

TUESDAY 24TH MARCH 2020 STAYING CONNECTED AND CURIOUS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Knowledge and understanding of attachment and trauma

The Repair of Early Trauma: A Bottom Up Approach

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOCTxcaNHeg&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop>

"Told to us through the voices of children, this animation teaches us that by putting together the seven-piece jigsaw puzzle of 'Developmental Trauma', we can understand how a child's adverse childhood experiences have shaped their emotional world and outward behaviour. Once we understand this, we can then work with a child to help them with their developmental trauma using an innovative therapeutic approach called the 'Neuro-Sequential Model of Therapeutics'. This model recovers and repairs each part of a child's brain in a specific, phased and effective order." **Beacon House**

See <https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Repair-of-Early-Trauma.pdf> for the full article.

Some questions for reflection:

1. *'Everyone who's part of my world - home, school, therapy, needs to work together to make sure my brain has the best chance to heal.'*

What about those children and young people who are experiencing placement changes, or whose parents are unable, for whatever reason, to meet their needs?

2. *'Somatic, sensory issues in my brain stem, attachment, emotional regulation and behavioural regulation issues in my limbic brain, self-esteem issues, dissociation and cognitive problems in my cortical brain. If you want to support me, you need to consider every single one of these jigsaw pieces. My brain does not work in the way it should.'*

Does your school understand and address all the 'jigsaw pieces', or does your school rely on 'top-down' approaches, like rewards, sanctions, restorative justice, reflection...?

3. *'If I am stuck in my primitive brain, I will not be able to learn, no matter how good my teacher is.'*

What implications does this statement have for your school your practice, your staff, your pupils?

4. *'A proper assessment can show us whether a child needs support to develop their brain stem, their limbic brain, or their cortical brain.'*

With the current crisis in school funding, how possible is it for your school to access the assessment and support services your pupils need?

5. **Covid-19 relevance:** *'A child may be well-regulated ... but then have a big change happen in their life... This may trigger a brain stem response for a few weeks or months. This means they might need a different focus to help them get regulated again before they can start thinking and connecting in their limbic [and cortical brain] again.'*

Arguably, the current pandemic is bringing about the biggest changes our current society has experienced, and all of us will find it difficult to recover. For children who have experienced early trauma, the impact may be profound, and many of them will 'drop down' to brain stem responses (fight, flight, freeze, and flop). How can we ensure that during the current restricted school opening for small numbers of children, and also, when we fully open again, that all school staff are flexible in their responses to children, and only try to engage reflective, cognitive processes when a child feels safe and regulated? For example, how effective would restorative practice be if a child is operating from the brain stem? Would asking them to think about how other people feel, or how they might put things right with another person be effective?

This may be enough for you for today. Please DO NOT over-extend. Now, more than ever before it is so important that we listen to our own bodies and emotions, so if you haven't yet done 'self-care' today, particularly by taking a walk in the sunshine, and by water if you can, this might be the right time. If you'd like more, the following article may be of interest:

<https://senmagazine.co.uk/home/articles/senarticles-2/changing-the-narrative-on-care>

I'm going to be focusing on anger tomorrow (there is such a lot of it about at the moment), and this article raises the issue of anger as a bi-product of fear and sadness.

Have a good day, keep safe and healthy and ring or email me to chat if that would help. Jenny x