Serious Violence Toolkit for Schools and Colleges

VRU
Kent and Medway

The fear of violence affects communities across Kent and Medway, and all organisations have a role to play in helping to reduce the likelihood of violence occurring. The County is a place where violence is not common, but there are still too many incidents of violence and some communities are more affected than others. The violence that occurs ranges from fights between young people through to the use of knives and weapons, and the harm from violence can extend into schools, colleges, families and communities.

This toolkit has been written to offer ideas and resources to school leaders that will help to prevent violence from occurring, and ways to support young people who have been affected by violence. It emphasises the importance of providing a positive approach to building children's resilience and how to support them with the life skills needed to overcome any adversity they may have experienced or continue to experience.

Young people who have experienced violence can feel vulnerable which increases the chances of young people being exploited or becoming drawn into violent lifestyles (either as victim or perpetrator), and those same young people may present with challenging behaviours. This toolkit offers guidance and information on how schools and colleges can take practical steps to help embed an inclusive approach in all aspects of the setting. It has a focus on trauma-informed training and practice, supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and re-examining behavioural management techniques and risk points. It emphasises understanding the reasons behind a young person's behaviour and how to provide a positive approach to building children's resilience.

Educational settings have always played a strong and positive role in supporting children and young people and helping to protect vulnerable children from harm both inside and outside the setting. In recent years there has been an increasing concern about how children are exploited by criminals and that this exploitation can draw them into violence. The use of social media has also created risks of conflict between young people when online messaging leads to real world violence.

Education professionals are often in a unique position to identify and support young people. The response from professionals to individual young people or across the whole school can have a significant positive impact to help keep young people safe. The Kent & Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) has been funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner using a grant from the Home Office to tackle the causes of serious violence and has been working with various schools since 2019 to test ways in which young people can be better protected from within the education sector.
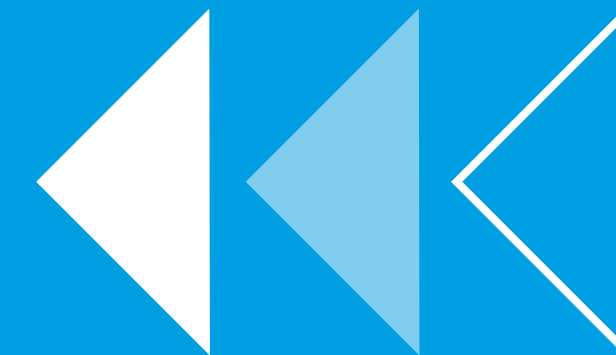
The VRU will continue to work with education partners to test new approaches, share good practice and collaborate to help young people thrive in their communities. The toolkit aims to underpin this work and to provide opportunities for professionals to develop and enhance their support to young people.

We know that there is a link between school exclusion and young people being more likely to enter the criminal justice system or become involved in serious violence, and the purpose of the VRU and this toolkit for schools is to ensure a public health approach to tackling violence through preventing it from occurring. Such an approach can improve not only the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of individuals but also to provide an opportunity to create sustainable positive communities with greater implications for the wider economy and society.

Reason for the toolkit

Contents

What is Serious Violence and Serious Youth Violence (SYV)

In its 2018 Serious Violence Strategy the government defines serious violence as "specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing. However, the Government recognises the need for a broader definition of violence to be adopted if a multi-agency or 'public health' approach to tackling and preventing serious violence is to be implemented.

The table shows the types of serious violence that are most common in Kent & Medway. Many young people involved in serious violence have also been victims of violence, so effectively supporting a young person can prevent violence from occurring as well as helping that person to recover.

Professionals also need to be aware of the signs of exploitation through drug supply. Young people can be drawn into the drug market through being offered 'free' clothing or gifts, being asked to use their bank account or because they want to make 'easy' money. Once young people are involved in drug supply they are at risk of becoming harmed or being forced to harm others.

150
Suspects

98
Suspects & victims

40
Victims

Approximately **67%** of those involved in causing the highest harm are **also victims of violence**.

Across Kent and Medway the main types of serious violence that are seen are:

County Lines and drug supply
Networks from London supply heroin and crack cocaine. They recruit and exploit young people to transport or deal drugs, and have started to use young people's bank accounts to launder the proceeds of crime. Networks will use violence to ensure young people remain working for them or force young people to harm others.

Knives & weapons
Knives or other weapons are carried for three main reasons: the person is scared and believes that carrying a knife will keep them safe; to increase their status amongst their peers; to be used to threaten or harm someone else.

Robbery
Violence is either threatened or takes place to rob another individual in a public place.

Violence with injury
Violence between individuals that causes a significant injury to the victim, which may require hospital treatment.

Types of serious violence

We know that there is a link between school exclusion and young people being more likely to enter the criminal justice system or become involved in serious violence, and the purpose of the VRU and this toolkit for schools is to ensure a public health approach to tackling violence through preventing it from occurring.

Such an approach can improve not only the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of individuals but also to provide an opportunity to create sustainable positive communities with greater implications for the wider economy and society.

If you are concerned that a young person might be at risk of serious violence then the first step is to be better informed, before either speaking with the young person or reporting your concerns.

Kent Police

You can speak with your Schools Officer or a member of the Police schools' team. The Police guidance for reporting incidents in schools is here: **Link**.

County Lines

The 'Eyes Open' website identifies the indicators of County Lines exploitation and has resources for schools – **eyes-open.co.uk/**

The Kent Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children website

Guidance for all professionals on exploitation including criminal exploitation. There is also an Exploitation Toolkit – **kscmp.org.uk/guidance/exploitation**

Fearless – CrimeStoppers

Fearless are part of CrimeStoppers and provide advice and guidance to young people or professionals. Concerns can also be reported anonymously – **fearless.org**

Kent and Medway VRU

The VRU can provide advice and guidance on preventing serious violence, and funds services to support individuals, families and services. The VRU can be contacted at **VRU.Programme.Delivery@kent.police.uk**

How to respond

"When students feel safe and supported they are truly ready and able to learn"

Laura Weaver & Mark Wilding

What works

Academics have looked at what approaches any professional can adopt that help to create positive change with young people who break the law. The summary of their findings is drawn from work around Desistance by Fergus McNeill, her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation and NACRO.

Their conclusions are that no single program will create positive change, but they have identified that the relationship that the young person has with a professional, that the professional sees the positives in the young person and that the focus of any discussion remains on the future rather than the past are all key components to helping a young person to change their behaviour.

An example of how a teacher's belief in a young person can help create change is from Desert Island Discs where Ian Wright talks about his childhood teacher. Listen to it **here**

The Youth Endowment Fund are working on developing evidence drawn from programs in England and Wales to improve the understanding of which approaches can be said to work effectively.

They are looking at approaches both within and outside educational settings. The emerging findings are summarised below:

Programs – Those with the strongest evidence are:

- **Life skills and social development programme**s designed to help children and adolescents manage anger, resolve conflict, and develop the necessary social skills to solve problems

- **Mentoring** with an emphasis on emotional support and role modelling.

- **Therapeutic approaches** such as CBT or Social Skills programs.

The Kent and Medway VRU currently funds a number of programs which offer support to young people. To find out what is available please contact the VRU by emailing **VRU.Programme.Delivery@kent.police.uk**

Key aspects of relationships

A positive relationship and a focus on the future is required to support a young person. Positive change can be helped by a relationships which includes:

A balanced, trusting and consistent working relationship with at least one worker. **Meaningful personal relationships** and a sense of belonging to family.

Emotional support, practical help and where the worker clearly **believes in the capacity** of the young person to change their behaviour and to do well.

Creating opportunities for change and integration but being realistic – lapses and relapses are to be expected. How these are dealt with is critical.

Recognising that **language is important**: labelling children and young people (for example as 'young offenders') can confirm offending identities.

Well planned **restorative approaches**. Giving people the chance to say what happened, explain how they have been affected and the opportunity to apologise.

Helping and supporting young people to **change peer groups**.

Adolescent brain development

Adolescents are less likely to think before they act or pause to consider the consequences of their actions. As such, they may act on impulse, misread or misinterpret social cues and emotions.

Adolescence is a time of significant growth and development inside the teenage brain. The main change is that unused connections in the thinking and processing part of a child's brain (called the grey matter) are 'pruned' away. At the same time, other connections are strengthened.

This pruning process begins in the back of the brain. The front part of the brain, the prefrontal cortex, is remodelled last. The prefrontal cortex is the decision-making part of the brain, responsible for a child's ability to plan and think about the consequences of actions, solve problems and control impulses. Changes in this part of the brain continue into early adulthood.

Because the prefrontal cortex is still developing, teenagers might rely on a part of the brain called the amygdala to make decisions and solve problems more than adults do. The amygdala is associated with emotions, impulses, aggression and instinctive behaviour.

Adolescent brains are more driven by risk-taking, novelty-seeking and peer relationships. The Limbic System drives hypersensitivity to reward and a hyperawareness of the opinions of others.

Netflix Series: The Mind Explained – Teenage Brain
Why to teenagers act like teenagers?
It's not just hormones. Neuroscience explains the fundamentally unique way a teen's brain operates

Nurture

In supporting the development of the adolescent brain, especially for those YP who have been affected by violence (and other ACES) which not only interfere with their attachment but result in an inability to trust and/or form positive relationships, there are various approaches to explore which can be embedded within a whole school culture, nurture being one.

There is research to show that a NURTURE approach to education has a significantly positive impact on improving social emotional skills, wellbeing, attendance, and the behaviour of children and young people who did not experience this good start.

Nurture programmes have been delivered in a number of Kent & Medway schools through VSK, the VRU and several STLS districts and specialist provisions.

See pages 15 & 16 for more information about the Nurture Approach and its development in Kent.

