

Unpacking and responding to behaviour

A resource for professionals to support care team members to explore the meaning behind the child's behaviour



Purpose:

We are very clear that children and young people's behaviour tells us a story about what has happened to them and how it continues to impact them today. We also know that we need to look beyond the behavior to the meaning underneath it about the child's needs that remain unmet for them. However, it can be challenging to actually undertake this process with those who work to support the child, including care team members, family members and the child's broader relational networks.

This resource has been developed to support professionals to unpack and plan how to respond to identified behaviours that may be of concern to the professional or the care team member. It reminds us about the required process and provides steps for responding that stem from a reasoned and trauma responsive approach.



Audience:

This tool can be used by anyone working with children and young people who have experienced trauma. It is provided as a blank template to enable you to copy and complete it as often as required.



What you could do:

- Print off and complete this tool in conjunction with the care team member or other adult in the child's world by explaining why each section is important. Remind them that it is often the first and last columns that are what people focus on but to bypass the middle columns means the response may not support positive or therapeutic outcomes.
- Explain that what lies beneath the behavior may not be in view to the child or young person either but that it helps us to understand the why in their behavioural presentation that is grounded in our understanding of trauma and its impacts.
- Acknowledge that the critical question on this tool is actually 'What does the child need?' and our answer to this question will influence our response as well as the nature of the outcomes for that child.
- Remind those in the care team that responding to behavior in a trauma responsive way asks something of us as professionals or carers and it is important to reflect on what we need to be able to provide a needs-based, rather than behavior-based, response. Resourcing this becomes the shared task of the care team as often what we need is support from others to be able to be responsive and not reactive.

 <p>What can I see, hear and sense? (Describe observed behaviour)</p>	<p>What lies beneath the child's behavior?</p>					 <p>What does the child need?</p>	 <p>What do I need to be able to respond to the child?</p> <p>What can I do to ready myself to respond?</p> 	 <p>What can I do to meet the child's needs?</p>
 <p>Body responses</p>	 <p>Trauma experiences</p>	 <p>Feelings</p>	 <p>Thoughts</p>	 <p>Beliefs about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self • Relationships • World 				