remember about the functions of the Right Hemisphere?

It could be hard for them to:

- Understand or comprehend what we say (a left hemisphere task)
- Speak (a left hemisphere task)



Australian Childhood Foundation

14


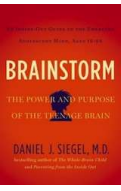
Strategies

- Recognise that the student may not be able to actually understand what we are saying or be able to communicate with us
- Connect and reassure
- Notice – are they hyper or hypo aroused? This will indicate what strategies to use to bring child back in to their WOT
- Once, calmer, use pre-organised visuals or simple hand signals or gestures to communicate


Australian Childhood Foundation

15

Adolescents - The remodelling brain: Pruning & myelination in the teenage brain


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O1u5OEc5eY>



16

Selected Brain Processes in Adolescence

- Synaptic formation and pruning
- Myelination
- Underdeveloped pre-frontal cortex
- Overactive emotion centre



17

The Prefrontal Cortex- executive function centre

Final part of the brain to reach maturity in one's mid to late twenties

- self awareness
- reasoning and judgement
- foresight and anticipation
- focusing and sustaining attention
- planning organising and prioritising
- decision making
- reflecting
- enthusiasm, motivation and persistence
- impulse control
- working memory





Image source: ©2018 ACF



18

Adolescence and change

<p>Puberty Linked Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Romantic motivation ▪ Sexual interest ▪ Emotional Intensity ▪ Sleep/arousal regulation ▪ Appetite ▪ Affective disorders ▪ Increased Risk taking, novelty seeking, sensation-seeking 	<p>Age & Experience Linked Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning ▪ Logic reasoning ability ▪ Inhibitory Control ▪ Problem solving
--	--

Australian Childhood Foundation
Catholic Education

19

The adolescent brain

TRENDS in Cognitive Sciences

Australian Childhood Foundation

20

Vulnerabilities

Behaviours associated with an underdeveloped pre-frontal cortex

- Short attention span
- Impulsivity and increased risk taking
- Procrastination (lack of motivation or internal reward systems)
- Disorganisation (trouble working through long term goals)
- Poor Judgement and problem solving
- Reduction in ability to see things from other's perspective



Australian Childhood Foundation

21

Vulnerabilities


Behaviours associated with an overactive limbic lobe and under-active pre-frontal cortex

- Over emotional reactions
- Trouble reading facial expressions
- Ill-attuned communication skills





22

Risk taking and impulse control



Heightened sensation seeking + Under-developed self-regulatory control = Increased RISK TAKING



23



Weekend Warrior @wwarrior 1 - 1h

Justingly in Netflix versus

sexualisation. It's a worrying consequence of



les' about an defying her

at's sexualizing

flix, a

24


Consider what are the challenges for the adolescent brain in Secondary education?

25

Transforming trauma – thinking about transitions....



- Reflection activity
- How many transitions would your young person go through in any given day?
- How can assist students who have experienced trauma to manage these?



26

Common labels for adolescents who are struggling

- Disruptive
- Defiant
- Poor learners
- Non-achievers
- Unstable
- High risk of disconnecting
- Waste of time
- Need another learning environment!

27

What are young people doing in our digital world?

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Tinder
- Kik Messenger
- Whatsapp
- Whisper
- ChatRoulette
- Down
- Snapchat
- Instagram
- Gaming – Minecraft
- YouTube
- Pinterest




Australian Childhood Foundation | catholic education

28

What are the positives of technology?

- Socialisation
- Entertainment
- Creativity
- Digital and media literacy – school work
- Identity
- Self care
- Development benefits
- Free information/communication
- Can assist people who may have a disability



Australian Childhood Foundation | catholic education

29

What are the challenges?

- Safe relationships
- Reputation and identity
- Privacy
- Inappropriate, illegal, offensive and/or violent content
- Distraction from study/homework/work
- Interferes with daily routine
- May increase conflict between young people and adults
- Addiction



Australian Childhood Foundation | catholic education

30

How can young people stay safe?