Prefrontal cortex

Teenage 'challenging behaviour' can be a consequence of being emotionally overwhelmed.

No matter how mature a young person might seem, they do not have the same understanding of risks and consequences as an adult.

When we understand how their brain works, we can understand how to get the best out of it.

The **prefrontal cortex** is also underdeveloped, and improperly balanced with the rest of the emotional part of the brain.

This is why teens are more sensitive to...

○ **Risky and impulsive behaviour**

○ **Peer pressure**

Adults   **Teens**

An underdeveloped front region means the brain is **unable to rationalise or modulate an emotional response** like an adult

The teenage brain is susceptible to the effects of sleep deprivation and sensory overload.

On the flip side, extra, enlarged synapses mean they absorb information and learn faster.
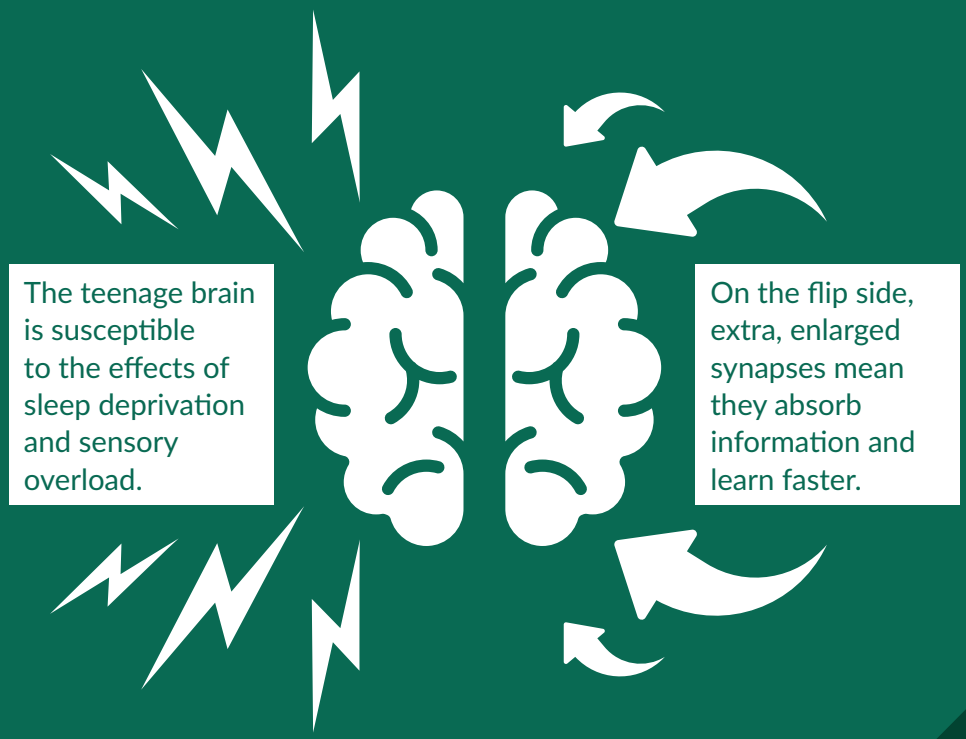
Links to learn more:

- Adolescent Brain Development – Oxford University

- Dan Siegel: The Purpose of the Teenage Brain

- Sarah-Jayne Blakemore: The mysterious workings of the adolescent brain

- Childhood Trauma and the Brain | UK Trauma Council

- Wired for Danger: The Effects of Childhood Trauma on the Brain

- Understanding Trauma: Learning Brain vs Survival Brain

Stock | #140106507

Factors which make a child vulnerable or at risk of involvement in violence are not clear cut. Some socio-economic disadvantages can have a negative impact on pupils and increase risk factors to violence but it is those who experience multiple disadvantages without sufficient protective factors who are facing more significant challenges in school than their peers which ultimately increase those additional factors for serious violence.

It is unlikely that any young person with go through their lives without experiencing some form of adversity and so Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES's) must be considered and inform planning but equally should not define a young person or their outcomes. Not all children go on to be involved in violence as a result of adversity and the critical reason for this is proactive factors that counterbalance. Protective factors are at the core of strengths-based prevention strategies. Multiple protective factors can offset the potentially harmful influences that have accumulated over a child's development. The presence of these protective factors can play a role in the development of academic resilience and good educational outcomes. Schools are the primary source behind enabling opportunities to provide secure attachment (trusted adults), safe space (every classroom and common area), sense of belonging (nurture) and social skills (which supports the navigation of positive, meaningful relationships).

Additional complexities in the form of Special Educational Needs, Children in Care and multiple ACE pupils further increase their challenges to find success in school and indeed their vulnerabilities which link to exploitation and violence which in turn require higher levels of consideration, support and interventions.

- Children's Voices: The Wellbeing of Children involved in Gangs in England
- Keeping kids safe– Improving safeguarding responses to gang violence and criminal exploitation

Examples of **risk factors***:

RISK

- Low school attendance/high exclusions
- Poor self-esteem/self-confidence
- Poor relationships. Low peer/adult support
- Family instability. Chaotic home environment – lack of boundaries/nurture
- Parents with little formal education themselves
- Having the feeling of little control or influence over one's own life
- Diagnosis of SEN – poor social/cognitive/language/communication ability

Examples of **protective factors*** within an educational setting:

PROTECTIVE

- At least one trusted adult, with regular access over time, who lets the pupil know they care
- Preparedness and capacity to help with basics ie. food, clothing, transport and even housing
- Safe spaces – for pupils who wish to retreat from 'busy' school life
- Knowing it's OK not to feel OK, but we move forwards – ACTIVE LISTENING
- Providing access to activities, hobbies and sports
- Help to develop and practise problem-solving approaches at every opportunity
- Provide peer mentoring/volunteering – Map a sense of future (aspirations) to develop life skills

*taken from **youngminds.org.uk**

County Lines & Gangs/Exploitation

There is a growing evidence base that suggests that links a young person's involvement in violence with traumatic experiences or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that they have experienced in their lives. Traumatic experiences, whether a single event or those happening repeatedly, can directly affect the young person and can have a significant impact on their ability to succeed in the school environment. Young people who have been affected by trauma will need to find ways to understand what's happened to them, feel safe or to cope with the feelings that come from a loss of safety.

Not every child will be affected in the same way by potentially traumatic experiences, and some will be more resilient than others. It is important to find out what has happened to a child or young person and to hear about how they have been affected. This will start when a young person feels safe and feels that they can trust the person with whom they are talking:

How trauma can affect thinking or behaviour

- **Cognitive** – Young people can become hypervigilant, so they are watching out for or seeing danger where it does not exist, particularly in new relationships and with people in authority They may find it difficult to accurately interpret what other people are thinking. Stress shuts down thinking capacity so people can struggle to make safe decisions.

- **Affective** – Young people may find managing emotions difficult and it can be hard to put these emotions into words. Trauma can lead to feelings of anger or shame and that the person does not deserve anything good.

- **Physiological** – They may dissociate, which where they feel that things are not real and may disengage or appear not to care. They may have memory problems.

- **Interpersonal** – There may be problems with boundaries and relationships might not follow safe patterns. People may isolate socially as it is easier to be on our own than risk being around others. There may be patterns of repeated abusive relationships or struggling to move away from abusers.

- **Behavioural** – Behaviour may be internalised, such as self-harm, drug or alcohol abuse. It may be externalised and be seen in physical or verbal aggression or behaving in ways that invoke social sanctions and exclusion. Young people may be impulsive and struggle with delayed gratification and decision-making.

Types of trauma:

TYPES

- The death or loss of a loved one
- Emotional, physical or sexual abuse
- Abandonment, betrayal of trust or neglect
- Witnessing domestic violence or abuse
- Bullying
- Witnessing or experiencing community violence
- Parental substance abuse
- Parental mental health issues.
- Poverty and hunger

Signs of trauma:

SIGNS

- Inconsistent/changes in academic performance
- Higher rate of school absence
- More suspensions or exclusions
- Difficulties with concentration, memory and cognition
- Reduced ability to focus, organise and process information
- Lower reading ability and/or language skills
- Difficulties with effective problem-solving, organisational skills and/or planning ability.

How serious violence affects young people

Experiences will affect people in different ways. Individuals have the power to interpret and respond to experience in a variety of ways and some will be more resilient than others.

Being trauma aware is to focus on **what has happened to you** rather than asking **why are you behaving like this** and to acknowledge that anyone can succeed if they feel safe.

DOs and DON'Ts of a
Trauma-Informed Classroom
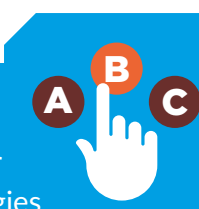
DO
Create a safe space
Consider not only physical safety but the children's emotional safety as well

DO
Offer choices
Empower students and offer power with rather than power over strategies

DO
Build a sense of trust
Follow through with your promises and in situations where changes are unavoidable be transparent with your explanations

DO
Establish predictability
Write out a schedule and prepare children for transitions. It helps create a sense of security and safety

DO
Stay regulated
Help your students (and yourself!) stay in the 'Resiliency Zone' to promote optimal learning. Have regulation tools ready to help students bumped out of the zone into either hyperarousel (angry, nervous, panicky) or hypoarousel (numb, depressed, fatigued)
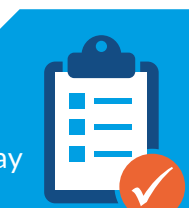
DON'T
Punish
There is really only one don't. Let's not punish kids for behaviours that are trauma symptoms

Signs to look out for
Some important signs to look out for, suggesting exposure to traumatic experiences, include:

- Inconsistent/ changes in academic performance
- Higher rate of school absence
- More suspensions or exclusions
- Difficulties with concentration, memory and cognition
- Reduced ability to focus, organise and process information
- Lower reading ability and/or language skills
- Difficulties with effective problem-solving, organisational skills and/or planning ability.

