

Safety and Understanding and Responding to Behaviour using the SMART PRACTICE Audit Tool

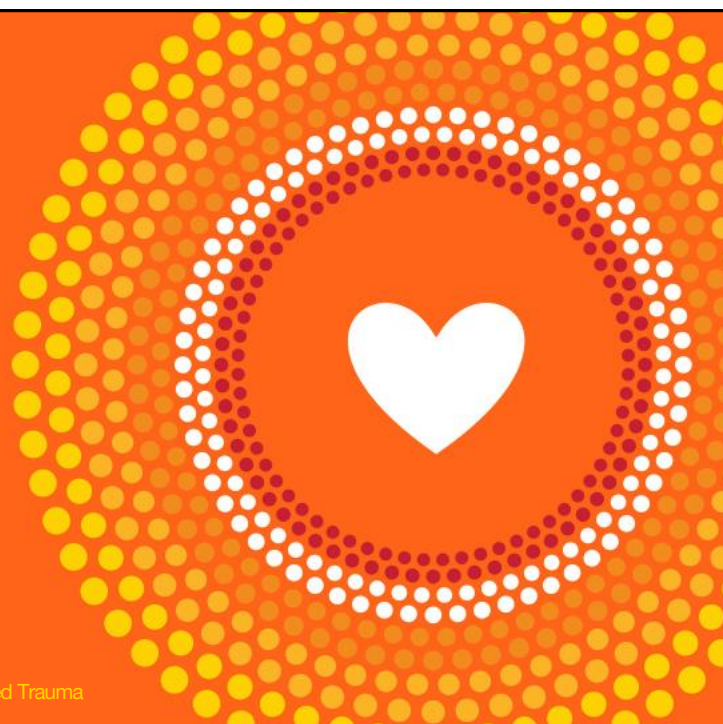
Mount Gambier North PS
Trauma Aware Schools Initiative Project

June 20th 2022
Online training

Trainer: Carolyn Grace



SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma



1

The Australian Childhood Foundation acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians and owners of this land and waters. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to the children who are their leaders of tomorrow. We acknowledge their history and living culture and the many thousands of years in which they have raised their children to be safe and strong.



2

Success Criteria – Part 1

- Explored the Window of Tolerance as a framework to guide observation, reflection and action, and provide an understanding for arousal
- Reflected on strategies to support regulation and dysregulation
- Gained a deeper understanding of the feelings and needs behind behaviour
- Understood the concept of the neuroception of safety and how to create safety



Image source: ©ACF2021



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART

Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

3

Success criteria – Part 2

- Expanded our knowledge of the SMART PRACTICE Framework.
- Built our knowledge of how to assist sites in their understanding how to use the SMART Audit Tool to complete a review of current trauma responsive practices;
- Considered our responses and strategies to support students and build a plan of action to enable effective support and healing outcomes; and
- Reflected on how to develop a plan for ongoing monitoring and review



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART

Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

professionals.childhood.org.
au

4

Part 1 - Safety and Understanding and Responding to Behaviour



Australian Childhood Foundation

SMART

Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

5

Neuroception and safety

Relationships shape our sense of self and safety...

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



Image source: ©ACF2021

(Porges, 2015, p.115).



Image source: ©ACF2021



Australian Childhood Foundation

SMART

Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

6

Polyvagal theory and protective responses

Behavioural Functions

Body Functions

by Stephen Porges

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
Moderate or extreme danger

Hyper arousal

- Increases heart rate
- Sweat 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)