- Talking to your kids about the sites they visit
- Teach them to leave or close the page immediately
- Encourage them to talk to a trusted adult
- Reassure them that access to the internet will not be denied
- Remind them not to open spam
- Tell not to respond if they are sent something inappropriate
- Keep them connected to trusted friends and family online and offline.
- Install filters and use parent controls
- Report inappropriate or offensive content


<https://esafety.gov.au>

Australian Childhood Foundation | Catholic Education

31

Health and Wellbeing

- The importance of sleep
- Mental health vulnerabilities
- Emotional Literacy and Regulation
- Understanding shame
- Empathy



Australian Childhood Foundation | childhood.org.au

32

Young people and the importance of sleep

- adolescents need more sleep than adults or children - optimal time being about nine and a half hours
- pruning and myelination occur during sleep
- sleep strengthens learning and memories
- later starting times for schools show statistically significant impact on academic achievement

What do you think?




Image source: Shutterstock

Australian Childhood Foundation

33

Complex trauma in adolescence

- *Anxiety*
- Depression
- *Dissociation & Avoidance*
- Relational & affect regulation disturbance
- Cognitive distortions
- Somatization
- Externalising behaviours such as: self-mutilation & violence
- Sexual disturbance



34

Complex Trauma in Adolescence

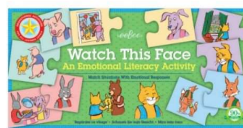
- Substance abuse
- Eating disorders
- Susceptibility to re-victimisation
- Traumatic bereavement associated with loss of family members and significant other attachment figures
- Sleep disturbance
- Danger – not recognising or over-recognising
- Defiant behaviours
- Anger



35

Building Capacity – Limbic System

1. Co-regulating strong emotions
Validate emotion, cues for proximity/space, engage senses, prosody, rhythm & breathing
2. Enhancing positive emotions
May need help to name & express
3. Promoting emotional literacy
Teach during moments of calm



childhood.org.au

36

Regulated Arousal

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

Freeze Physically immobilized, frozen, tense musculature

Image source: ©2018 ACF

Australian Childhood Foundation

Gyden, Minson, Parn 2006

37

Co-regulation

- Affect matching
- Voice
- Movement
- Breath

Australian Childhood Foundation

38

Reflecting on our own movement within our Window of Tolerance

Partner conversation:

1. What factors enhance our ability to stay regulated in difficult situations?
2. What factors might limit or inhibit this?
3. What strategies do we use to return to a regulated state if we have become dysregulated?

Australian Childhood Foundation

child@hood.org.au

39

When people are in relationship one's ability to regulate them self in relation to their window of tolerance will effect the other's ability to regulate them self in relation to their window of tolerance

Child's movement in their window

Movement in my window

Australian Childhood Foundation childhood.org.au

40

Australian Childhood Foundation calmbox.org.au

41

Attention focused on avoidance

- Avoidance in young people is not as sophisticated as in adults, because young people have had less time to practice
- Avoidance is reflected in behaviour which distracts and deflects the young person from re-experiencing traumatic memory states
- For young people, these actions are facilitated in the body and lower architecture of the brain (motor sensory) and serve to maintain traumatic memory states rather than resolve them

Australian Childhood Foundation

42

Avoidant behaviour & shame


- *Avoidant behaviour* –
- Feelings of social inhibition & creation of social isolation
- Inadequacy & inferiority (low self esteem)
- Sensitive to negative criticism & ridicule
- Humiliated, Rejected

- *Shame* -
- Being flawed and inadequate
- Unlovable & unworthy
- Defective and undesirable
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Shut down





43

The shield against shame



The Shield of Shame

- Blame
"It was his fault!"
- Deny
"I never did anything!"
- Minimise
"He wasn't really hurt"
- Rage
"You always blame me for everything!!!"



44

Empathy

- Why is empathy important?
- How do we learn empathy?