Serious Violence Toolkit for Schools and Colleges

How do you transform your school into a trauma-informed school?

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What is a 'trauma-informed' school or college?

A trauma-informed classroom works best when part of a whole school approach where all adults understand the impact of trauma. We define a 'trauma-informed' school as one that can support children and young people who suffer with trauma and whose experience of trauma acts as a barrier to learning. Children and young people who have experienced traumatic events may show signs of academic or behavioural problems; however, in other pupils, their suffering may not be apparent at all. The accumulation of traumatic experiences may impact on their school performance and can impair learning.

There are six key parts to creating a trauma-informed setting.

Create a safe and supportive environment

Prioritise emotional and physical safety. A return to 'normal' can help a child feel safe and to understand that life will go on. Reinstate usual school routines as far as possible. A child who experiences trauma can feel that life is unpredictable, chaotic and out of his or her control. Give children choices or control when appropriate. A safe school environment is one that is consistent, organised and has clearly stated, reasonable expectations. Provide extra reassurance and explanation if there are any changes and check that they have understood.

Build trust and help children and young people to regulate their emotions

Let the child or young person know that you are available to talk if he or she wants to. When talking to a child, show them that they can trust you; listen carefully, don't judge but accept their feelings and remind them that it is normal to experience emotional difficulties following trauma. Children need to feel able to share their worries and feelings and they need to know it's okay to take time to recover. Designate an adult who can provide additional support if needed. Provide a safe place and set aside time to talk about what has happened.

Raise awareness and understanding amongst staff

Promote understanding about the connection between emotions and behaviours. Anyone has the potential to misinterpret changes (e.g. as 'bad behaviour'); however, changes to a child's usual conduct or performance can be a sign of trauma. Whilst it is important to protect and respect a child's privacy, it can be helpful to share information with school staff who have contact with a child to make sure that they are aware that the child has experienced trauma and may be having difficulties (e.g. concentrating, controlling emotions and/or performing academically) as a result.

Staff Can Experience Trauma Too

Be aware that adults in the school may have experienced trauma and they can be affected in the same way. Take time to check in with staff. Be curious about how they are feeling and ask about what's happened to them. Provide opportunities for them to reflect and make sure that this is a part of the school structure.

Modify teaching strategies

Balance routines and normal expectations with a flexible approach. You might avoid or postpone tests, events or projects that require intense concentration and energy, for a while. Be sensitive to students who are experiencing difficulties and anticipate difficult times further down the line (e.g. birthdays or anniversaries). Support students by rescheduling or adapting classwork and homework. Use teaching methods that help concentration, retention and recall. Warn and remind pupils when there's going to be a loud noise, if possible (e.g. school bell or fire alarm test).

Cultural competence

Racism and discrimination as a result of race and culture play an important role in mediating outcomes for schoolchildren. It is important that teachers have a good understanding of cultural differences. Teachers and staff may need to develop new skills, such as the ability to see learning through a multicultural screen, to achieve inclusive educational achievement for all. This means that, as well as being able to teach an academic subject, staff must have the knowledge and the skills to connect with students from diverse racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

Serious Violence Toolkit for Schools and Colleges

How do you transform your school into a trauma-informed school?

What can you do:

Each educational setting will have unique circumstances, cohorts and communities that they serve. There can't therefore be a one-size-fits-all approach to implementing trauma-responsive approaches into the whole-school culture.

However, the following could be considered as helpful processes for beginning to review trauma-informed practice within your setting and developing local solutions.

Working parties

Creating a working party with minimal hierarchy to lead trauma-informed change across the organisation. This is best if it has the backing of senior leaders and commitment to implement the findings that the group generates. Ideally, this working party includes representation from pupils and from parents/carers or other members of the community. This group could consider the strengths of the school and areas for development in relation to trauma-informed principles.

A toolkit to use to help with this is here: **How mentally healthy is your school**

Promote training

Promoting trauma-informed training for all staff members. An example of free online software is the **Introduction to Adverse Childhood Experiences: Early Trauma Online Learning**.

The training can be found here **Link**

Perform walkthroughs

Completing walkthrough exercises of the daily functioning of the school, considering how it might feel if you were a child with an experience of trauma, adversity or losses of different kinds.

This can be extended to parents and the communications with the community at large. Ideally, these exercises are also informed by young people themselves. Collect the learning from these exercises and begin to implement changes to processes and policies.

Trauma-informed Champions

Operating a trauma-informed champions' model, either within school or through a cluster model with other schools in the locality or within a multi-academy trust. Kent and Medway Councils have invested in trauma-informed practice and may be able to support your work.

Network

Seeking to establish or join a local community of practice with other schools or organisations to share best practice on embedding a trauma-informed approach or accessing trauma training. This community of practice could form out of a champions' model such as that described above. Kent Public Health host the SPACE Matters multi-agency approach to ACEs and can advise on approaches to take.

The website is here: **Link**

Action learning set model

Use an action learning set model to disseminate trauma-informed practice throughout the organisation or the local cluster.

Creating the right school environment

Creating the right school environment is often challenging. This section provides help in promoting positive behaviour, recognising the need for cultural competency. Information in this section has been adapted from the City of York's Trauma-informed behaviour policies and approaches: A guide for schools and settings. Developing an Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy

Promoting positive behaviour and relationships

Research suggests that 'when schools place a strong emphasis upon the emotional health and wellbeing of all members of the school community, and this ethos is driven by the school's senior leadership team and is evident in practice, this leads to better outcomes for all – e.g. staff retention, pupil attendance and attainment, positive home-school relationships.'

Banerjee, Weare and Farr, 2014

Managing and supporting behaviour that challenges

A clear school behaviour policy, consistently and fairly applied, underpins effective education. School staff, pupils, parents and volunteers should all be clear on the high standards of behaviour expected of all pupils at all times. The behaviour policy should be enacted consistently by all members of the school community.

Discipline represents an opportunity to teach and nurture

When considering the range of options to effect changes in pupils' thoughts, beliefs and behaviour, the following should be considered:

- What was the function of (i.e. the reason behind) the behaviour?
- What lesson do I want to teach in this moment?
- How can I best teach this lesson?

Leadership and management that supports and champions efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing

- An **ethos and environment** that promotes respect and values diversity
- **Curriculum teaching and learning** to promote resilience and support social and emotional learning
- Enabling **student voice** to influence decisions
- **Staff development** to support their own wellbeing and that of the students
- **Identify need and monitoring impact** of interventions
- **Working with parents/carers**
- **Targeted support** and appropriate referral

A Headstart graphic summary of the approach to promote whole-school wellbeing.

Internal exclusion

Where pupils repeatedly struggle to meet the expectations of the setting, they may be vulnerable to the repeated use of internal exclusion over an extended period of time. Where this is the case, repeated efforts to understand what has happened to a young person that is preventing them from meeting expectations are recommended. Some suggestions are listed below:

- Identifying and meeting the need being communicated through a behaviour at the earliest opportunity (rather than continuing sanctions where they are not working to change that behaviour)

- Restorative conversations between the child or young person and a key attachment figure within the setting, at a point where the child or young person is calm enough to reflect on triggers, thoughts, feelings and what might help in the future.

- Using a relational approach to behaviour management. A relational approach is one in which staff "are aware of and explicitly focus on the quality of their interactions with students to develop classroom communities that promote academic, social, and emotional growth" (Reeves and Le Mare, 2017).

An example of a behaviour policy, recommended by KCC's Educational Psychology Team, is here: **Trauma informed behaviour Policy**

Anna Freud

The Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families have created 5 Steps which is a framework to help schools and colleges develop a school or college-wide approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Their research and that of others suggests that whole school or college approaches can improve attendance and attainment. Research at the Anna Freud Centre has found that, as levels of mental health difficulties increase, attainment results decrease.

The course is free and is available to all schools and colleges. The link to the 5 Steps approach and the interactive framework that can be used by Governors and Senior Leaders to create a personalised school plan is **here**.
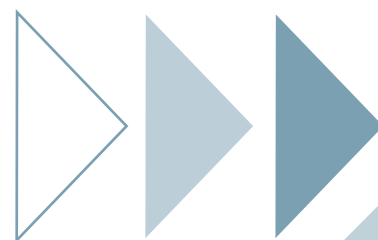
Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families

Whole-School Nurture approach

Nurtureuk have been commissioned by Kent County Council to support inclusion in schools by creating and celebrating a whole-school nurturing approach. This three-year programme began in September 2021 and will work with 300 mainstream primary and secondary schools across the county to develop their policies and practices to be more inclusive.

Schools in Medway can speak with the Violence Reduction Unit about how a nurture approach can be adopted within their setting.

What's behind nurture – The concept of nurture is rooted in Attachment Theory and Neuroscience of the developing brain. It highlights the importance of social environments and its significant influence on social emotional skills, wellbeing and behaviour. A nurturing ethos in an education environment is empathetic, structured and fair for all. Nurture approaches is about identifying a range of strategies and resources to engage and build relationships with those most at risk of exclusion and/or becoming involved in violence/exploitation. By enhancing staff understanding, and their assessment, of those cohorts who have missed early nurturing experiences, the interventions support increased social and emotional skills, resilience and their potential to achieve.

Embedding a nurturing approach – requires some pre-requisites. Most importantly is SLT buy-in and commitment. 6 months' preparation is advised to ensure that an integral location within the main school building is identified as the 'safe space', furnished appropriately with an ongoing budget for nurture sundries. Appointing the 'right people' with training is essential with ongoing plans to deliver whole staff training in the principles of nurture and attachment/trauma-informed practices. Any desired nurture ethos must be shared with parents, pupils and wider community partners. Finally, key to nurture is establishing a clear referral pathway by implementing robust SEMH assessments and ensure communication takes place with other support systems (ie counsellors and pastoral inputs).

