

*Trauma
informed
practice in your
learning
community*



With delivery partners



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Included below are answers to some of the questions we weren't able to respond to during the webinar along with suggestions provided by attendees and references mentioned.

Quick Summary of Key Concepts

The main types of trauma include:

- Type 1 vs. Type 2
- Relational
- Intergenerational
- Complex
- Community
- and many more

Relational (trauma that exists in their relationships) has much more persuasive effects on the child than one off events like an impersonal event like a car accident. In the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community where you've had intergenerational trauma of disposition and ongoing discrimination, can have profound effects for whole communities. Community trauma can include intergenerational trauma but also covers events that affect the whole community, like a flood, fire, a death of loved one in a small community.

The BRACE Framework

The BRACE Framework is made up of five key components that form the basis for a whole of learning community approach to trauma sensitive practices: Belonging, Routine, Attachment, Capacity; and Emotion.

Belonging

- Children feel connected to staff and peers
- Your learning community provides a safe and secure environment, physically and emotionally
- Your learning community engages with children and their families.

Practical examples of Belonging in a learning community could include:

- staff greet and farewell each student by name at the beginning and end of each day
- circle time is incorporated into all classrooms each day, preferably at the beginning of the day
- a social skills program is in place in all schools to promote peer skills and relationships
- all school environments are safe for children
- anti-bullying programs are in place and active
- school staff actively work to engage families by welcoming them in to the classroom and regularly providing positive feedback on their child

- ⦿ classroom expectations are explicit so all children know what is expected of them – this may be done through guidelines (written or pictorial) of classroom expectations on walls
- ⦿ positive strategies to manage behaviour are consistently implemented
- ⦿ all staff model acceptance of all students – each day is a fresh start.

Routine

- ⦿ Routines across your learning community are predictable
- ⦿ There is a consistent approach to learning and behaviour across your learning community.

Practical examples of Routine in a learning community include:

- ⦿ a consistent and predictable routine is established in all classrooms
- ⦿ this routine is explicit and on display within the classroom (either written or pictorial)
- ⦿ any changes to routine are pre-empted as much as possible
- ⦿ there are consistent approaches to manage behaviours across the whole school
- ⦿ there is a ritual for each classroom, this can be decided on by the whole class (eg Friday Friday)
- ⦿ policies and procedures incorporate trauma sensitive practices.

Attachment

- ⦿ All staff develop relationships with children and their families
- ⦿ Staff are attuned to the needs, emotions and behaviours of children.

Practical examples of Attachment in a learning community include:

- ⦿ staff recognize the different attachment relationships of children
- ⦿ staff notice and attend to the emotional cues of students
- ⦿ children/young people are assisted to identify key staff they can access for support when needed
- ⦿ staff are consistent and predictable in their response to children/young people
- ⦿ staff can reflect on interactions with individual students and be aware of potential triggers, responses and reactions from children/young people.

Capacity

- ⦿ Strengths are identified for all children
- ⦿ Competency is promoted for all children
- ⦿ Capacity for mastery is built for all children
- ⦿ Children are assisted to be successful.

Practical examples of Capacity in a learning community includes:

- ⦿ student strengths are recognized and promoted
- ⦿ for each child with an ILP, their strengths are included
- ⦿ children are given the opportunity to succeed (eg they are assigned roles that promote their strengths)

- ⦿ expectations are clear and explicit, so that children are given chances for success
- ⦿ scaffolding strategies are utilized in all classrooms to provide opportunities for success (eg multiple instructions are presented in written or pictorial format for children/young people who exhibit difficulties following multiple instructions)
- ⦿ learning needs are viewed through a trauma informed lens and appropriate referrals and interventions are made.

Emotions

- ⦿ Calming the self
- ⦿ Calming the child
- ⦿ Helping children to recognize, regulate and express emotion

Practical examples of Emotions in a learning community include:

- ⦿ self-reflection is promoted for all staff to enhance staff emotion identification and regulation
- ⦿ emotion regulation is promoted for all staff and modeled by executive.
- ⦿ emotional identification, emotional expression and emotion regulation are promoted for all children/young people
- ⦿ each learning space has an area available to children/young people to assist to regulate emotions
- ⦿ having a social and emotional wellbeing program in place

Attendee questions and answers

What is the best way to deal with defiance or refusal in the classroom, even refusing to do small, simple things?