Image source: ©ACF2021



SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

7

Regulated Arousal

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

Freeze Physically immobilized, frozen, tense musculature

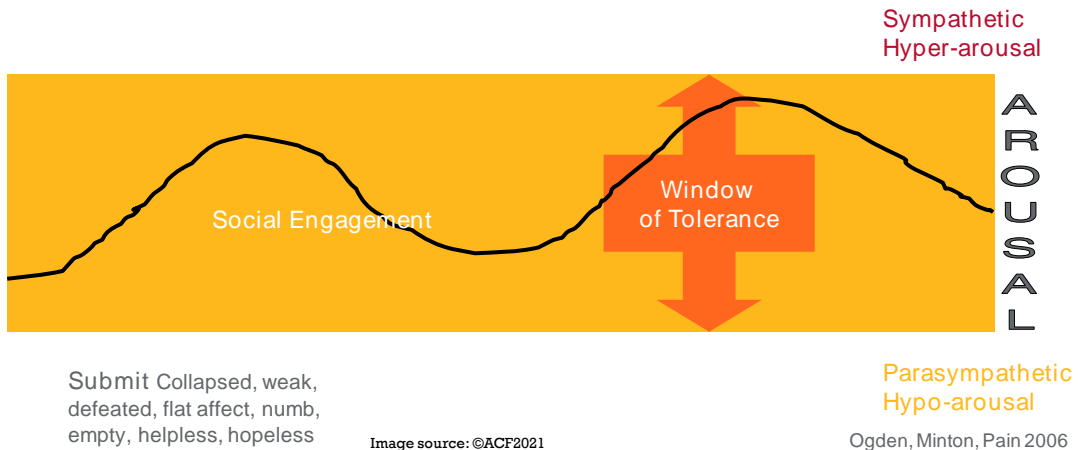


Image source: ©ACF2021

Ogden, Minton, Pain 2006



SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

8

Dys-regulated Arousal

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

Freeze Physically immobilized, frozen, tense musculature



Submit Collapsed, weak, defeated, flat affect, numb, empty, helpless, hopeless

Parasympathetic Hypo-arousal

Image source: ©ACF2021

Ogden, Minton, Pain 2006



SMART Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

Reflecting on Regulation

My 5 point scale

| Feels like: | | What it looks like: |
|-------------|---|---------------------|
| MAD | 5 | |
| FRUSTRATED | 4 | |
| JUST RIGHT | 3 | |
| QUIET | 2 | |
| SLEEPY | 1 | |

What zone am I in?



Use tools to get in the green zone.



| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 5 | I am not safe. I need to leave before anyone gets hurt. | |
| 4 | I am losing control. I need a Chillville break to calm down. | |
| 3 | I am not fully in control. I need to take deep breaths. | |
| 2 | Things are ok. I can handle it. | |
| 1 | I feel super | |



SMART Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma


Teaching students about the WOT

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Hyperarousal</p> <p>Fight Flight Active Freeze</p> |  |
| <p>Social engagement</p> <p>When we feel and are safe we will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Play well - Engage well with others and our environment - Think well and make decisions |  |
| <p>Hypoarousal</p> <p>Feigned death Flop Collapse</p> |  |

11


Overshooting your Window of Tolerance:

- Upset and hyped up
- Angry and agitated
- Frustrated
- Heart beating fast
- Tense and can't think clearly
- Unable to regulate your emotions




Within your Window of Tolerance:

- Feeling safe, calm and peaceful
- Happy and able to think clearly
- Ready to learn
- Settled and content
- Mindful and able to regulate your emotions




Undershooting your Window of Tolerance:

- Sad and tired
- Unmotivated with no energy
- Feel empty and withdrawn
- Don't want to listen, talk or play
- Can't think about learning



Making Space for Learning – Action Research Project - St Thomas More School, Elizabeth Park, S.A.


Australian Childhood Foundation | **SMART** Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

12

6

Australian Childhood Foundation | SMART Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