Your school, your principles! – It is recognised that each setting will have different landscapes. Different demographics, different needs and differing capacity will require a flexible and bespoke approach to nurture and therefore the 6 principles can be adapted and/or aligned to the existing core principles in place to suit your provision. Fundamental to nurture is building on existing strengths and experienced providers agree that a whole school ethos to nurture is one that is devised alongside staff and pupils to achieve the best results, together creating a culture where young people can thrive and achieve through their education.

The 6 Principles of Nurture
(as devised by NurtureUK)

Children's learning is understood developmentally

The classroom offers a safe base

Nurture is important for the development of self-esteem

Language is understood as a vital means of communication

All behaviour is communication

Transitions are significant in the lives of children

Accept there will be challenges

Nurture will need time to become established and to provide evidence of impact as an early intervention.

Staff back up will be required to cover nurture absences

Other curriculum areas will need to take a back-seat whilst nurture timetabling takes priority for agreed period.

Tools to understand what is behind a young person's behaviour

All behaviour is communication

'A Need Met is a Problem Solved' – JR Knost: A few minutes of listening, observing and understanding can save hours of miscommunication, frustration and conflict.

Even in the most extreme situations (including violence and violent circumstances) research concludes that to understand and 'treat' the underlying causes with trauma-informed interventions can reduce the risk of future incidents and achieve long-term improved behaviours of those who cannot regulate their emotions appropriately.

Social and emotional development is a fundamental part of a young person's education and with ever-increasing online influences and extra-familial factors adding to many young people's anxiety, nurture is recommended now more than ever.

From the chair-throwing, wall-punching, aggressive pupils to the verbally abusive, threatening responses given by some and the hood-up, withdrawn, unwilling to talk young people among your cohorts, understanding the root cause and recognising their behaviour is their way of communicating something they can't articulate, will help to inform the best-placed response, often most importantly for safety of others, de-escalation, a warm, caring response is the most effective – albeit not always the most natural.

A scenario to perhaps consider is one in which a colleague throws a mug of coffee across the staff room, perhaps whilst swearing and/or screaming. It would be considered quite 'normal' and natural to show concern and support that colleague. Despite the shock at such a display, it is likely your reaction would be to throw a protective arm around them and offer kindness.

It is never acceptable to act in a violent or aggressive manner and therefore any such incidents will always cause alarm and fright. However, a human response to those we care

about is love and nurture and this response is shown to a colleague. Yet, as professionals working with children and young people, why then can it often be the case that young people are not met with that same nurturing approach?

Similarly, with the withdrawn, disengaged pupil, instead of providing additional nurture to build a sense of trust – a secure attachment – to understand what may be causing this closed demeanour/unresponsive stance is to meet this 'attitude' with kindness and nurture.

Taking a whole school approach allows the nurturing principles to be brought to as many young people as possible. It is widely accepted that by supporting mental health and putting young people at the centre of their education, a culture can be created where aspiration, motivation and application are raised through sense of belonging and understanding. To aid thinking around this and resource to the toolkit, STLS have developed a whole school-approach to Zones of Regulation which support the Nurturing approach and its principles.

What we sometimes see as a failure to behave properly is in fact a failure to communicate properly

What **we all** want

To be accepted

To make choices

To be engaged in meaningful activities

To be surrounded by people who care

To be listened to and heard

To be loved

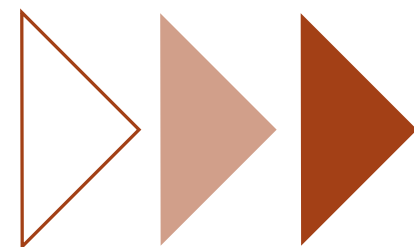### What **none** of us want

To be ignored

Thought to be incompetent

Bored

Abused, controlled

Ridiculed, restrained

Disliked

Whole School Approach to Zones of Regulation

Zones of Regulation is a framework designed to support the SEMH needs of children and young people. This framework as a whole school approach has been created and is used by the Specialist Teaching Learning Service

To identify and manage their emotions through the use of self-regulation strategies. An emotional toolkit which can help pupils who may be experiencing difficulties in identifying and labelling emotions, understanding and/or controlling emotions and managing reactions and behaviours.

This approach is most effective when introduced to the whole class but can be further developed with individuals who required additional focus in this area.

A curriculum designed by Leah Kuypers which uses a CBT approach to teach self-regulation, the Zones framework provides strategies to teach students how to become more aware of and independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, managing their sensory needs, and improving their ability to problem solve conflicts.

Influenced by and built upon the following theories and practice:

- **Alert Programme® by Mary Sue Williams and Sherry Shellenberger**
- **The Incredible 5 Point Scale by Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis**
- **Social Thinking® by Michelle Garcia**
- **The Empathising –Systemising Theory by Simon Baron Cohen**

The Four Zones

Our feelings and states determine each zone – categorizing the way a young person feels and their state of arousal into 4 colours:

Blue Zone
Describes low alertness and feelings such as tiredness or sadness. '**REQUIRES REST/RECOVERY**'.

Green Zone
Describes a calm state of alertness. The pupil may be described as happy, focused, content or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs. '**GOOD TO GO**'.

Yellow Zone
Describes a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions (the pupil has more control than when they are in the Red Zone). Examples of what the pupil may experience are: stress, anxiety, excitement, frustration, silliness or nervousness. '**CAUTION**'.

Red Zone
Describes extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions such as anger, fear or over-whelming excitement. '**STOP**'

Promoting positive behaviour

Zones of Regulation should be understood and used as a cognitive behavioural approach to help students learn how to self-monitor and reflect on the effectiveness of their regulation strategies. **It should not be misused as behavioural sanction**.

What zone are YOU in?

Be the role model students may not be able to control their own behaviour, but you, as the adult, can control yours. Try to ensure that you know what you will/won't do if a child is not in control. Check that they are fully aware of what will/won't happen if they do/don't follow the expectations.

It is vital that the zones are not only used when 'negative' behaviours are shown but to recognise the 'positive' too! Whole school ethos should promote **modelling of self-regulation**, explicitly teach students about self-regulation and how to self-monitor, implementation of positive time out and positive reinforcement.

The Zones of Regulation curriculum promotes that all of the zones are natural and ok to experience – including the red zone. The Zones of Regulation framework teaches students how to identify and manage their feelings and employ regulation strategies within each Zone based on:

• **The environment** – such as the differences between an assembly, the playground, the classroom and home.

• **The demands of the environment** – such as the use of the space, equipment, social rules and expectations.

• **The people around them** – familiarity, age, personality, role and expectations.

Rest area	GO	Caution	STOP
Blue zone tools	**Green zone tools**	**Yellow zone tools**	**Red zone tools**
Stretch	Drink water	Deep breaths	Take a break

Zones in the classroom strategies:

Consider triggers that put space in between us and the Green Zone. Examples: fire alarm, writing, others being unkind. Can the pupils reflect on what could be a trigger for them?

Discuss what tools could be used to help keep us in the Green Zone. Review the triggers and talk about tools as a way to get back to the Green zone. Can the pupils come up with their own ideas?

Possibilities may include

• Going for a walk

• Listening to some music

• Breathing techniques...

The overview of this framework and its key principles is taken from: 'The Zones of Regulation: A Curriculum Designed to Foster Self-Regulation and Emotional Control' by Leah Kuypers (2011, Social Thinking Publishing).

ℹ Further information

Accessed resources from your local Specialist Teaching Learning Service Colleagues and **zonesofregulation.com**
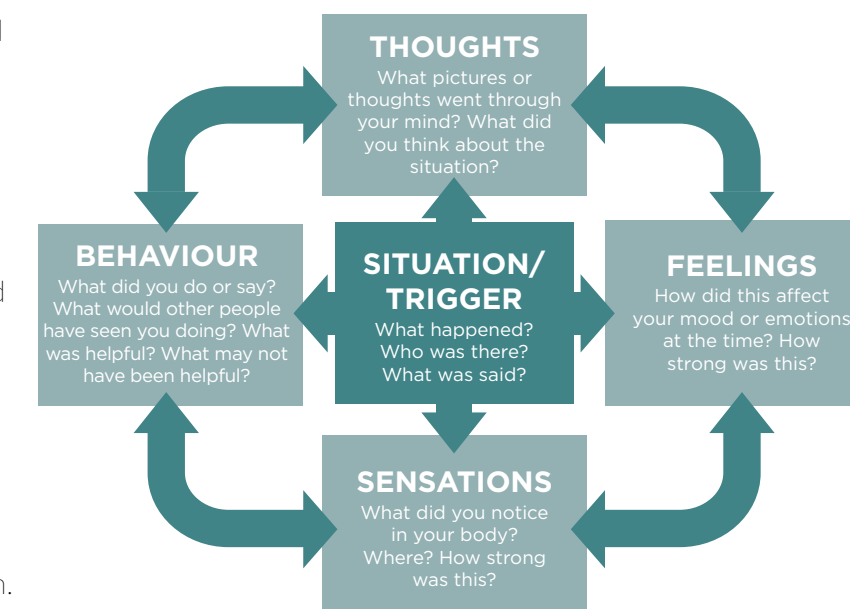
Social skills

Through Home Office High Intensity Funding, the VRU have commissioned Clinical Psychologist, Dr Rebecca Packer who is working with the Kent & Medway Pupil Referral Units. Via this toolkit, we would like to introduce an overview of this program for mainstream schools can understand the approach and how they may replicate this within their settings to support reintegration of those pupils returning to their 'home' provision.