See tip sheet on [Trauma Sensitive Behaviour Management](#).

How long after trauma ends can the impacts still be evident?

There is no timeline, the impacts can last a lifetime.

Is there any correlation between students who demonstrate evidence/impacts of trauma and empathy of a child?

There can be, as empathy is a skill developed over time so some children who have experienced trauma can be developmentally behind on a range of skills. Empathy needs to be explicitly taught and supported.

What techniques can you use for children and young people (up to 18 years) who are physically aggressive/“blow up”?

Connection and relationships are key. Working with the child/young person to develop skills and plans for how to recognise and express their feelings over time helps reduce escalations. See tip sheet on [Trauma Sensitive Behaviour Management](#).

How do you help children who struggle to connect with classmates when the behavioural symptoms from trauma (non-verbal, clinginess) are perceived as annoying or weird by their classmates?

Educating the whole class about differences in development and ways of expressing emotions to increase the acceptance of the child. Not making it the child's problem.

How do you not let the child “off the hook” when using a trauma informed lens?

Trauma sensitive behaviour management is not about no consequences, but rather timing of appropriate consequences. There is no point trying to rationalise with a child who is out of their window of tolerance and operating in fight/flight/freeze mode. Connection before correction is a term for this. Once things are calm, natural consequences can be used, ie returning to clear up a classroom that a child has damaged. But without shame and with a problem-solving approach with the child about how to avoid something like this happening again; developing behaviour plans and ideas for how to respond next time with the child.

Is a child exposed to conflict and addiction in the mother's stomach at risk of displaying trauma behaviour later in life?

Yes, infants in-utero can be impacted by their mother's stress levels, drug or alcohol intake etc.

How would you suggest we communicate with parents/families? Can we ask families outright what is happening at home?

It depends to what end. Just prying isn't helpful, but in the context of an ongoing relationship with families via face to face meetings or email exchanges it is fine to ask 'How are things at home?' or to let them know that you are interested and it is helpful for you to know if families are having a particularly hard time.

When you have a child who has experienced trauma tries to control what they do and when they do it, at what point do you push to take control back?

Some children try to exercise control to help them feel safe. Clear communication of what they can control and have a say in, and what is an adult's responsibility can help. Give options and control whenever possible and understand that 'pushing' to take it back will only escalate things usually.

Are there programs I can implement in my setting to support our approach to trauma informed practice?

Implementing a formal program is one strategy your school or early learning service can use to support children and young people's social and emotional learning and promote positive mental health.

In Australia, there are hundreds of different programs offered by many different organisations. We know that choosing the right program can often be difficult.

The Programs Directory is a searchable database of external programs, providing key details about the program delivery, duration, and cost – which aims to help you make decisions about choosing the right program for your service or school.

Visit: <https://beyou.edu.au/resources/tools-and-guides/about-programs-directory>

Attendee suggestions

The following points were suggestions provided by participants.

- ⦿ "My school offers 'Peaceful Kids' for kids who need help regulating their emotions. They attend once a week for a term (or more if needed)."
- ⦿ "In my Drama classroom, I use Bear cards (from ACER) as a safe way to encourage students to recognise and communicate their feelings."
- ⦿ "We create some 'quiet area' or 'safe spaces' for children to go to when needed. We also have different experiences / equipment near these areas. Emotion charts could help too."
- ⦿ "We use the Zones or traffic light program to help with self-regulation."
- ⦿ "We use a strategy called 'connecting-in', as many times the child needs that connection to help them sooth or calm the intense feelings they might be feeling dis-regulated."
- ⦿ "Play therapy is very effective for non-verbal children."
- ⦿ "Rock and Water has been a highly successful program within our community for Social and Emotional development."
- ⦿ "Small group games at lunch that teach social skills, board games or handball with adult supervision that teach patience, taking turns, supporting each other."
- ⦿ "We have a student support Hub in our secondary school and [support is offered] through the Hub to catch up on missed schoolwork and easing back to class selecting subjects [the student] wants to attend and doing the other subjects in the Hub. Gradually building up time in class. We would also give [the student] a time out pass to go to the Hub if ever they are not coping."
- ⦿ "We have used the zones of regulation program to support children to identify their emotional status and support them with strategies to move through the zone they are experiencing. This is a really simple and easily implemented program that has positive impacts."
- ⦿ "We do morning greetings where the students hug, fist pump or high five and our stage 1 students love it."