13

My Line of the Day

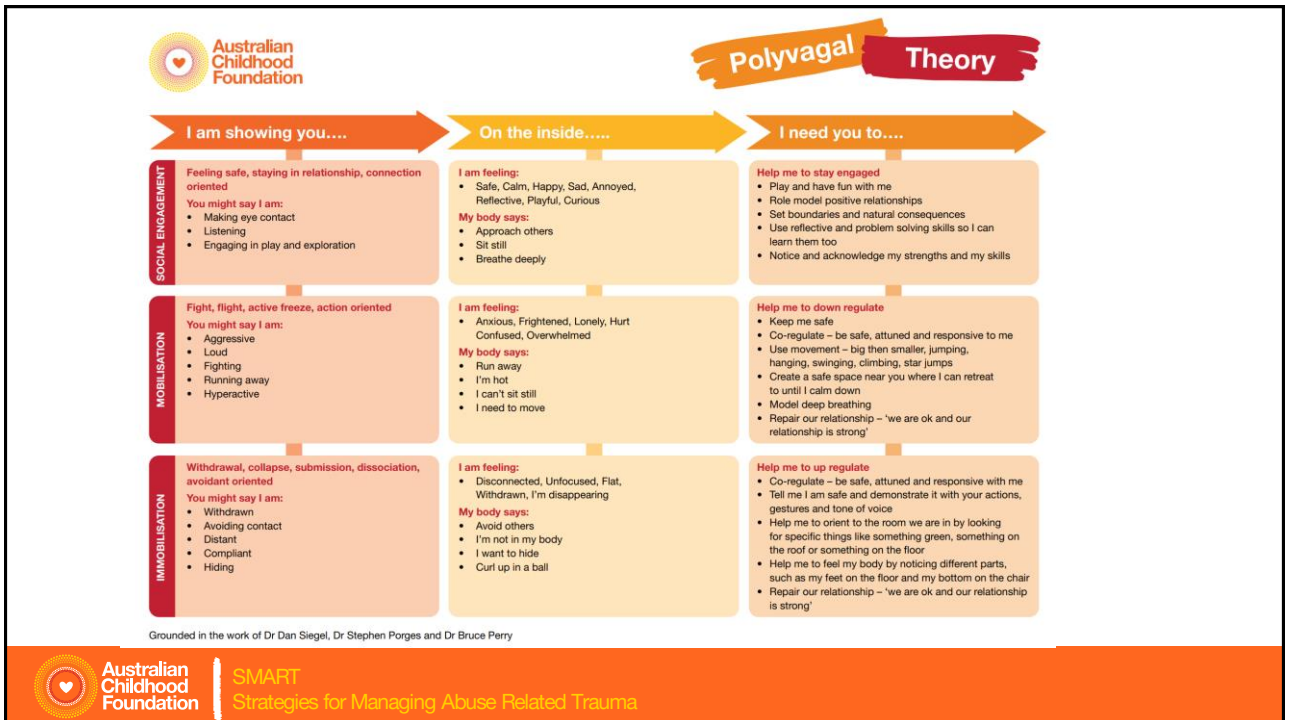
Image source: ©ACF2021

If you had to draw your day with one continuous line, how would you draw it?

Image source: ©ACF2021

Australian Childhood Foundation | SMART Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

14



15

Understanding behaviour

Rather than asking “What’s wrong with you, ask, what happened to you...”

- 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?



Image source: ©ACF2021

16

Trauma organised behaviour

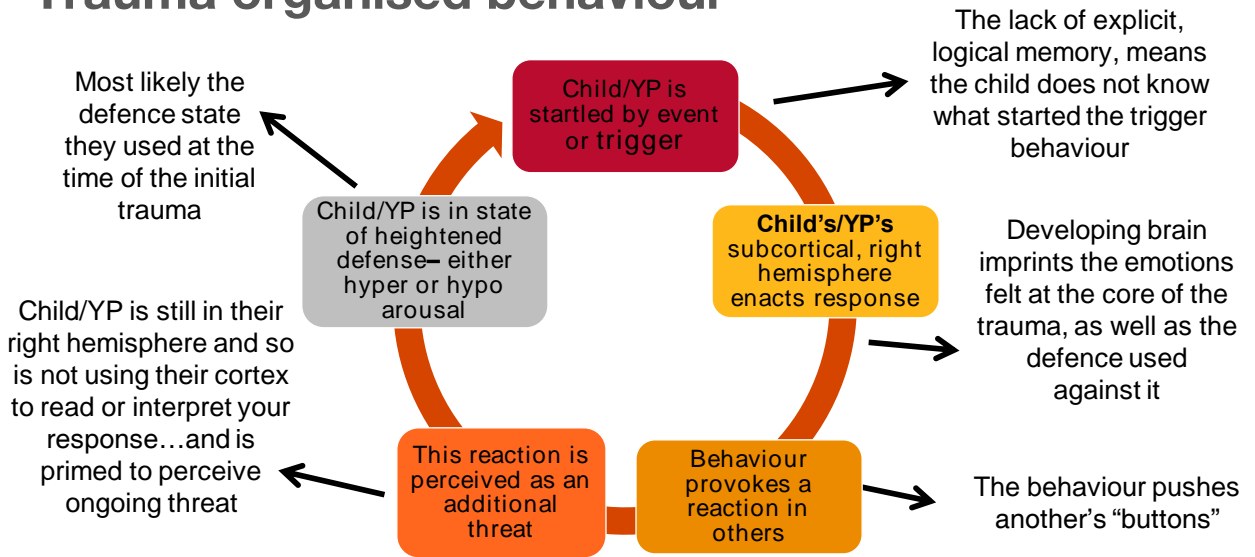


Image source: ©2018 ACF



SMART Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

Behaviour

REFOCUS FORM

REDO

Name: Harold H.
 Grade: 1st
 Teacher: Mrs. Caber-Rude

I engaged in unacceptable behavior by: making copies of dog man comic in OFFICE

My behavior caused other students and teachers to: break out

How will my behavior change in the future? be more quiet when making copies of dog man comic in office.

I am ready to re-join the classroom. Yes ___ No X

Why? too busy making dog man comic

Student signature: Harold H.

NO DRAWINGS

HOW MANY TIMES DO WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THIS???