Our social skills program is co-designed with PRU staff to increase their skills and confidence in using the approach and the tools available to them. It also supports PRUs to create safer spaces within their community and to allow young people to enhance their social skills to support a positive engagement with education to maximise their chances of realising their full academic potential.

Social Skills are verbal and non-verbal means of communication which can inform how we navigate our relationships. To interpret someone else's feelings is a skill and provides emotional literacy.

Many of our young people are described as lacking empathy and this can be a symptom of disorganised attachment resulting in an unawareness of their own feelings which explains their inability to recognise feelings in others. It is evidenced that young people who struggle with social skills have developed their own acceptable outcome. For example, to be excluded may be a negative response yet it is the outcome the young person wanted to achieve.

A lack in self-awareness is also prevalent in their understanding of risk/harm and situations they could place themselves in.

THOUGHTS
What pictures or thoughts went through your mind? What did you think about the situation?

BEHAVIOUR
What did you do or say? What would other people have seen you doing? What was helpful? What may not have been helpful?

SITUATION/ TRIGGER
What happened? Who was there? What was said?

FEELINGS
How did this affect your mood or emotions at the time? How strong was this?

SENSATIONS
What did you notice in your body? Where? How strong was this?

Emotion coaching uses moments of heightened emotion and resulting behaviour to guide and teach the child and young person about more effective responses

Formulation – the 5P's

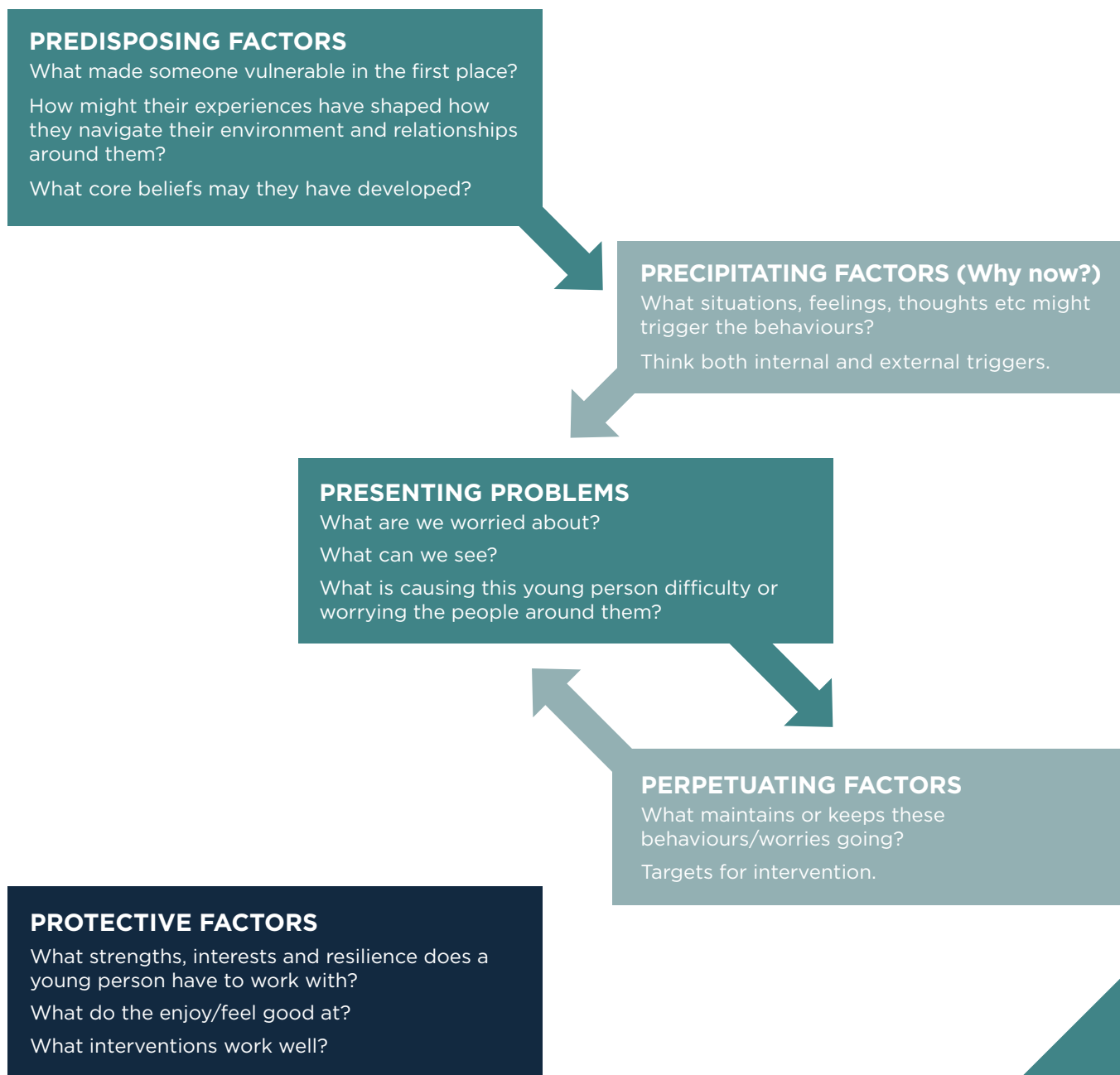**Presenting, Predisposing, Precipitating, Perpetuating, Protective Factors**

The Formulation of something, such as medicine or beauty product, is the way in which different ingredients are combined to make it. The finished product is a formulation (Collins Dictionary)

To **understand the things that keep the problem (behaviour) going** is key to identifying the intervention to meet the needs and reduce repeated incidents.

Full resources from Dr Packer's workshops are available via **rebecca@rppsychology.co.uk**

Examples of her 5P's and options as to how you may wish to determine these in your planning are detailed for your information.
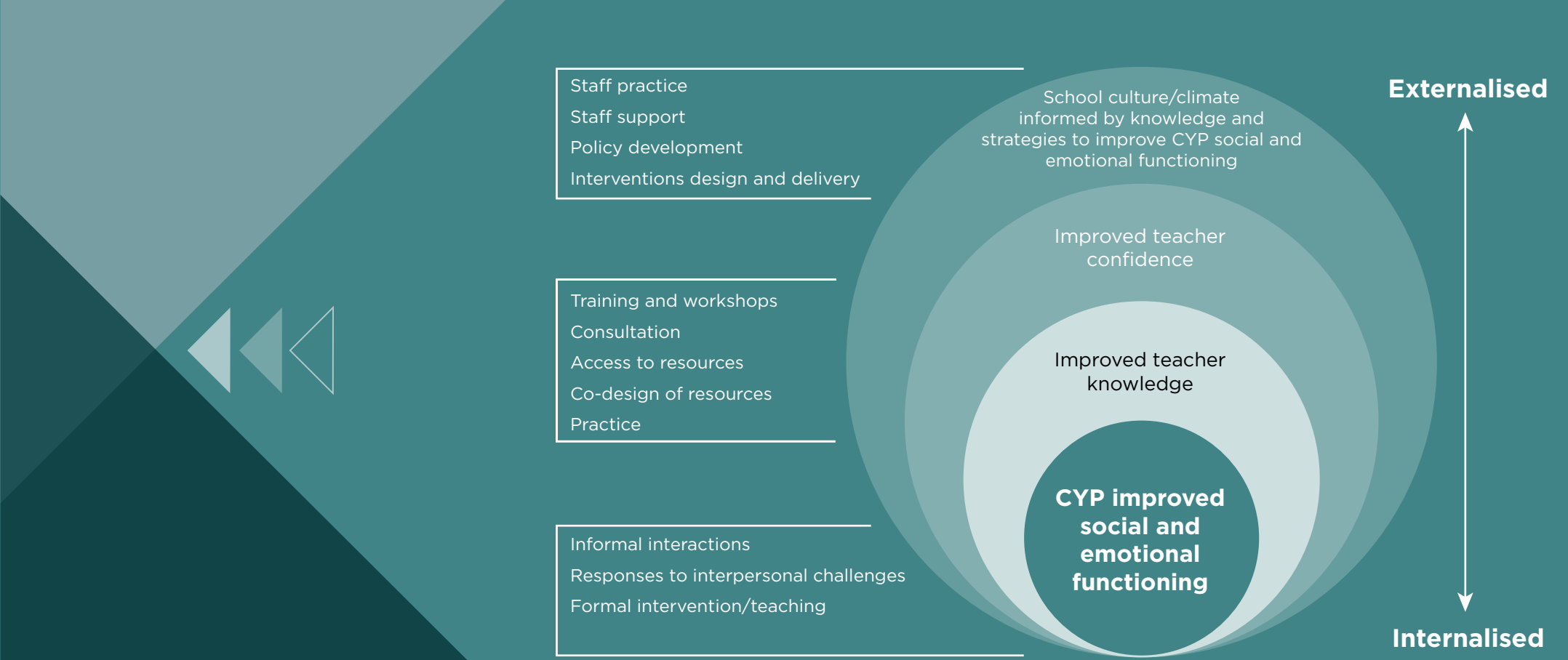
Both Zones of Regulation and Social Skills utilise the understanding of Emotion Coaching as a way of supporting yourself, young people and adults who are struggling to regulate their behaviour. Enabling to potentially diffuse and deescalate situations where people become upset, angry or aggressive. Whilst the research is grounded in parenting, the principle holds true more broadly for any interaction, including in the classroom.

PREDISPOSING FACTORS
What made someone vulnerable in the first place?

How might their experiences have shaped how they navigate their environment and relationships around them?

What core beliefs may they have developed?

PRECIPITATING FACTORS (Why now?)
What situations, feelings, thoughts etc might trigger the behaviours?

Think both internal and external triggers.

PRESENTING PROBLEMS
What are we worried about?

What can we see?

What is causing this young person difficulty or worrying the people around them?

PERPETUATING FACTORS
What maintains or keeps these behaviours/worries going?

