





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 marifestations 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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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

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Defining trauma

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

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· A response to a perceived threat; response is usually based in survival

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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 strenghten 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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 Image: Sector Sector















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
- 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



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



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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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 persepective

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Vulnerabilities

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

Over emotional reactions

Trouble reading facial expressions





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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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 The child will be tuned into our tone of voice, not the content (a right hemisphere task)

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Things you can do

- 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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Neuroplasticity is hope

- 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

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Internal working models Positive internal working model 0000 Negative internal working model liew of self I am lovable I am unlovable I am worthy I am unworthy iew of the world and elationships 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 Australian Childhood Foundation Pcatholic education











































































Reflective Activity

Roots = Underlying needs

Trunk = Known Trauma

Brunches = 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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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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Adaptive



Responding to trauma organised 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? What do I need at this time?



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