SMART Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

Understanding the feelings and needs beneath the behaviour



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

19

Group activity – behaviour

| Observed behaviour | Assumed Meaning (how we might interpret the behaviour) | Possibly underlying cause/need (needs might include: safety, calm, connection/engaging) |
|---|---|---|
| Eg refuses to make eye contact when spoken to, despite being asked several times to look at the teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defiance ▪ Wants to assert dominance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physiological response to feelings of unsafety – their body won't allow them to make eye contact (NEED – safety) ▪ Student has withdrawn and cannot hear/process instructions (NEED – connection/engaging) |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

© 2018 Australian Childhood Foundation



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

20

Strategies to help students remain in their WOT.

- Breath based activities
- Grounding activities
- Movement & Regulation activities
- Use of self



Image source: ©ACF2021



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART

Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

21

Creating Safety – the environment and use of self

Creating safety – supporting the social engagement system

| | |
|--|---|
|  <p>Environment</p> | <p>A safe environment is paramount. Consider physical, emotional and cultural safety. Is the environment free from violence and abuse, responsive to physical and emotional needs and inclusive of cultural needs. Also ensure the environment considers the sensory needs of the child. Spaces that have too much stimulation - loud noises, bright lights, strong smells or too many pictures on the walls can be overwhelming for children experiencing trauma. Understanding the child's individual needs and providing enough sensory stimulation for growth but not too much so that the child is overwhelmed is the key. Remember safety is an individual experience. What seems safe for one person may not be for another.</p> |
|  <p>Proximity</p> | <p>Consider the child's need for closeness or space. Each child is different. Take into account the context, your relationship and the developmental age of the child. Being attuned to the child will help you to navigate what the child needs. If a child is dysregulated always remain within the line of sight of the child, unless your safety or the safety of others is at risk. Remember time is rather than time out. Any direct contact with the child should be initiated by the child.</p> |
|  <p>Eye contact</p> | <p>Eye contact is an important aspect of social engagement and enables feelings of connectedness and validation. Eye contact can be threatening though to a child who has experienced trauma as their social engagement system is usually on high alert. Consider ways to engage with the child using minimal eye contact. Chatting while driving along in the car, creating art or shooting hoops is a great way to engage the child in conversation and is less threatening than sitting face to face. Remember, each child is different so be guided by the child.</p> |
|  <p>Facial expressions</p> | <p>Children who have experienced trauma can often have trouble reading facial expressions and will often interpret expressions as anger or disappointment. Be aware of your facial expressions when engaging with the child. Aim for contingent facial expressions that look to mirror the child's inner experience - this conveys empathy and helps the child to understand themselves and feel heard. When the child is regulated, look for opportunities to assist the child to develop emotional literacy by using cards/games that match faces to feelings.</p> |
|  <p>Tone of voice</p> | <p>Prosody is the rhythm, pitch and tone of the voice, like when a mother alters her voice to soothe her baby. Tone of voice can have a powerful impact on a child's sense of safety. In situations where a child is dysregulated, consider the tone and pitch of your voice. A soft and gentle voice is more likely to deescalate an overwhelmed child.</p> |
|  <p>Posture and gestures</p> | <p>Consider your posture and gestures. How you approach the child will determine how safe or unsafe they may feel. If your posture is puffed up with your shoulders back, the child may read you as defensive and primed to fight. A posture that is strong, yet open and welcoming will help to calm the child. The child's implicit memory system may interpret certain postures or gestures as threatening, so stay attuned to the child and again be guided by them. Mirroring (while staying within your window of tolerance) is also important. Mirroring can convey empathy and a sense of feeling heard and this will help with co-regulation.</p> |

Image source: ©ACF2021



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART

Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

22

Creating an environment of SAFETY

Physical environment: Consider sensory factors – what promotes calm? What might trigger defensive/threat response?

“Human” environment How do we use our voice, face and bodies to communicate safety? Do our interactions with students embody empathy and acceptance? Do our relationships prioritise predictability and consistency?



Image source: ©ACF2021



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART

Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

23

What might safety look like in practice?

Safety is connected to predictability (Porges, 2012)

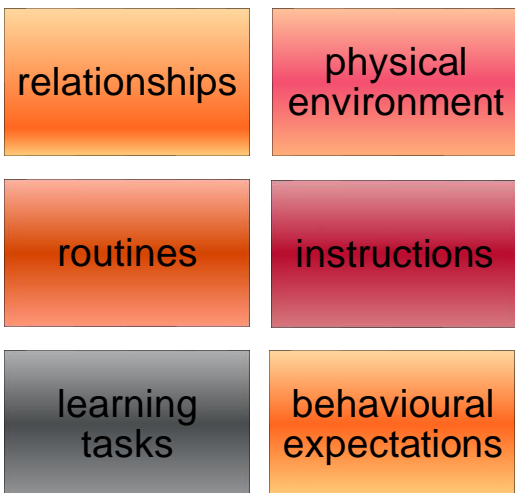


Image source: ©ACF2021




Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART

Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

24



My Safety Map

Who helps me feel the safest?