Targets for intervention.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS
What strengths, interests and resilience does a young person have to work with?

What do the enjoy/feel good at?

What interventions work well?

A strategy to deal with life's ups and downs. Accepting all emotions as normal. Guiding the young person about more effective responses. Through empathetic engagement, the child's emotional state is verbally acknowledged and validated, promoting a sense of security and feeling 'felt'. This activates changes in the child's neurological system and allows the child to calm down, both physiologically and psychologically. A calmer student, a calmer teacher and a calmer classroom, increased resilience in both students and teachers.

What is wrong? How did it get that way? What keeps it this way?

A shared understanding, description or narrative of a problem and its maintenance in order to consider best ways forward.

RECOGNISE → UNDERSTAND/FORMULATE → INTERVENE → INFORM

Staff practice
Staff support
Policy development
Interventions design and delivery

Training and workshops
Consultation
Access to resources
Co-design of resources
Practice

Informal interactions
Responses to interpersonal challenges
Formal intervention/teaching

Externalised

School culture/climate informed by knowledge and strategies to improve CYP social and emotional functioning

Improved teacher confidence

Improved teacher knowledge

CYP improved social and emotional functioning

Internalised

Bystander Interventions

The approach was piloted in Scotland by the Glasgow Violence Reduction Unit and has been rolled out to all secondary schools in Scotland through the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program.

What is an Active Bystander

Every day events unfold around us and we are all bystanders. At times events around us might make us feel uncomfortable, we might witness discrimination, harassment or bullying. When this happens, we can choose to say or do something, be an active bystander, or to simply let it go and remain a passive bystander.

To be an active bystander therefore needs a person to challenge these thoughts and concerns and make a decision to intervene in some way. When we intervene, we signal to the perpetrator and any observers that their actions are unacceptable, and if such messages are constantly reinforced within our communities, we can shift the boundaries of what is considered acceptable behaviour.

The bystander approach involves working with young people to breakdown and challenge perceived norms and misconceptions which often negatively influence behaviour. It gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of violence.
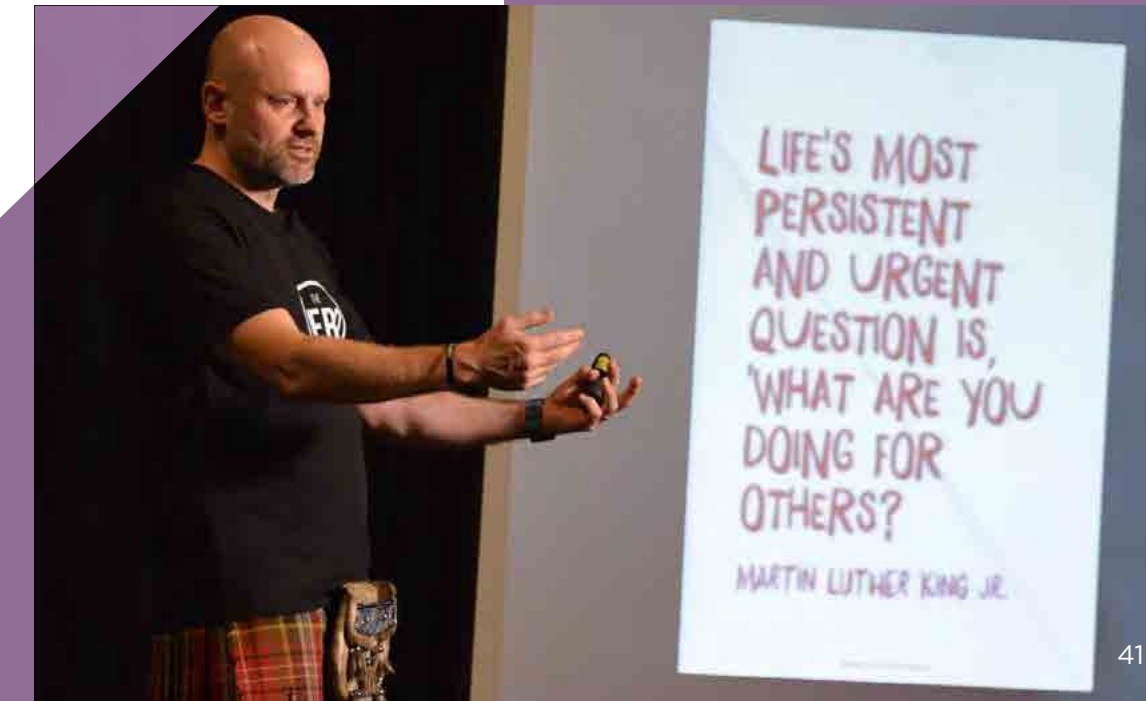
The bystander approach also involves working with young people to empower them as active bystanders who have the ability to both challenge and support their peers in difficult situations which could cause emotional or physical harm. It helps to promote a culture where everyone understands that they have a positive role to play to help those around them feel safer and to reduce harm.

Kent have since provided training and workshops to multi-agencies via Communities of Practice and VRU funded sessions through Graham Goulden at Cultivating Minds UK **grahamgoulden.com**

GRAHAM GOULDEN
CULTIVATING MINDS UK

Some reasons people do not intervene include:

- Thinking 'No-one else is doing anything so I shouldn't either'
- Assuming that 'someone else' will intervene
- Thinking 'I don't know the person it's happening to – don't get involved'
- Being concerned about other people negatively appraising their intervention
- Fear of retaliation: e.g. physical harm, or others' reactions, at the time or afterward
- Incorrectly believing their views are in a minority 'nobody else thinks this behaviour is wrong, they aren't saying anything'.

Bystander approach

LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS, 'WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS?'

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

How to be an Active Bystander

There are four main stages to the process of being an active bystander:

Stage 1: Notice the event/behaviour.

This is about being informed about what is inappropriate and noting the behaviour to oneself.

Stage 2: Interpret it as a problem.

Don't presume that the problem has been solved or underestimate its importance even if the person who is the target doesn't say anything.

Stage 3: Feel empowered to take responsibility for dealing with it.

Realising that it's your responsibility to be active in some way. Do not assume that someone else will intervene, or that because you are not causing the problem, it is not your responsibility to be part of the solution.

Stage 4: Possess the necessary skills to act.

This can involve having had training or information on how to intervene.

NINE out of TEN teens who witness cyber-bullying WON'T report it

Snitches get stitches?

Young people may believe that reporting a concern is snitching and breaks an unwritten code. The Bystander Approach can help to reframe that language and encourage young people to see reporting as standing up for something or someone.

Fearless have produced a workbook on this and can talk to students in classrooms or assemblies.

You can find the workbook here **fearless.org/ en/professionals/resources/downloads**

This can involve having had training or information on how to intervene.

fearless
Part of **Crimestoppers**

Snitching
To get someone else into trouble
To stop yourself getting into trouble
To gain something from it
To hurt or upset someone you don't like

Reporting
To keep yourself safe
To keep someone else safe
The problem might be urgent
You may need an adult's help
Speaking out because you know something is wrong

There are 5 ways to be an active bystander – known as the 5 D's

DIRECT ACTION ▼

We can directly intervene in a situation, but we should only do so if it is safe and we don't put ourselves at risk

DISTRACT ▼

We can interrupt, start a conversation with the perpetrator to allow their potential target to move away or have friends intervene. Or come up with an idea to get the victim out of the situation. Distraction will help reduce the risk of harm happening and give us time to talk.

DELEGATE ▼

There may be someone better who can intervene, such as someone trusted by the person carrying a knife. Delegation means asking someone else to talk to them and to help them see that what they're doing is wrong. This could include telling a friend, a teacher or the police if someone in authority is needed to step in. By telling Fearless about a crime or a concern, the young person can delegate the responsibility to intervene.

DELAY ▼

We might be able to slow things down before they go past the point of no return. Delaying can take the emotions out of how someone responds.

DOCUMENT ▼

Make a note or record what's happened and who was involved. Notes can help you see how many times something was happening and can help you show others about why you are concerned.

Active bystander

Being an active bystander involves raising confidence in young people to understand how they might intervene by reporting concerns.

Young people in Gravesham, who are part of the Gifted Young Generation youth group, have produced the video below which shows how the active bystander approach can work.