Further Resources for Educators

Visit the [Emerging Minds web hub](#) to access the full suite of resources

[Trauma and the Child](#)

This course will introduce you to key elements of understanding the prevalence of trauma, and its impact on children and families. With the right supports, children can and do recover from experiences of trauma and adversity. Throughout this course you will work towards using your understanding about trauma and its impacts on children and families to explore an approach that will help you provide support. This approach is sensitive to the experiences of these children, and that takes into account information about how trauma can affect a child's development, behaviour, emotions and wellbeing.

[Community Trauma Toolkit](#)

This toolkit contains resources to help and support adults and children before, during, and after a disaster or traumatic event. It will help you understand some of the impacts of disaster and how you can help lessen these impacts.

[Short Articles](#)

- ◉ [How educators can prepare their students for natural disaster](#)
- ◉ [How educators can support children immediately after a disaster or community trauma](#)
- ◉ [What educators can expect during and immediately after a disaster or community trauma](#)
- ◉ [How educators can support children in the short term following a disaster or community trauma](#)
- ◉ [What educators can expect in the short term after a disaster or community trauma](#)
- ◉ [How educators can support children in the long term following a disaster or community trauma](#)
- ◉ [What educators can expect in the short term after a disaster or community trauma](#)

[Videos](#)

- ◉ [Supporting children immediately after a disaster or traumatic event](#)
- ◉ [Supporting children in the short-term after a disaster or traumatic event](#)
- ◉ [Supporting children in the long-term after a disaster or traumatic event](#)
- ◉ [The use of therapeutic story books following a natural disaster](#)
- ◉ [The importance of story and play for young children following a natural disaster](#)
- ◉ [Natural disaster curriculum in the Early Childhood sector](#)
- ◉ [Infant and perinatal wellbeing: Risk and resilience factors](#)
- ◉ [Queensland Centre for Perinatal & Infant Mental Health: Natural disaster resources](#)
- ◉ [The impact of natural disasters on babies and young children](#)
- ◉ [The impact of drought on children](#)
- ◉ [Re-establishing routines and rules following a disaster or traumatic event](#)
- ◉ [The impact on parenting and the parent-child relationship after a disaster or traumatic event](#)

- ⦿ [The impact on children of a disaster or traumatic event](#)
- ⦿ [Children in the short term after a disaster or traumatic event](#)
- ⦿ [Children in the long term after a disaster or traumatic event](#)
- ⦿ [Children in the immediate aftermath of a disaster or traumatic event](#)
- ⦿ [Children's meaning-making in relation to a disaster or traumatic event](#)
- ⦿ [Strathewen-Arthur's Creek Bushfire Education Partnership](#)
- ⦿ [Strathewen community: A bushfire recovery story 10 years in the making](#)
- ⦿ [Preparing for disaster](#)

Podcast

- ⦿ [Communities in the immediate aftermath of a trauma](#)
- ⦿ [Disaster preparedness, myths and programs that hold promise](#)
- ⦿ [The ongoing psychosocial needs of children following a community trauma](#)

Fact Sheets

- ⦿ [Preparing for disaster](#)
- ⦿ [How can I support children during a drought?](#)
- ⦿ [The big dry: the impact of drought on children and families](#)
- ⦿ [Traumatic events: anniversaries and other triggers](#)
- ⦿ [Trauma sensitive behaviour management](#)
- ⦿ [Helping students recover after trauma: classroom activities](#)
- ⦿ [Trauma responses in children aged 0-24 months](#)
- ⦿ [Trauma responses in children aged 2-4 years](#)
- ⦿ [Trauma responses in children aged 5-12 years](#)
- ⦿ [How child care professionals can help children aged 0-24 months following a traumatic event](#)
- ⦿ [How educators can help in the classroom following a traumatic event](#)
- ⦿ [Educators and childhood trauma reactions: how and when to get help](#)
- ⦿ [Common severe stress reactions to a traumatic event](#)

Workshops

- ⦿ [Educators community trauma workshop](#)