When have I felt the safest in my life?

What objects/things help me feel safest?

Where do I feel the safest now?

Where have I felt the safest in my life?


Image source: ©ACF2021

Australian Childhood Foundation | SMART Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

The diagram features a central cartoon figure of a person with arms outstretched. Five rounded rectangular boxes are arranged around the figure, each containing a question and a small icon. The top box has a yellow icon of three people. The left box has a red icon of a person. The right box has a yellow icon of a teddy bear. The bottom-left box has a red icon of a house. The bottom-right box has a yellow icon of a lifebuoy. The title 'My Safety Map' is written in white on a dark red brushstroke background in the top right corner.

25

Part 2 – Responding to Behaviour using the SMART PRACTICE Audit Tool



Australian Childhood Foundation | SMART Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

The slide has a solid orange background. On the right side, there is a large graphic consisting of a white heart in the center, surrounded by concentric rings of dots in shades of orange and yellow. The text 'Part 2 – Responding to Behaviour using the SMART PRACTICE Audit Tool' is written in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font on the left side. The Australian Childhood Foundation logo and the SMART text are at the bottom left.

26

Documents to assist you...



Framework for supporting traumatised children at school

Predictable

Principle:

Children and young people who have experienced trauma may experience any change as a potential threat. Even if the familiar is difficult and destructive, the familiar is safer for them than the unfamiliar.



SMART Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

SMART Discussion Papers



Discussion Paper 2 Ideas for integrating SMART into school policies and processes

Introduction
This is a short discussion paper that outlines ways in which the SMART program can be integrated into school policies and processes.

Section 1: SMART considerations in reviewing school child protection policies
The framework provides some key questions to consider when developing or reviewing a child protection policy for your school. It also offers some pointers as to what you might include in the policy.

What are the commitments that underpin our policy?

- The school acknowledges its role and staff are committed.
- We will act to protect children and young people.
- We believe in children and young people.
- We work to create a safe, predictable and nurturing learning environment.
- We support all staff in their role protecting children.
- We understand that the behaviour of traumatised children and young people results from their experiences of abuse and violence.
- Our responses to traumatised children and young people will be guided by the impact of trauma on their capacities to learn, negotiate their behaviour and manage relationships.



Discussion Paper 9 Engaging collegial support for the implementation of SMART

Introduction
The intent of this paper is to generate discussion. The paper provides an opportunity for readers to share specific knowledge and strategies. It is a process rather than a question to further enhance their responses to working with the SMART PRACTICE framework.

This discussion paper acknowledges the critical importance of SMART PRACTICE being implemented as a whole site program. It offers ideas for change for children who are at risk of or who have experienced abuse related trauma. Only the SMART PRACTICE framework can provide the support for these children in more detail. The ideas presented in this document stem from the work of the SMART team as well as those of schools and early childhood settings across South Australia who have implemented the program over their journey work.

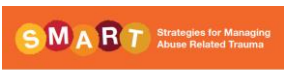
Section 1: 4 key questions to build collegial support for SMART

Question 1: To what extent is the impact of abuse and trauma on a child's behaviour and learning widely understood and identified across the setting?

Understanding the impact and consequences of abuse related trauma is a key element to supporting SMART strategies because it enables a shared language framework and support all staff to identify the behaviour of traumatised children.

Having a shared language framework is crucial to supporting children who have experienced trauma because:

- enables consistency and repetition of responses which supports their "learning";
- ensures no one person carries the sole burden of supporting these children;
- enables consistent and better responses across sites or settings which in turn create a safe and predictable environment;
- particularly reduce placement issues as all staff have a clear plan.



Discussion Paper 10 Revisiting the SMART PRACTICE framework for supporting traumatised children

Introduction
The intent of this paper is to generate discussion. The paper provides an opportunity for readers to share specific knowledge and strategies. It also poses a series of questions to further enhance their responses to working with the SMART PRACTICE framework.

This discussion paper acknowledges the SMART PRACTICE program (Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma - Collaborative Network) as an extension of the program and its application. Each function is explored through active based research. Over the course of the SMART PRACTICE program, the SMART PRACTICE framework has been refined and updated to reflect the current research and practice. The SMART PRACTICE framework is a living document and is subject to ongoing review and refinement. The SMART PRACTICE framework is a living document and is subject to ongoing review and refinement. The SMART PRACTICE framework is a living document and is subject to ongoing review and refinement.