45

Transforming trauma

- Traumatized young people require environments that provide opportunities to:
 - Develop connection and belonging – RELATIONSHIPS are key – acknowledge strengths
 - Reintegrate experiences of shame (eye contact)
 - Experience trust and respect
 - Develop a sense of personal competence
 - Be predictable
 - Regulate to engage



46

Framing Behaviour Support Plans

- Consider the function behind the behaviour – what is the unmet need? What alternatives could we offer the child to meet this need in a different way?
- Can the behaviour be understood as a *fight, flight, freeze or withdrawal* response?
- What stresses or situation do we think trigger these behaviours, and which ones can we do something about?
- What skills can we help the child/young person to develop, to support them in reducing these behaviours?
- Don't rely on consequences to promote behaviour change



childhood.org.au

47

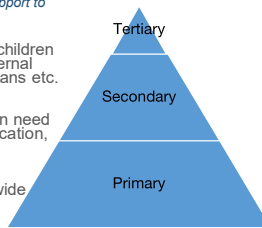
Multi-tiered Service Delivery Model

Provide effective practices for all students, and intensive support to those who need it.

TERTIARY TIER: individualised interventions for children who need more intensive support – referral to external services, wrap-around support, tailored support plans etc.

SECONDARY TIER: identifying 'at-risk' students in need of targeted small group intervention – psycho-education, etc

PRIMARY TIER: preventive measures – system-wide changes to promote a safe learning environment



Phifer & Hull (2016)



childhood.org.au

48

Summary

Trauma has impaired children's cortical capacity to regulate subcortical functioning. In order to return cortical capacity (which is essential for learning) we must restore calm.

- Be predictable
- Be connected
- Be present
- Promote understanding
- Equip the child with calming and engaging strategies they can use and help co-regulate


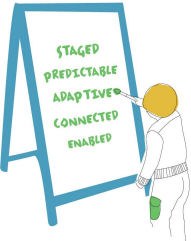


Image source: iStock

Australian Childhood Foundation

49

SPACE



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

Australian Childhood Foundation

Catholic Education

50

Making SPACE for Learning – Site Audit Tool

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

	Whole Site	Staff	Classroom / Group	Small Group	Individual Student / Child
S STAGED					
P PREDICTABLE					
A ADAPTIVE					
C CONNECTED					
E ENABLED					

Australian Childhood Foundation

Catholic Education

51

References

Australian Childhood Foundation (2010). *Making Space for Learning: Trauma informed practice in schools*

Baylin, J. & Hughes, D.A. (2016). *The neurobiology of attachment-focused therapy*. New York: W.W Norton Company.

Bombér, L. M., & Hughes, D. A. (2013). *Settling to learn: Settling troubled pupils to learn: Why relationships matter in school*. Worth Publishing.

Golding, K., Turner, M., Worrall, H., Cadman, A., & Roberts, J. (2016). *Observing Adolescents with Attachment Difficulties in Educational Settings: A Tool for Identifying and Supporting Emotional and Social Difficulties in Young People Aged 11-16*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Porges, S. W. (2015). Making the World Safe for our Children: Down-regulating Defence and Up-regulating Social Engagement to 'Optimise' the Human Experience. *Children Australia*, 40(02), 114-123.

Porges, S. (2012). *Understanding Polyvagal Theory: Emotion, Attachment and Self-Regulation* [Video file]. Psychotherapy Networker. Retrieved July 2, 2016, from Counselling and Therapy in Video: Volume III.

Seigel, D. & Bryson, (2012). *T. The whole-brain child*. Brunswick: Scribe Publications Pty Ltd

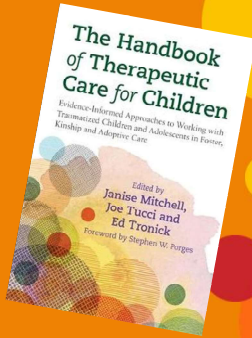
van der Kolk, B. (2015). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Penguin: New York



52

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



53

Thank you for your participation!



To find out more about the Australian Childhood Foundation please visit our website: www.childhood.org.au

Training enquiries: training@childhood.org.au



54