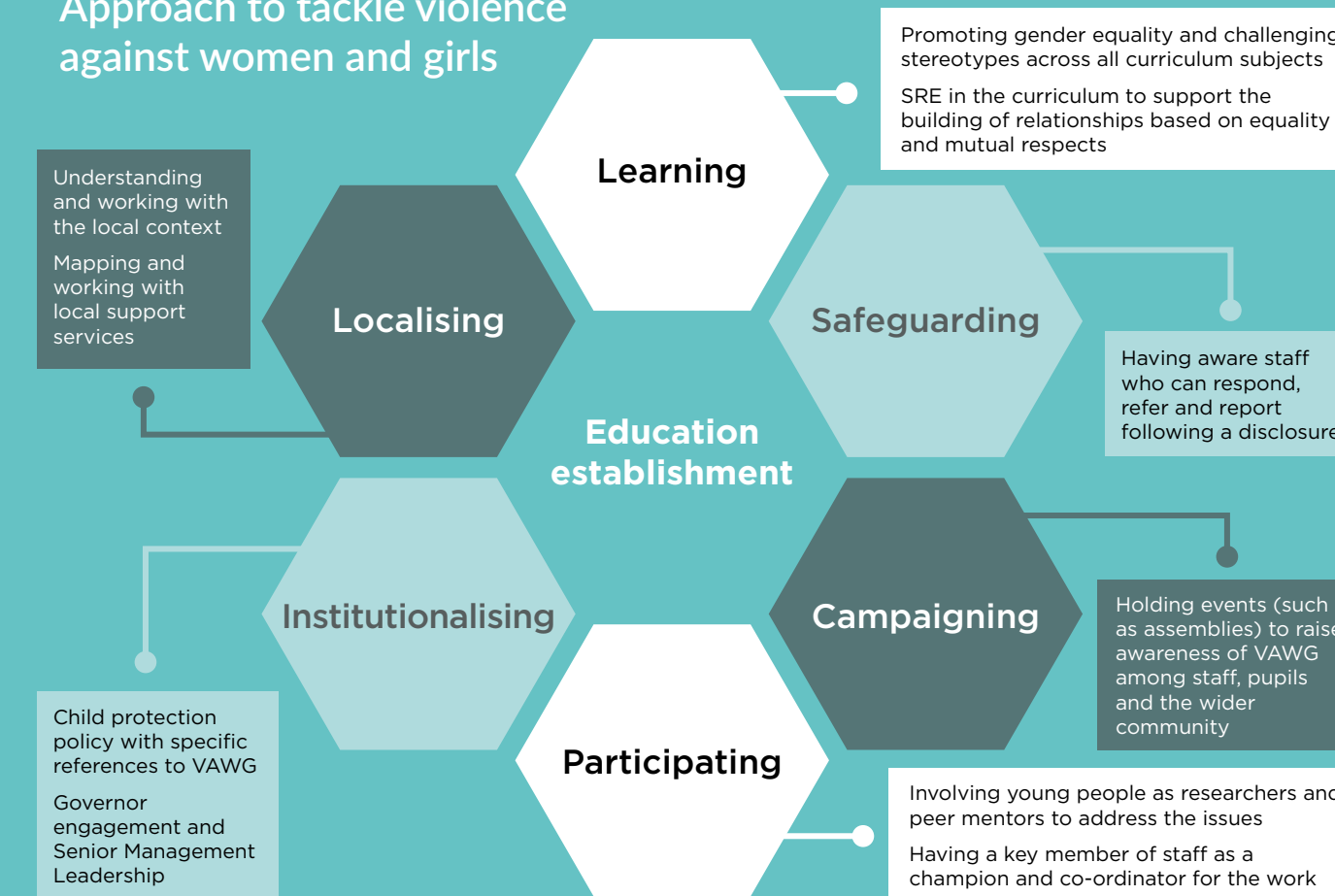**wearegyg.co.uk/report-it-hate-crime-and-bullying**

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is the term given to all forms of violence and abuse experienced disproportionately by women and girls, or experienced by them because of their gender, including rape, domestic violence, forced marriage, 'honour' based violence, FGM and sexual harassment. VAWG is linked to women and girls' inequality and is neither acceptable nor inevitable.

Adults and children who experience violence and abuse cope in different ways. Some may become withdrawn, isolating themselves to keep themselves safe, while others may throw themselves into work, focused on 'achieving' and try to be around people constantly to avoid unwanted thoughts. Survivors may start to control their eating or develop 'eating disorders' to claim back a sense of control over the body, to keep the body small or large as a form of protection. Many survivors use some form of self-injury to cope with their feelings of numbness or low self-worth, again seeking to reassert control over their body and their self. Some use substances (such as drugs or alcohol) to block out unwanted or overwhelming emotion or to help them express emotion it if they are feeling numb.

The End Violence Against Women Coalition has produced a guide for school leaders to help schools' efforts to tackle violence against girls. The guide can be found **here**.

Violence Against Women and Girls

Six areas of a Whole School Approach to tackle violence against women and girls

Promoting gender equality and challenging stereotypes across all curriculum subjects

SRE in the curriculum to support the building of relationships based on equality and mutual respects

Learning

Understanding and working with the local context

Mapping and working with local support services

Localising

Safeguarding

Having aware staff who can respond, refer and report following a disclosure

Education establishment

Institutionalising

Campaigning

Holding events (such as assemblies) to raise awareness of VAWG among staff, pupils and the wider community

Child protection policy with specific references to VAWG

Governor engagement and Senior Management Leadership

Participating

Involving young people as researchers and peer mentors to address the issues

Having a key member of staff as a champion and co-ordinator for the work

Kent Police have set out a strategy to tackle violence against girls which includes support for schools. As such, DSL's are requested to please liaise with the local ward PSCO and/or allocated School's Officer to ensure voice of the child is appropriately achieved with a multi-agency approach undertaken as per the strategy objectives.

1. Young people labelled as 'hard to reach' are clear that they do not rule out the possibility of this trust being rebuilt. They emphasise the importance of professionals engaging in active listening, following through on agreed actions and being able to provide support flexibly over time as crucial components of any approach which hopes to achieve this.

2. Learning the triggers and signs (how do we then support a YP via intervention at the right time) – Disregulation Curve – Dr Rebecca Packer

3. Recognising all feelings are valid – whether wanted in that moment or not. Emotion coaching – naming and validating emotions to meet the needs of the young person.

4. Provide a safe space to learn about and discuss sexual consent and healthy relationships and the experience and social causes of disadvantage with trusted professionals and peers with lived experience of the issues – this may require gender-specific environments developed in collaboration with partners such as Early Help, Youth Workers, School's PCs and 3rd-sector agencies.

5. Recognise difference in drivers and impacts of exclusion for boys and girls.

6. Remain objective when de-escalating aggressive behaviours.

7. Resolve conflicts in a manner which that repairs any harm that occurred.

8. Adopt a trauma-sensitive model so that all staff members are better equipped to meet the emotional needs of all pupils. This in turn will reduce disruptive behaviours that pose a threat to school safety and often derail classroom time and tasks.

9. Re-framing thinking and re-framing language.

Recognise – Redefine – Rephrase

Think About Language

The language we use to describe things shapes how we perceive them.

Always remember; your focus determines your reality."

George Lucas

This latter point is one to elaborate on. **Language can create stigma**. Preconceptions result in planning for expected behaviours and this is often very much based on reports a school will receive about a young person, or indeed a report written by teaching staff to inform SLT to shape appropriate intervention or a new school to inform planning for a 'fresh start' via managed move. Underlying causes for behaviours are needed to **RECOGNISE** – **REDEFINE** and **REPHRASE** a pupil's profile to prevent them becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Behaviours are learnt – what a young person does is usually as a result of what has been done to them. 'Challenging behaviour' translated with trauma-informed understanding will evidence the young person is emotionally overwhelmed. As such to understand why is key and requires professionals curiosity. To be curious will provide awareness which in turn will allow 'control' and it is this reframing that can be reflected in the use of language.

"What if?" – Using a trauma-informed lens to reframe behaviour in the classroom

Dr Chris Moore – Educational Psychologist

"It's just attention-seeking"

When a child behaves in a way which seems to seek attention, it is easy to associate this with negative connotations; "He's trying to disrupt my lesson"; "She's holding other people back from their work"; "He's trying to be the class clown".

But what if the child has been starved of attention in the past? What if there was a lack of consistent and positive attention at an earlier stage in their development? The child may have learned to behave in ways which stand the best chance of holding on to such attention – positive or negative – due to a fear of being forgotten.

When we think of attention-seeking as an attempt to make or maintain connection, we can be more flexible in showing the child that they are kept in mind and remembered. This might involve checking in with how they're feeling on a more regular basis, being explicit about when you'll see them again after a separation or using a transitional object to represent your enduring relationship.

"They have no respect for authority"

It can really grind our gears when a child acts in a way which is disrespectful – this might include rudeness, sarcasm, mockery, name-calling or being ignored. We can feel our muscles tensing, the beating of our heart and a sense of panic setting in. These feelings can make us want to take control and reassert our own authority, especially if the behaviour occurs as other children or adults are watching.

But what if the child's past interactions have been characterised by a lack of basic respect? A lack of thought for their safety, their sense of belonging and their own thoughts and feelings about a range of situations? If children have experienced past relationships which have been fraught with isolation, harsh words and even physical or sexual abuse… then they may expect the same type of relationship with school staff. They may not easily trust that you care about their safety and well-being.

"This is just manipulation"

It can be very easy to perceive undesirable behaviour as deliberate, targeted and planned. After yet another stressful and frustrating incident in the classroom or playground, our "hot cognition" can be that the child knows what he or she is doing. The idea that they have gone out of their way to interrupt, antagonise or embarrass us can be devastating and infuriating.

But what if such behaviour helped the child to survive elsewhere in the past? By being noticed and provoking strong emotions in the adults around them, it may have helped to maintain connection or sent a much-needed reminder about their needs. Even though we know they're safe in school, they may stick to what they know best – especially if their amygdala is over-sensitive to perceived threats.

We can mitigate this tendency by building in opportunities for them to exert control (such as letting them choose materials or where to start in a task), establishing a routine which allows them to take a break and giving them responsibilities which help them feel valued and competent.

"Every day is constant disruption"

When a child presents with so-called "meltdowns" - comprised of shouting, screaming, throwing objects, tipping over furniture and lashing out at others – this can be extremely hard to watch. The staff supporting this child can feel on edge, anticipating that it will happen again sooner rather than later. It's understandable to think that the child needs time away from the classroom or even that they are in the wrong type of school.

But what if the child can't effectively regulate their emotions like other children their age? The neural connections governing this function may not have been repeatedly wired through sensitive, consistent and attuned interactions with an adult. So we need to be pro-active in helping them maintain a calm and alert state.

They may need a settling routine in the morning where they can scan the environment and talk through the daily schedule. Changes in activity and transitions may need to be communicated in advance through countdowns and timers. They may also need a sensory diet, with dedicated breaks for movement, play and relaxation. When the child becomes significantly dysregulated, it's important that we reduce demands, limit our use of language and follow consistent routines for going to a safe space with a key adult.