Section 1: Reviewing the SMART PRACTICE framework

Introduction

Travis and other researchers are changing as a possible threat. Building an environment that is as predictable as possible reduces their response.

Reduction in staff and/or students who are present or perceived to be present in the setting.

Specific strategies to support the shared language:

- Individual protocols for use staff and TEs to reflect the consistent nature of responding to children in the site.
- Set up a "dual role" of staff substituted and used for each session or class.
- Develop a shared language across the site (visual, oral, written, etc).
- Review the children's and staff's change.



Discussion Paper 11 Exploring SMART PRACTICE with adolescents

Introduction
The intent of this paper is to generate discussion. It poses a series of questions to further enhance their responses to working with the SMART PRACTICE framework. These questions are designed to be a guide to further discussion and research, and to encourage the sharing of specific knowledge and strategies.

This discussion paper explores the application of the SMART PRACTICE framework with adolescents. It offers a range of ideas for how the SMART PRACTICE framework can be used to support adolescents who have experienced trauma. The SMART PRACTICE framework is a living document and is subject to ongoing review and refinement. The SMART PRACTICE framework is a living document and is subject to ongoing review and refinement. The SMART PRACTICE framework is a living document and is subject to ongoing review and refinement.

Section 1: Adolescent development and the impacts of trauma

Adolescent brain development

As with all brain development processes, we now know much more than we did in the past and this is particularly true of the adolescent brain. It is clearly important for the development and application of SMART PRACTICE with adolescents to be based on the current research in this area.

The brain is an increasingly complex organ and is particularly vulnerable to a range of inputs from the environment. The brain is a complex organ and is particularly vulnerable to a range of inputs from the environment. The brain is a complex organ and is particularly vulnerable to a range of inputs from the environment.



SMART Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

Reflection

Discussion Paper Reflection



Section 2. Questions for reflection or discussion

1. How does this knowledge facilitate further understanding of a specific student at your school?
2. Does this knowledge change the ways in which you would work with this student?
3. Which element(s) of SMART PRACTICE are of most value when working with the ways that trauma can affect children's memory functioning?
4. What have you utilized as an effective strategy for working with students to support their memory functioning? Is this a strategy specifically for the individual student or a whole class or whole school plan?
5. Do you have a challenge you would like to share with colleagues in looking for a different support path?



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

29

Reflection



Section 2. Questions for reflection or discussion

1. What do you see as the biggest issue that influences the level of collegiate support for SMART at your site - be it positively or negatively?
2. Which of these questions is of most relevance to your site and your work? Why?
3. How have you engaged your colleagues effectively with the SMART PRACTICE framework?
4. Please share one example of a collaborative process or strategy that has worked well for your site.



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

30

PRACTICE Frameworks

What are practice frameworks?

How do they guide your practice?

What practice frameworks guide your practice?

What does a developmental trauma-informed practice framework offer us?



Image source: ©ACF2021



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

31

A practice framework is a co-ordinated articulation of a set of aspirations of professionals working together to make a difference to the people they are supporting. It allows professionals to know that their approach is in keeping with the values and principles of the organisation. It guides decision making and reflects the outcomes that are being aimed for – particularly when working with children and young people.

Dr Joe Tucci, CEO, Australian Childhood Foundation



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

32

What is the SMART PRACTICE Framework

- The SMART PRACTICE Framework and Site Audit Tool is a framework to **guide practice** through a trauma-informed lens
- This framework is a starting point for **responding** and outlines the key points in terms of effective and healing work with traumatised children.
- The framework should inform best **practice** when supporting children and young people who have experienced trauma.



SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

33

PRACTICE Acronym

The PRACTICE acronym was developed:

- in conjunction with the Department of Education and ACF.
- to provide people a way to remember the areas of responding.



SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

34

Site Audit Tool Reflection

SMART PRACTICE – Site Audit Tool

This is an opportunity to reflect on the current application of the SMART PRACTICE framework across your site. This tool can also be used to plan further implementation strategies as a site plan. It is acknowledged that not all areas will be relevant to all sites however each area has value in terms of a holistic application of the skills and knowledge underpinning SMART PRACTICE.

In the following table, list strategies, policies or other processes that are currently undertaken that support each of the listed groups in each of the elements of the SMART PRACTICE framework.

| SMART PRACTICE | Whole Site | Staff | Classroom/Group | Small Group | Individual Student/Child |
|----------------|------------|-------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| PREDICTABLE | | | | | |
| RESPONSIVE | | | | | |
| ATTUNED | | | | | |
| CONNECTING | | | | | |
| TRANSLATING | | | | | |
| INVOLVING | | | | | |
| CALMING | | | | | |
| ENGAGING | | | | | |



SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

35

Using the Site Audit Tool – celebration and reflection....



