

SPACE

The acronym **SPACE** represents five key dimensions that if incorporated into strategies offer the most potential to establish effective opportunities for schools to respond to the needs of traumatised children and young people

STAGED
PREDICTABLE
ADAPTIVE
CONNECTED
ENABLED

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Professional Education Services
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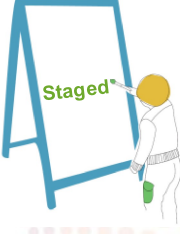
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SPACE



- The knowledge base about the maturation of the brain highlights that development is sequential by nature.
- Sophisticated functions of the brain – body system only emerge after basic functions have been developed and been consolidated with rehearsal and practice.
- Strategies aimed at resourcing traumatised children and young people need to follow this staged pattern of conceptualisation and implementation for them to succeed.

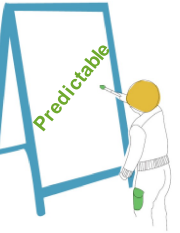
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Staged

- Sophisticated functions of the brain-body system only emerge after basic functions have developed and been consolidated with rehearsal and practice
- Assists with vertical and horizontal development of the brain
- Progression of basic memory of sequences of experiences to narrative memory, which combine experience and interpretations
- Skills developed: reading = built from the blocks of letters, syllables, words, sentences and paragraphs

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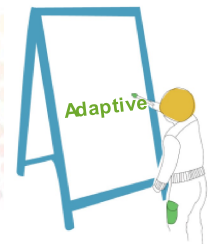
- Traumatized children and young people experience change in their relational and physical environment as a source of stress.
- Their brain-body system maintains itself in a state of arousal readiness in preparation for the re-occurrence of threat.
- Strategies which promote stability and familiarity reduce the need for the stress system to be as actively engaged.
- If the school environment is predictable they 'feel safer' then have the space to experience themselves as more flexible & may become more able tolerate small degrees of change in their environment.

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Predictable

- Traumatized children and young people experience any change as a potential threat
- Even if the familiar is difficult and destructive, the familiar is safer for traumatized young people than the unfamiliar
- Focus on creating environments which promote:
 - Consistency
 - Predictability
 - Repetition
 - Flexibility
 - Co-regulation

SPACE

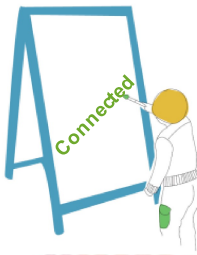


- Traumatized children and young people rely on a limited set of behavioural routines to respond to the challenges of their context.
- These routines are sourced in the history of their physiological reaction to trauma and the experiences of relationships through which these reactions were interpreted and responded to. They are left without resources to adapt to the specific requirements of any given environment.
- 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.

Adaptive

- Children and young people who show challenging and intense behaviours are often excluded from activities which could prove to be beneficial for them
 - The options in schools often become focused on discipline and behaviour management
 - Locked down systems in themselves restrain flexibility
- Ideas:
- Strategies that 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

SPACE



□ Traumatized children and young 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 have learnt to perceive relationships as possible sources of terror, indifference and inconsistency. They avoid engaging fully in relationships for fear of being hurt or rejected again. At other times, they may have an insatiable need for love and attention.

□ Strategies to support traumatized children and young people emphasise relationships with safe and consistent adults and peers as the foundation for change. Relationships become the primary vehicle through which new meanings emerge.

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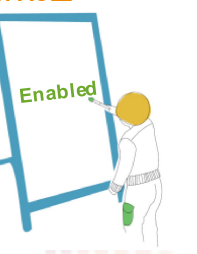
Connected and Enabled – Calming and Engaging

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 tools they can use

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□ Traumatized children and young 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. They do not build stories about how to connect with others or jointly make meaning of their experiences.

□ Strategies for responding to traumatized children and young 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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Making SPACE for learning across the school

- The involvement of staff groups in all roles within a school is needed in order to effectively implement trauma sensitive practice
- It is based on a school culture that acts as an open, adaptive, consistent, connected and flexible system that communicates and integrates knowledge about the neurobiology of trauma and toxic stress and its implications for children and young people
- Whole-of-school strategies that incorporate SPACE principles need to be implemented as part of a suite of policies and initiatives that resource individual teachers and other school staff to be able to meet the needs of traumatised children & y/p



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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.

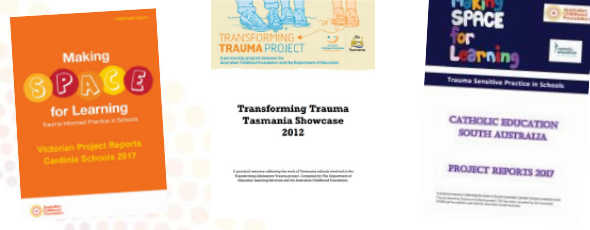
	Whole Site	Staff	Classroom / Group	Small Group	Individual Student / Child
S Supportive					
P Predictable					
A Adaptive					
C Connected					
E Enabled					



Making SPACE for Learning – Trauma Informed Practice in Schools

Showcase booklets

<https://professionals.childhood.org.au/building-capacity-in-educational-settings/>



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