"Praise and Rewards never seem to work"

It can be so frustrating when a lot of time and effort has been spent on a reward system, only for the child to rarely meet the targets for accessing the reward. They may have a great morning and then suddenly their behaviour goes severely downhill after break time. And no matter how often we "catch them being good", they continue to break the rules or engage in undesirable behaviour at other times of the day.

But what if we consider how the child's developmental age may not align with their chronological age? What if the child is stuck at the point of past trauma and is still functioning as a much younger child? Praise may be too abstract for such a child to internalise and it may cause discomfort when they receive explicit feedback. They may not trust that they will be given a reward, due to past experiences of not getting what they were promised or deserved. If they continually fail to achieve a reward, this can induce shame which will only cause further emotional dysregulation.
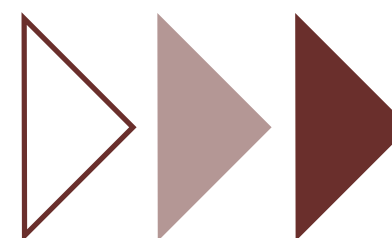
For these children, it may be safer to initially focus on non-verbal communication – a smile, a nod, a laugh or a thumbs up. We may need to explain a task or give positive feedback to the group of children at their table, if they are sensitive to praise on an individual basis. As for rewards, are they sufficiently motivating for the child? This is where good home-school communication is essential in understanding which toys or objects are genuinely comforting and relaxing. There may need to be scheduled times with these items as part of a preventative approach to emotional regulation, as it is unrealistic for a child with fluctuating emotions and impulses to consistently earn this time.

SHAME – Taken from Hey Sigmond

You haven't got the right shoes AGAIN, You're late AGAIN

Easily done, easy to miss and easy to think it doesn't cause any problems. But it does.

Shame manages behaviour by persuading young people to feel bad about themselves for needing, feeling or wanting something. It is a comment about what the child is, rather than what the child has done and it causes children to shrink away from their potential, rather than be ignited by it. Shaming can break connection. Shaming can fade any influence like it was never there to begin with.

The Problem with Shame

- **It fails to help kids internalise values and lessons.** Shaming young people kills their capacity to act from internalised values and sends them backwards. When young people feel shame, they will focus on who they are (naughty? disappointing?), rather than what they've done.

- **It fails to teach empathy.** Empathy is the cornerstone of healthy relationships and emotional intelligence. We know from research that children who are more likely to feel shame actually have less capacity to feel empathy towards others.

- **It can encourage socially unacceptable behaviour.** Shaming causes kids to feel small and powerless. Often leading to young people looking to reclaim power by seeking out someone who is more vulnerable and easier to stand over.

- **Models poor problem solving.** It teaches young people that it's okay to be critical, judgemental, righteous when someone gets it wrong. A tantrum is a tantrum whether it's from an adult or a child. In the same way we need them to own their behaviour, we need to do the same.

- **Encourages lies and secrecy.** Wired towards self-preservation, if we want young people to tell the truth, we need to make it safe for them to do that.

- **Fails to encourage ownership of the behaviour.** In order to change a behaviour, there has to be room to own it. Only then is there scope to explore the effects and start thinking about a more effective way to respond. Shame is more likely to encourage denial on the basis that owning it would confirm the message of being less than.

- Children and young people naturally want to please the people they care about.

And when they do feel shame – which they will

Encourage young people to talk about their behaviour in terms of choices, and their mistakes in terms of learning.

Ask them what they think of other people who make similar mistakes, and the possible reasons those people might make them.

Help them to find healthier explanations for their behaviour than personal deficiency.

This doesn't let go of the need for personal responsibility – you're not making excuses – but you are focusing on the learning rather than the mistake.

Focus on the behaviour, not the person

All children and young people are going to do things that leave us baffled, angry or frustrated. Rather than **making a critical comment** about them or who they are, ('You're so naughty'), talk about what they've done, ('I'm really upset that you pushed xxx. I understand that you're angry, but what would have been a better thing to do?').

Avoid the labels and embrace the boundaries

Labels can happen so easily and although they are often done with love and the best of intentions, they can backfire. If one child is known as, say, 'the sporty one' or 'the funny one', other pupils in the class might interpret themselves as 'not the sporty one' or 'not the funny one'.

To create a space for multi-dimensional young people who make up their own minds about their strengths and weaknesses is therefore favourable.

Understand the need that is being met.

Young people react for a reason – there is always something going on. Are they receiving enough attention? Are they bored? Tired? Hungry? Frustrated? Sad? Angry? Is there something else going on?

There are so many reasons young people do the wrong thing and none of them have anything to do with them being bad. It's not about making excuses, it's about taking the precious opportunity to understand them and connect which may teach them a better way to respond.

And when they do feel shame – which they will.

Encourage young people to talk about their behaviour in terms of choices, and their mistakes in terms of learning. Ask them what they think of other people who make similar mistakes, and the possible reasons those people might make them. Help them to find healthier explanations for their behaviour than personal deficiency.

This doesn't let go of the need for personal responsibility – you're not making excuses – but you are focusing on the learning rather than the mistake.

Trauma unravels over time so young people may not show any damage in the present BUT investment is relationship building is key to prevention.

For young people who come from insecurity, a safe place is the biggest protective factor and this is school. Young people are able to move from insecurity to learned security if they have someone to teach, encourage and support them.

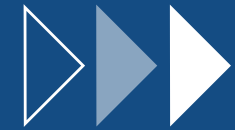**Every relationship has the power to confirm or challenge experiences learnt from before**

"It is what transpires within the relationship that is at the core of transformation"

Ogden 2015

Resources

What 'misbehaviour' you see

What is **really** going on

Sensitive	• Cries over smallest things • Gets sad when you leave • Doesn't like being alone • Can't watch super sad movies	• Lacks self-regulation • Worried about new things and any help gradually being introduced to them • Has an inner fear they are unable to verbalise
Angry	• Yells and screams often • Throws things and is destructive • Crosses arms and shuts down • Shouts 'I HATE YOU' or 'GO AWAY'	• Unable to recognise emotions • Does not have appropriate coping strategies • Needs help with calming strategies • Worried about 'unknown' feelings
Perfectionist	• Nervous about breaking rules • Can't handle getting things wrong • Doesn't ever want to miss school • Scared of answering things wrong • Struggles with constructive criticism	• Struggling with negative thought patterns • Needs help connecting thoughts and actions • Has trouble verbalising their worries • Thrives on doing things the right way
Shy	• Hides behind your legs • Scared of 'new' people • Fearful of change • Doesn't like going to new places • Prefers playing with 'familiar' friends	• Unable to detect their inner emotions • Needs help regulating their excitement • Lacks calming strategies for rising anticipation
Over-excited	• Becomes 'hyper' when guests come over • Says inappropriate things around others • Makes jokes at inappropriate times • Jumps on furniture • Plays rough with others	• Unable to detect their inner emotions • Needs help regulating their excitement • Lacks calming strategies for rising anticipation

Preschool children

- Feel helpless and uncertain
- Fear of being separated from their parents/care givers
- Cry and/or scream a lot
- Eat poorly and lose weight
- Return top bed wetting
- Return to using baby talk
- Develop new fears
- Have nightmares
- Recreate the trauma through play
- Not developing to the next growth stage
- Have changes in behaviour
- Ask questions about death

Elementary school children

- Become anxious and fearful
- Worry about their own or others safety
- Become clingy with a teacher or a parent
- Feel guilt or shame
- Tell others about the traumatic event over and over
- Become upset if they get a small bump or bruise
- Have a hard time concentrating
- Experience numbness
- Have fears the event will happen again
- Have difficulty sleeping
- Show changes in school performance
- Become easily startled

Middle and high school children

- Feel depressed and alone
- Discuss the traumatic events in detail
- Develop an eating disorder or self-harming behaviours
- Start using or abusing alcohol and/or drugs
- Become sexually active
- Feel like they are going crazy
- Feel different from everyone else
- Take too may risks
- Have sleep disturbances
- Don't want to go to places that remind them of the event
- Say they have no feelings about the event
- Show changes in behaviour

"Connectedness has the power to counterbalance adversity"

Perry & Szlavitz

This is Your Legacy

Relationships change lives, not resources

Resources are simply key to allow the time and space to build those relationships.

- Do young people believe in what adults say or believe what adults do...?
- Teaching is a unique opportunity to leave a legacy on a daily basis.
- The ability to leave your 'mark' and have positive impact on those you teach starts with an intentional effort to get to know and understand your students.
- To foster a sense of belonging and connection to school which can then build a foundation for academic success.

Connect, not correct
- How do you want to be viewed by those who need you most (albeit these are often the hardest to reach and disengaged)

Every interaction is an intervention
- What will the lasting impression of you be to each young person at the end of a lesson?

To trust is to thrive
- Only when a student feels safe and supported are they ready and able to learn.

To do list:
Build a legacy

Conclusion

Youth violence is a global public health problem. It includes a range of acts from bullying and physical fighting, to more severe sexual and physical assault to homicide. When it is not fatal, youth violence has a serious, often lifelong, impact on a person's physical, psychological and social functioning. Schools are a key partner in the recognition of a wide range of conditions of vulnerability. We know that vulnerability increases the chances of young people being exploited or becoming drawn into violent lifestyles, either as a perpetrator or a victim. Early supportive interventions can help reduce vulnerability, prevent exclusions and ensure children can make the most of their education.

Violence is preventable, not inevitable. Interventions, especially those in early childhood, not only prevent individuals developing a propensity for violence but also improve educational outcomes together with employment prospects. As such tackling it must focus on the root causes and consequences to prevent it from occurring in the first place and/or to prevent repeated behaviours. Public health principles provide a useful framework for investigating and understanding those causes and assist with the implementation of inclusive practices and policy. To provide a positive approach to building children's resilience and in giving them the life skills they need to overcome any adversity that they may have experienced.