The Site Audit Tool INVITES Educators, Leaders and Support Staff to celebrate and reflect on their current practices, policies and processes

Invite your participants to consider their main area of influence/work and what processes/policies and strategies support staff and students.

- **Leadership** – Whole Site and Staff
- **Classroom Teachers** – Classroom/Group and Individual Student/Child
- **Specialist Teachers/SSO's/BSSO's** – small groups and Individual Student/Child

SMART PRACTICE – Site Audit Tool

This is an opportunity to reflect on the current application of the SMART PRACTICE framework across your site. This tool can also be used to plan further implementation strategies as a site plan. It is acknowledged that not all areas will be relevant to all sites however each area has value in terms of a holistic application of the skills and knowledge underpinning SMART PRACTICE.

In the following table, list strategies, policies or other processes that are currently undertaken that support each of the listed groups in each of the elements of the SMART PRACTICE framework.

| SMART PRACTICE | Whole Site | Staff | Classroom/Group | Small Group | Individual Student/Child |
|----------------|------------|-------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| PREDICTABLE | | | | | |
| RESPONSIVE | | | | | |
| ATTUNED | | | | | |
| CONNECTING | | | | | |
| TRANSLATING | | | | | |
| INVOLVING | | | | | |
| CALMING | | | | | |
| ENGAGING | | | | | |



SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

36

Implementing trauma responsive practice

- What do you already do well across your school/site in terms of trauma responsive practice?
- Is the focus of that practice on individual students, small groups, classroom groups, year levels or whole of school?
- In thinking about these practices, we know that:
 - many are already being implemented
 - these practices are relationally based
 - these actions are not always reflected in policies and procedures
 - consistent application is key



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART

Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

37

Opportunity for review and planning

Utilisation the SMART PRACTICE Framework provides an opportunity to consider what is already being done and how it can be enhanced or improved.



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART

Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

38

Transforming trauma through PRACTICE

How might you use the PRACTICE Site Audit Tool to reflect on your site's and your own practice?

The next slides provide you with an opportunity to reflect on each element of the PRACTICE Framework, and ideas to encourage you to consider in your own practice.



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

39

SMART Audit Tool

SMART PRACTICE – Site Audit Tool

This is an opportunity to reflect on the current application of the SMART PRACTICE framework across your site. This tool can also be used to plan further implementation strategies as a site plan. It is acknowledged that not all areas will be relevant to all sites however each area has value in terms of a holistic application of the skills and knowledge underpinning SMART PRACTICE.

In the following table, list strategies, policies or other processes that are currently undertaken that support each of the listed groups in each of the elements of the SMART PRACTICE framework.

| SMART PRACTICE | Whole Site | Staff | Classroom/Group | Small Group | Individual Student/Child |
|----------------|------------|-------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| PREDICTABLE | | | | | |
| RESPONSIVE | | | | | |
| ATTUNED | | | | | |
| CONNECTING | | | | | |
| TRANSLATING | | | | | |
| INVOLVING | | | | | |
| CALMING | | | | | |
| ENGAGING | | | | | |



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

40

Predictable



Section 1: Reviewing the SMART PRACTICE framework

Predictable

Traumatised children experience any change as a possible threat. Building an environment that is as sensorily familiar as possible reduces threat responses.

Reflection: *In your school or workplace, what processes or procedures do you have in place to help traumatised children manage staff changes?*

Specific strategies to support this element might include:

- Induction processes for new staff and TRT's reflect the consistent model of responding to children at the site.
- Set up a "shadow board" of items student/child will need for each session or class.
- Transition warnings could be multi-modal eg: music, cue cards, colours.
- Involve the child/ren in any room changes



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

41

Responsive



Responsive

Responses to children's behaviour should always stem from an understanding of the trauma-based origins of that behaviour. This may mean a disciplining framework is not always the best path.

Reflection: *How have you specifically responded to a child or young person's behaviour while maintaining your relationship with them?*

Specific strategies to support this element might include:

- Provide a space for calming down that contains reminders of the individual teacher or key person eg: photos, pieces of clothing, specific pen etc.
- Explore and incorporate the idea of "time in" rather than "time out". What will it look like in the context of your school/centre?
- Utilise restorative principles and questions but clear about expectations. In many instances, you may need to lead the restorative responses.
- Notice attempts at behaviour changes, not just successes. Provide positive feedback quietly and non-effusively.



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

42

Attuned



Attuned

Because trauma is fundamentally a disintegrative process, children are often disconnected from their own emotional and physiological responses. The more we can understand patterns and processes of responding, the better able we are to understand the child and help them to understand their own reactions.

Reflection: *In reflecting on the children with whom you work, what patterns of emotional responding have you identified? How did you undertake that tracking process?*

Specific strategies to support this element might include:

- Reflect on teaching strategies that seem to escalate behaviour and equally, that support calm. Feed this back to the whole staff team.
- Set up a feelings feedback loop between school/centre and home and/or after care.
- Support the child to understand experiences of happiness and joy- and any patterns associated with those.
- Ensure that attunement incorporates physiological responses and is not just a linguistic exercise.



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

43

Connecting



Connecting

To begin the healing process, traumatised children need to start with a process of feeling reconnected to themselves- their feelings, their physical responses and their strengths.

Reflection: *Children who have experienced trauma need to build a repertoire of success, rather than a litany of failure. How often do you help these children experience success? How?*

Specific strategies to support this element might include:

- Build a symbolic emotional vocabulary considering accessing all the senses eg: textures, sounds/music, colours.
- Use photography to connect the child's inner sensations with external representation.
- Make specific links between activities and capacity or skills.
- Understand the child may feel overwhelmed by their own emotional responses so provide an environment that enables them to experience regulation.



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

44

Translating



Translating

The way we structure a story of understanding about our experiences is a crucial integrative process for engaging with life. Children who have experienced trauma struggle to build those stories of understanding because of the impacts of that trauma.

Reflection: *How do you provide a record of the children's time with you to each individual child? How often do you review it with the child?*

Specific strategies to support this element might include:

- Link current work/activities to possible futures.
- Meaning making does not need to be language based.
- Provide fun experiences for all children "just because"- not as a reward for a particular behaviour.
- Do calendar activities leading up to significant school/centre events eg: excursion, camp, concert.



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

45

Involving



Involving

Children who have experienced trauma often struggle with relationships with their peers. However, these relationships can be a source of healing and nurturing when developed and supported.

Reflection: *What strategies or programs do you have in place that build friendship skills, tolerance, respect and safety?*

Specific strategies to support this element might include:

- Building social groups around areas of interest not social capacity.
- Consider developmental sequencing of play. Provide opportunities for parallel play- regardless of the age of the child (including into adolescence)
- Provide structured activities for recess and lunchtime- this does not have to be teacher directed and does not have to include implements.
- The value of staff modelling social skills cannot be underestimated.



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

46

Calming



Calming

Invariably, traumatised children are in a constant state of high arousal. To facilitate positive outcomes for these children at all levels (ie: educationally, socially, emotionally etc) we need to provide and support experiences of calm on a consistent and repetitive basis.

Reflection: *Within your role and your site, how can you provide consistent, rhythmic experiences of lowered arousal which is non-verbal? Does this mirror the soothing actions we might use with a very young child?*

Specific strategies to support this element might include:

- Provide rhythmic repeated calming activities or environments that mirror early soothing.
- Utilise calming activities that focus the child's attention eg: fishtank, mindfulness, yoga poses.
- Be very clear of your own calmness levels to maintain your own capacity to think clearly and effectively.
- Work specifically around understanding what calm "feels like".



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

47

Engaging



Engaging

As with calming, the element of engaging children in relationship is fundamental to our work with traumatised children. The experience of appropriate, supportive adult-child relational exchanges is instrumental to supporting children who have experienced abuse related trauma.

Reflection: *How do you ensure that all adults in your workplace respond in a consistent way to traumatised children?*

Specific strategies to support this element might include:

- How do staff access support in their work with traumatised children? Is it with external agencies and/or processes within the school/centre?
- Understand the child's experience of relationships within the school/centre.
- Ongoing support and T&D for staff is important for consistency of response.
- Link to all other relationship based policies and processes eg: anti-bullying, code of conduct.



Australian
Childhood
Foundation

SMART
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma

childhood.org.au

48

Reflective questions – review, gap analysis and action plan

- In reviewing the audit tool, what can you include regarding what you already do?
- Where are the gaps or areas for improvement based on the Audit Tool?
- What do you need to be able to reinforce what you already do and to address the identified gaps or work on the areas for improvement?
- What is your action plan?



Holding Hope



Image source: ©ACF 2021

What are your hopes for
the children/young
people
you work with?

What are your hopes for
your school?

Thank you for your participation!

Keep in touch with us....



www.childhood.org.au

Image source: ©ACF 2021

 Australian Childhood Foundation | **SMART**
Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma