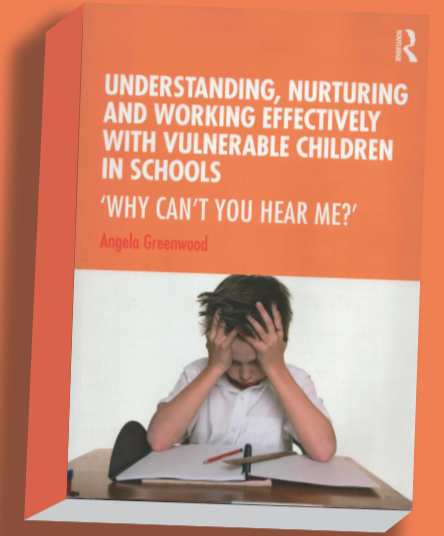


# POSTERS for SCHOOLS

**S**AFELY  
**U**NDERSTANDING  
**N**URTURING AND  
**R**ESPONDING THOUGHTFULLY WITH  
**E**MPATHY, FIRM BOUNDARIES,  
**A**ND ATTUNEMENT TO  
**C**HILDREN WHO  
**H**URT



Angela Greenwood is the author of *Understanding, Nurturing and Working Effectively with Vulnerable Children in School, Why can't you hear me?* She is an Educational Psychotherapist and former Senco, who also offered training to school staff over many years on the subject matter in the book.



**OPEN UP**

Free for Schools and Trainers



## INTRODUCTION

In these post Covid times of increasing pressure on children, schools and teachers, it is essential that teachers are equipped to understand the emotional and relational factors in learning and teaching. Vulnerable and disaffected children especially, need understanding and nurturing rather than reactive management, which can easily exacerbate their difficulties and leave them unheard and defensive, and struggling to learn. Such difficulties and reactivity can even undermine teacher confidence and effectiveness. School staff need to understand the effects of: trauma, insecure attachments, unconscious processes, and of transitions, change and loss.

### They need to know how to facilitate:

- A secure base for learning and emotional growth
- Emotional containment
- Nurture
- Managing outbursts
- Emotional growth and learning
- Ways to calm, relax, and enhance wellbeing
- And how to work supportively together

**“My experience as an educational psychotherapist, and particularly my time at a pupil referral unit enabled me to see vividly how a relationship-based approach derived from understanding, can make a difference to the education and the emotional capacities of needy and hurting children. This book for school staff and trainers is all about this.”**

*Angela Greenwood*

**These 28 posters illustrate pictorially such ways of thinking and understanding, and through links with the book, offer many practical ways of responding arising out of this understanding.**

On the bottom orange ‘strapline’ of each poster is the book title and the key to the references.

**C**hapter No.    **P**age No.    **B**ox No.

**3** = the Chapter number – The particular chapter number is indicated inside the ‘c’.

**3+** = the page number - indicated inside the p. A plus + sign means and the next page(s)

**3** = Suggestion Box number, indicated inside the box. See index of Boxes in book for their page numbers

## Posters:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Vulnerable children. We can...                  | 15. Sam is Avoidant                                |
| 2. What might they have on their minds?            | 16. Liz is Resistant/Ambivalent                    |
| 3. Trauma affects and inhibits                     | 17. Tom is Chaotic/Disorganised and may have PTSD  |
| 4. Trauma – Inner and Outer Worlds                 | 18. Reaching and teaching children who ...         |
| 5. Behaviour as unconscious communication          | 19. Insecure and dysfunctional attachments summary |
| 6. Responding to children’s hurtful communications | 20. Learning Triangles                             |
| 7. Change/loss/endings                             | 21. Vulnerable children                            |
| 8. Family changers and losses can affect learning  | 22. Negative trauma cycle                          |
| 9. Learning inhibitions                            | 23. Virtuous trauma cycle                          |
| 10. Don’t you see. I can’t work. I can’t learn.    | 24. Nurture group for needy children               |
| 11. The importance of emotional containment        | 25. Play creativity and expression work            |
| 12. Ways of relating and responding                | 26. Ways to calm and relax                         |
| 13. Coping with outbursts                          | 27. Building up inner resources                    |
| 14. The importance of a secure base                | 28. You can make a difference                      |



## Suggestions of ways to use the posters:

- Print out A3 or even A2 versions
- Allocate someone to place one poster a month on staffroom noticeboards.
- Place on noticeboards in University Schools of Education and other relevant training institutions
- Use for discussion in teacher and Senco training / staff, teacher assistant and SLT inservice training sessions
- Put into PowerPoint presentations.
- Place Poster box in a prominent place in staff room
- Discuss in staff meetings. .... etc.



Although the posters and the book arose mostly out of primary and PRU experience, much of the subject matter is relevant to students in both pre and post primary settings. Likewise staff working with high functioning autistic children will find much that is useful.



# VULNERABLE CHILDREN – WE CAN.....



**WONDER ABOUT:**



**TALK WITH EACH OTHER ABOUT:**

**DISCUSS WITH PARENTS:**

**MATCH WAYS OF RESPONDING TO NEEDS, AND LATER MEANING:**

**SCHOOL STAFF NEED: HELP - DEBRIEFING & CASE DISCUSSION + TRAUMA, AWARENESS TRAINING + AWARENESS OF TRIGGERS UNDERSTANDING AND A SECURE RELATIONSHIP WITH TRUSTED, COMMITTED, AVAILABLE ADULT(S) + TALKING & 'PLAYING THROUGH' WHEN THEY ARE OPEN TO IT. WITHOUT THIS THEY CAN'T BEGIN TO GROW, STAFF GET VERY STRESSED, AND CYCLES CONTINUE**

**UNDERSTANDING, NURTURING AND WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS 'WHY CAN'T YOU HEAR ME?'**



# WHAT MIGHT THEY HAVE ON THEIR MINDS?

3



28+

20+

The slightest hint of a (buried?) trauma can evoke fear, acting out, dissociation, inhibition etc



# TRAUMA AFFECTS AND INHIBITS .... 3

BRAIN CONNECTIONS

TOLERANCE OF FRUSTRATION

STATES OF MIND

RESILIENCE

HORMONAL FLOWS

READING WRITING

PERCEPTION

CONCENTRATION

INNER WORLD

LISTENING

ADDITION SUBTRACTION



THINKING

PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS

TRIGGERS

RELATIONSHIPS

BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS

LEARNING

REMEMBERING

WAYS OF RELATING

SELF IMAGE

29+

MAKING LINKS

EXPECTATIONS



3

# TRAUMA INNER AND OUTER WORLDS

29+

**CHAOS**



**MUDDLE -  
BURIED FEAR**



**'DON'T  
LOOK!'**

**ALL ALONE  
AND HURTING**



**FEAR/HURT**



**'I CAN'T BEAR IT  
ANYMORE'**



**SHOUTING...  
NOO!!**

**ANGER**



**'CAN'T  
THINK  
CAN'T  
CONCENTRATE  
'I DON'T WANT  
TO  
THINK  
ABOUT IT'**



**TERROR!**



**ARRHHH!**



**'GO AWAY'**



**'NOT  
AGAIN!'**



**NIGHTMARE!**

**I HATE YOU.  
I HATE  
EVERYONE**



UNDERSTANDING, NURTURING AND WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS 'WHY CAN'T YOU HEAR ME?'

Chapter No. Page No. Box No.



# BEHAVIOUR AS UNCONSCIOUS COMMUNICATION



WHAT ARE THEY (NOT) 'SAYING'?



It's not getting it 'right' - but 'wondering', that makes the difference

UNDERSTANDING, NURTURING AND WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS 'WHY CAN'T YOU HEAR ME?'





You really wanted to be first, didn't you, but ... .. got there first.

I think you're a bit cross with me for not letting you ....., but I need to

It's hard to manage when we're so full of BIG feelings.

How about we..

That hurt you didn't it. Do you want to tell me about it?



# How Might we Respond to Children's Hurtful and Puzzling Communications

116

168+

14

Sharing can be so hard. We can worry there won't be enough for us.

12

We don't need to talk about it if you don't want to. Maybe later we can.....

I can see you becoming a little bit fidgety Tom. We are going to finish this soon aren't we, and then we will move onto ..... Changes can often be difficult, especially when we are not sure about the next thing. We will be moving onto .... next, remember. How about I go with you to.....'

Oh! What's that about I wonder? Is there some way I could help you perhaps if this happens again?





# CHANGE/LOSS/ENDINGS

12

Watch out for indicators of transition anxieties and acknowledge them

20

*Its never easy when we have to finish...*

*I'm just thinking. We only have .... left. I guess that must be on your mind too*

*I noticed that you put some Lego in your pocket. I'm sure you know that you can't take it home, although I do understand that it must be hard for you to feel that you won't be able to play with it for much longer, as we only have a week left in year 3.*

*Wow, thank you. I'll keep it on the wall in my office. I shall think of you every time I look at it.*

– and respond

21



Always talk through changes in good time – again and again

234

A Calender Can Be Helpful

237

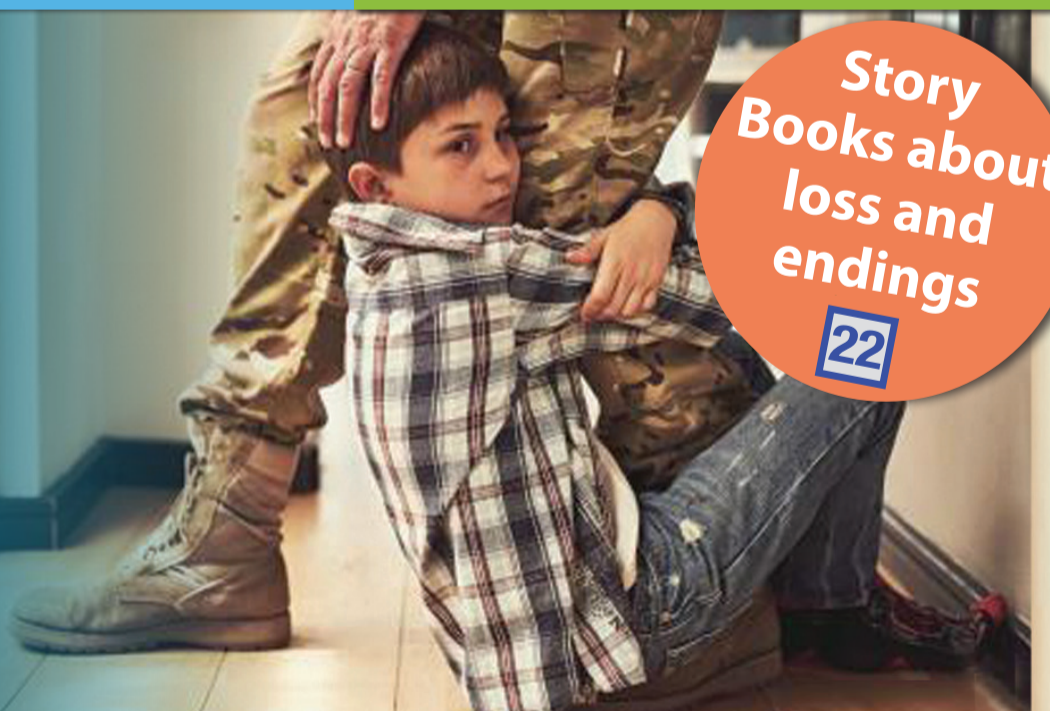
21 Take brief opportunities to talk through endings - with empathy

Changes and endings can trigger hints of previous traumatic losses/changes

**Its so sad when we have to say goodbye. Sometimes it can be hard to *feel* the sadness**

Story Books about loss and endings

22





# Family changes and Losses can affect learning

Significant family changes, particularly those which can't be talked through enough with the child, can sometimes have a (sudden?) and inhibiting effect on learning



Intelligent capable P was noticed to suddenly struggle with spelling particular words which showed no pattern, like: else, together, behind, and away. On investigation this was found to coincide with his move away from his nan with whom he had lived for 10 years, to his busy mum far away from 'home'

H's difficulties with addition arose after his family grew to include a new 'Dad' and 2 'favoured' step siblings

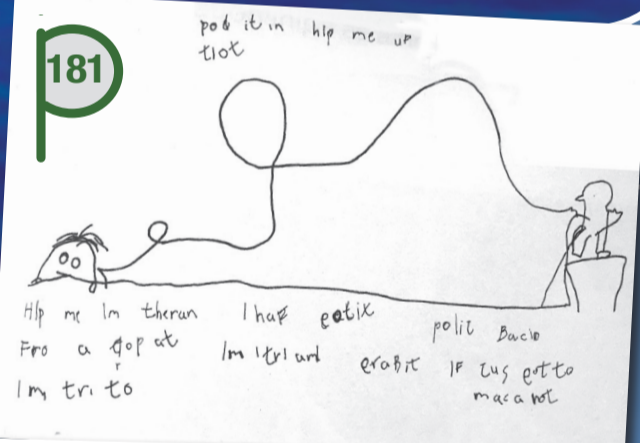
179

R's dyslexic and learning inhibitions were severely exacerbated by his parents long and messy divorce, which was not talked about with him but which he 'sensed' making him feel worried and helpless – just like he expressed in his writing

180+

C's difficulties with subtraction arose quite suddenly after the tragic loss of her friend and neighbour in a car accident

181



Painful losses like stillborn siblings and miscarriages which can't be talked about, have been found to inhibit sensitive children's learning and maternal attachments

**R: Help me I'm theran (drowning).**

**R: Fro a rop at.**

**R: I'm tri to.**

**R: I haf got..**

**R: If jus got to mac a not.**

**R: Pol it bac in.**

**R: Hip me up.**

**R: Tiot.**

Me: How shall i help you?

Me: Catch the rope. Here it comes

Me: It is behind you

Me: It sounds hard to grab it

Me: OK

Me: OK

Me: OK. Here you are. How are you feeling?

Me: Just lie down and have a sleep

Noticing and discussing any sudden difficulties with staff, who may know about recent family changes and losses - might enlighten the teacher.

Sensitively talking things through with parents and child both together and separately, followed by individual work with the child on the loss or change alongside the particular learning difficulty, can ease it

180+

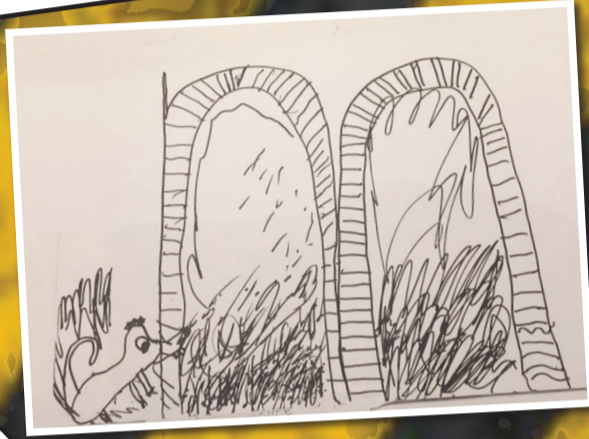


# LEARNING INHIBITIONS

## too many 'things' in the way



The messy mole with his two holes was mesin up the to hos in the mountains. They was so messy he couldn't get in so he timd (tidied) them up and he was not messy any more



I need help remembering the letters. Everything gets in a muddle'

'I can't stop thinking about it. It's SO horrible'

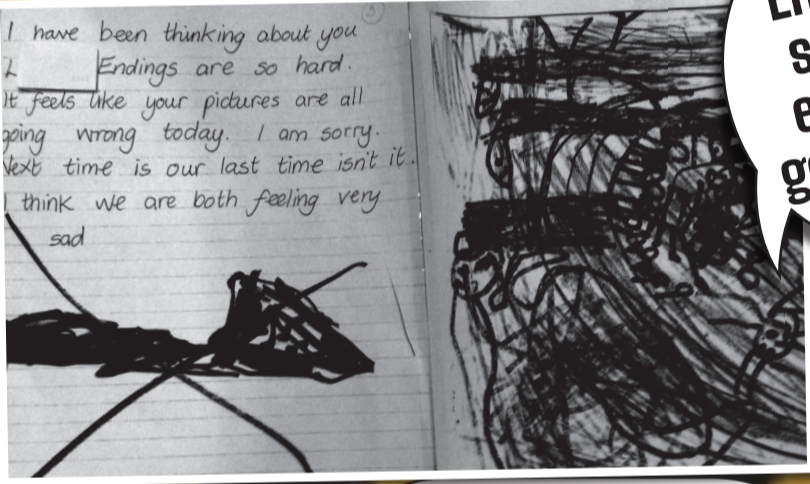
'I feel helpless'

'HELP'

I SEE YOU NEED HELP JOHNNY. PERHAPS I AM NOT HELPING YOU ENOUGH

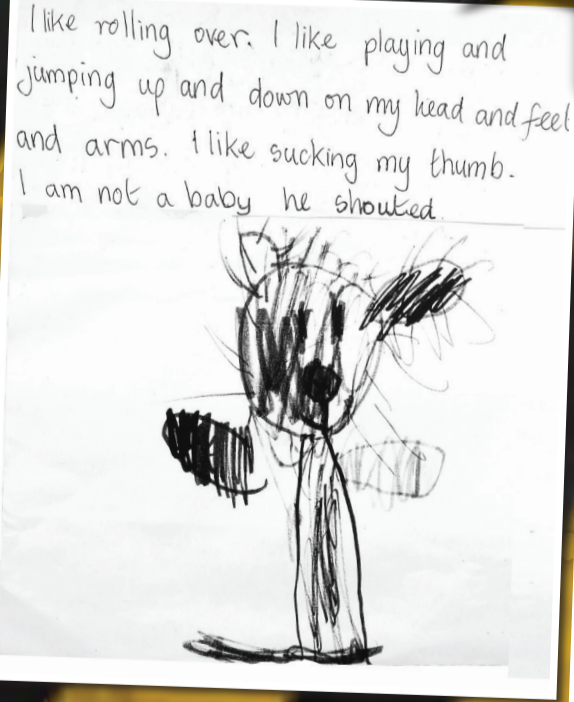


'Endings are so hard' - everything goes wrong!'



I'm not a baby. I want my mummy

got to keep smiling



Im bad bad bad Why does everyone think im bad Im just bad and no one likes me Everyone says I have to be good but they think the teacher says "Veery bad werk - write some more" but I can't think of any more The teacher thinks im stupid I don't like it

Very bad werk





# 'DON'T YOU SEE - I CAN'T WORK. I CAN'T LEARN'



I just want you back



Bang!! I'll get you!

Don't talk. Shut up! I'm not listening!



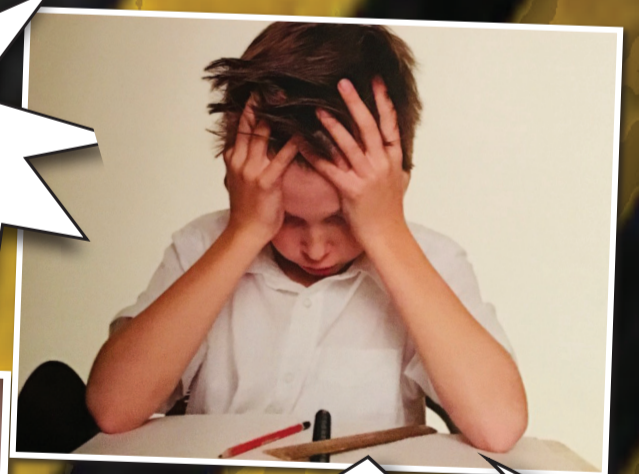
Ahh! I just need to sleep



I'm stupid. This is all rubbish! I can't do it

I don't want to think about anything

Blah blah. I'm not listening. It's all stupid



I can't think. So many things going round and round



# The importance of Emotional Containment for insecure children 5



Stop! That's not safe. I know its hard when ....., but ....

Hurting children often 'act out' their hurts and fears  
 Emotional Containment includes bearing a child's painful feelings and hurtful behavioural communications 9

Wondering about them  
 Then responding to them with firmness and empathy

**BUT:** Sometimes this is not easy - children can put their hurts and anxieties right into us 50+

Vulnerable children need secure, committed, nurturing adults who listen thoughtfully, and respond with: 147+



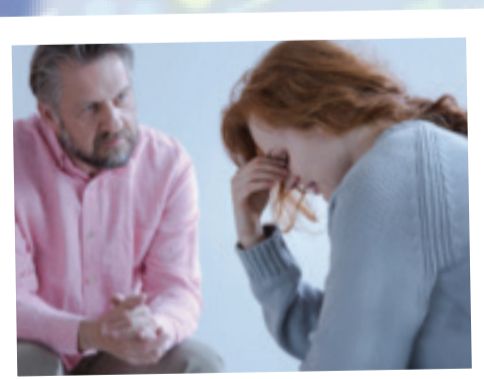
That hurt you didn't it. .... I wonder if ....



- Containing gestures 8
- Containing actions 3
- Containing words 4
- Practical containment 2

## Notice Indicators they might need emotional containment 6

Staff may need support and training 312 16



A Nurturing School encourages talking things through, debriefing, staff support and asking for help  
 A Nurturing School makes time for case discussion, supervision and training for staff 305+





# WAYS OF RELATING AND RESPONDING TO CHILDREN

There are many 'Boxes' of suggestions around themes in the book

Here is a flavour

## Ways of responding emphatically to children's behaviours

14

You look like you're enjoying that

Do you need some help with that?

It's hard when you both want to talk to me at the same time isn't it

When he said that it hurt you a bit I think didn't it

## Curiosity

15

how can I help you with

What would it make you feel like if

how about if

How do you feel now?

## Fostering inner growth and thoughtfulness

19

I wonder what makes you think that

I'm so pleased you told me that

Sometimes we wonder about things don't we

## Responding to children's sad and hurtful comments

16

I HATE YOU!

I can see you are very angry with me. Its hard when we can't ...

I wish I was still with my mum...

You wish you could still be with your mum... It's so sad that she can't look after you.

you never let me..

But I think we both know that if .... you will (both) get too excited

It's not fair

No one likes me.

Is that how you feel sometimes Sam? That sounds so sad.

## Wondering

195

I'm wondering. Is it...

I wonder what you think

I wonder what made you...

I wonder what made you say that

## Generalised Empathic comments

9

It's so hard to..

It's frustrating when

When people... it can make us want to...

## Growing stronger conversations

18

Of course I'll help you. I think that's the first time you asked me for help. It can be hard to ask for help sometimes. Do you know something I think you're growing stronger. What do you think?

It took courage I think for you to say/do that. How do you feel now that we've talked about it - I think you're growing stronger. What do you think?



Support each other

Set firm boundaries with empathy

Observe and share triggers

Notice how they express anxiety

Notice early signs

CALM 7

# PREVENTING

Sh

Help them change state/take a break

Use non-verbal support

Teach them ways to calm down

USE YOUR OWN CALM PRESENCE

Let them know you understand but can't allow

Communicate that whatever happens you will cope

Stay 'connected', quietly and firmly empathic

Seek help?

Safe removal? Do NOT discuss with child

# COPING WITH OUTBURSTS!

209+

Support each other

Repeat boundary in neutral voice

Use The Word Safe

Put in place 'Strategy for emergencies'

'Let them know you understand its scary and hard to stop, but you will stay with them till it's over, and you will come through it together.'

Later talk things through with empathy and firmness

Take responsibility to repair the relationship later

Notice little signs the child wants reparation

Acknowledge signs of regret/wishes for reparation

211

# RECOVERY AND REPAIR

Talk through their triggers with understanding

Afterwards – drink or cup of tea!

115

17

Discuss ways of helping them/ways of calming

Communicate relevant consequences calmly

Share feelings/ observations anxieties with others

311

Mindfulness for staff

284+

Debrief together afterwards

Emphasise school culture of asking for help

# DEBRIEF AND STAFF SUPPORT

Seek professional support

311

Case discussion?

## Trauma awareness training for ALL staff



# A Secure Base Grows Through..

146+

**TRUST**

**EMOTIONAL SAFETY**

**CALM PRESENCE**

**PREDICTABILITY**

**It includes familiar secure attuned key workers who:**

- notice and talk through any changes
- notice child's body language
- communicate calm
- are aware of possible triggers and avoid/talk through
- can bear and understand outbursts and hurtful behaviours
- **AND set firm boundaries with empathy**

146+

148



**Very insecure and dysfunctional children also need:**

- Familiar room, layout and materials
- Regular timetable
- All changes talked through beforehand
- Support with changes and anxieties as necessary
- Agreed systems for support/prevention/emergencies

150



## The Importance of a Secure Base

8

**A secure base facilitates / improves:**

- Learning and remembering **10**
- Concentration
- Relating and relationships
- Small achievements **18**
- Play
- Thinking
- Creativity
- Guilt and reparation



**For insecure & dysfunctional children this can take time & commitment**



# Sam is Avoidant

90+

.. because she was rejected and ignored, or not engaged with much

## Fears:

- Rejection
- Being ignored
- Being criticised

## Finds it hard to:

- Have a conversation
- Make eye contact
- Talk and listen to others
- Recognise and express feelings/empathise
- Ask for help
- Play

91+

## Needs Sensitive Proximity Management

92

- Attunement from familiar non-intrusive caring adult
- Quick look and look away
- Observe: circle time, others interacting thoughtfully, laughter, singing
- Experience evidence of adults remembering her interests and likes
- Watching others relate

**She needs to move from distant engagement to closer relating**

96

## Helpful Ways to Learn

93

- Sit at back
- Written instructions
- Materials close by
- Manageable tasks
- Familiar practical activities
- Easy puzzles / games / work, especially maths and logical tasks
- Computer activities
- 'Easy' reading
- Watching others
- Pick up instructions by watching others
- Listen from far away



# Liz is Resistant/Ambivalent

97+

.. because her parents were variably available, and often preoccupied

## UNDERLYING DIFFICULTY

Being forgotten / 'falling out' of special person's mind

SO

### Finds it hard to:

98

- Let go of special people / of conversations / or of mum
- Listen to teacher teach class
- Manage work tasks alone for long
- Cope with endings / change
- Allow her 'special' TA to work with another

### Needs:

8

- 'Holding in mind'
- Conversations about being held in mind when special person is far away
- Thoughtful help and planning for change and endings
- Reminders and lots of talking through of changes
- Firm boundaries set with empathy
- Transitional object when special person is away

103

### Behaviour Tendencies

98+

- Reactive - especially when special person leaves/moves to someone else
- Clingy
- Controlling
- Manipulative

## Helpful

105

- Holding in mind / gestures / words at a distance
- Small steps / small tasks
- Timer to support this
- Allocated reliable bounded time
- Turn taking activities
- Adult in charge
- Talking things through again and again



# 17 Tom is Chaotic disorganised and may have PTSD

106+

.. because of abuse and neglect and multiple traumatic changes at home and schools

## Can't do:

- Feelings
- Thinking
- Playing
- Concentrating
- Listening
- Empathy, wondering and reflection
- Trust

107+

## Tends to

- Feel unsafe
- Be easily triggered
- Feel scared inside but hide it with bravado
- Become overwhelmed easily

109

## 9 Behaviour

- Fight/flight/freeze
- Panics and disrupts
- Triggered outbursts which he can't stop and needs help with

## Needs

- Emotional and practical safety
- Secure/resilient adults to work with him
- Someone to bear and hear his pain
- Help with preventing arousal
- Scanning the room for safety
- Short manageable non-emotive tasks
- Firm boundaries set with empathy

111+

## Needs help with:

- Trust
- Feeling safe
- Calming down
- Repairing breaks in relationships after outbursts
- Taking in instructions / making links in learning
- Sorting things out practically
- Relating

**Key resilient caring adult working regularly with him needs:**

110+

- Support
- Supervision
- Debrief time
- Careful selection

311

309



# Insecure and Dysfunctional Attachments Summary

(Some children can be a mixture!)

6

## Features

## Responses

### Avoidant Attachment

90-97

93

Primary carers lack sensitivity

- Emotional needs neglected
- Feelings not talked through
- Stiff upper lip!
- Laugh it off!

Therefore closeness is difficult - cause  
So they can't ask for help

Task - main focus of intervention

- Clear structured tasks which need little help
- Materials at hand
- Help from another child
- Games with rules
- Some choice over activities
- Keep a 'safe' distance
- Stories about distance, bridges

Weaning slowly towards closeness

### Resistant/Ambivalent Attachment

97  
105

PARENT - preoccupied, inconsistent... So  
CHILD - heightened fear of abandonment  
In school they can't focus on task because  
they will lose the attention of the teacher

- They fear separation - like 'falling out of mum's mind'
- Because they can't feel 'held in mind' anyway
- Ambivalent - both need mum, and angry with her inconsistency

May be: ENMESHED - separation difficulties

HOLDING IN MIND comments and gestures is  
the most important and effective intervention  
They need help to trust that key adults will  
always have them in mind

- Differentiate task into smaller steps

Weaning slowly from clinging with  
words and closeness to attention from  
a distance and feeling held in mind

### Chaotic/ Disorganised Attachment

106  
119

*aka Reactive Attachment Disorder*

Stress and danger in primary carers

Child - tends to panic and disrupt  
because of heightened states of anxiety

- Highly vigilant / easily triggered
- Can be dissociated
- Lack of trust
- Unaware of other's feelings

Need help to redo

their attachment patterns and expectations  
through carefully selected KEY WORKER

- Thoughtful containing relationship
- Outbursts dealt with in a consistent supportive manner
- Physical holding or not? (team teach?)

May need agreed Strategy for Emergencies

Weaning slowly towards trust



CAN'T DO - - - -  
CAN DO ———

# LEARNING TRIANGLES

## A Relational Approach

GEDDES (2006)

6

### Pupil Difficulties Teacher difficulties/needs Main Interventions Meaning



START WITH MEETING CURRENT DYSFUNCTIONAL NEEDS, AND **WEAN** TOWARDS MORE FUNCTIONAL AND NORMAL RELATIONSHIPS AND LEARNING

UNDERSTANDING, NURTURING AND WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS 'WHY CAN'T YOU HEAR ME?'

Chapter No. Page No. Box No.



# Reaching and Teaching children who:



## AVOID PEOPLE, CLOSENESS AND ASKING FOR HELP

92+

- Sit far away in lessons
- Have all materials available
- Written instructions
- Practical activities
- Offer tasks around their interests
- Work not needing help eg. filling in the gaps and answering questions
- Computerised learning - sometimes!
- Class monitor jobs to do alone
- Take an interest remotely
- Quick looks / non-emotive words

## ARE AMBIVALENT AND RESISTANT, CLINGY AND ATTENTION NEEDY

100+

- Lots of holding in mind **8**
- Boundaried listening / support times
- Use of timer / transitional objects **125**
- Short timed tasks - then review
- Helping tasks for, but without adult
- 'Scaffolded' work
- Take a boundaried interest in them
- Meet and greet **111**
- Turn taking sharing
- Turn taking games / work
- Extra / practical support around all changes

## ARE GRIEVING AND HURTING RE. CURRENT LOSSES OR TRAGEDIES

239+

- Meet/build relationship with parents
- Family/review meetings as needed
- Key worker needs to know details
- Watch out for maths difficulties **176+**
- Relate learning inhibitions to loss etc.
- Avoid work which might trigger them
- Talk things through with trusted adult
- Circle time sharing
- Read sympathetic stories to class **22**
- Time out / mentoring when needed
- Drawing story times with mentor
- Monitor spellings / maths / miscues

## EXPERIENCE(ED) TRAUMA/ ABUSE/NEGLECT. PANIC AND DISRUPT PEERS AND STAFF

105+

- Allocate trusted keyworker **147+**
- Share triggers **148**
- Trauma awareness training
- Supervision availability
- Work away from peers as needed
- Ensure emotional safety/ monitor language
- Use the word "SAFE" often.
- Scan room for safety
- Watch their body language – prevent triggers **111**
- Short, timed tasks **114+**
- Agreed strategy for emergencies
- Calm down / time out space available **114**
- Contain their anger (seek help - work together) **7**

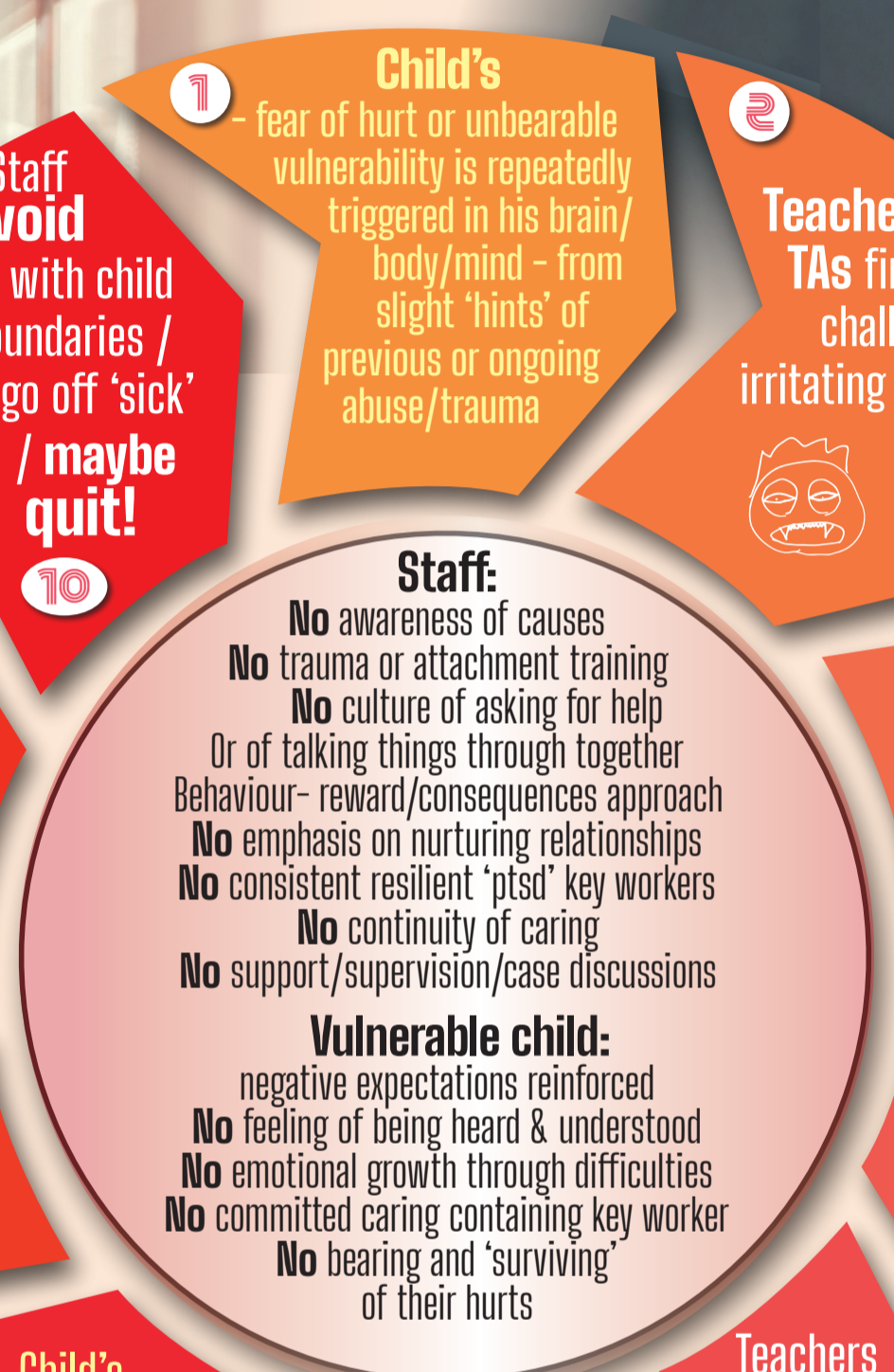
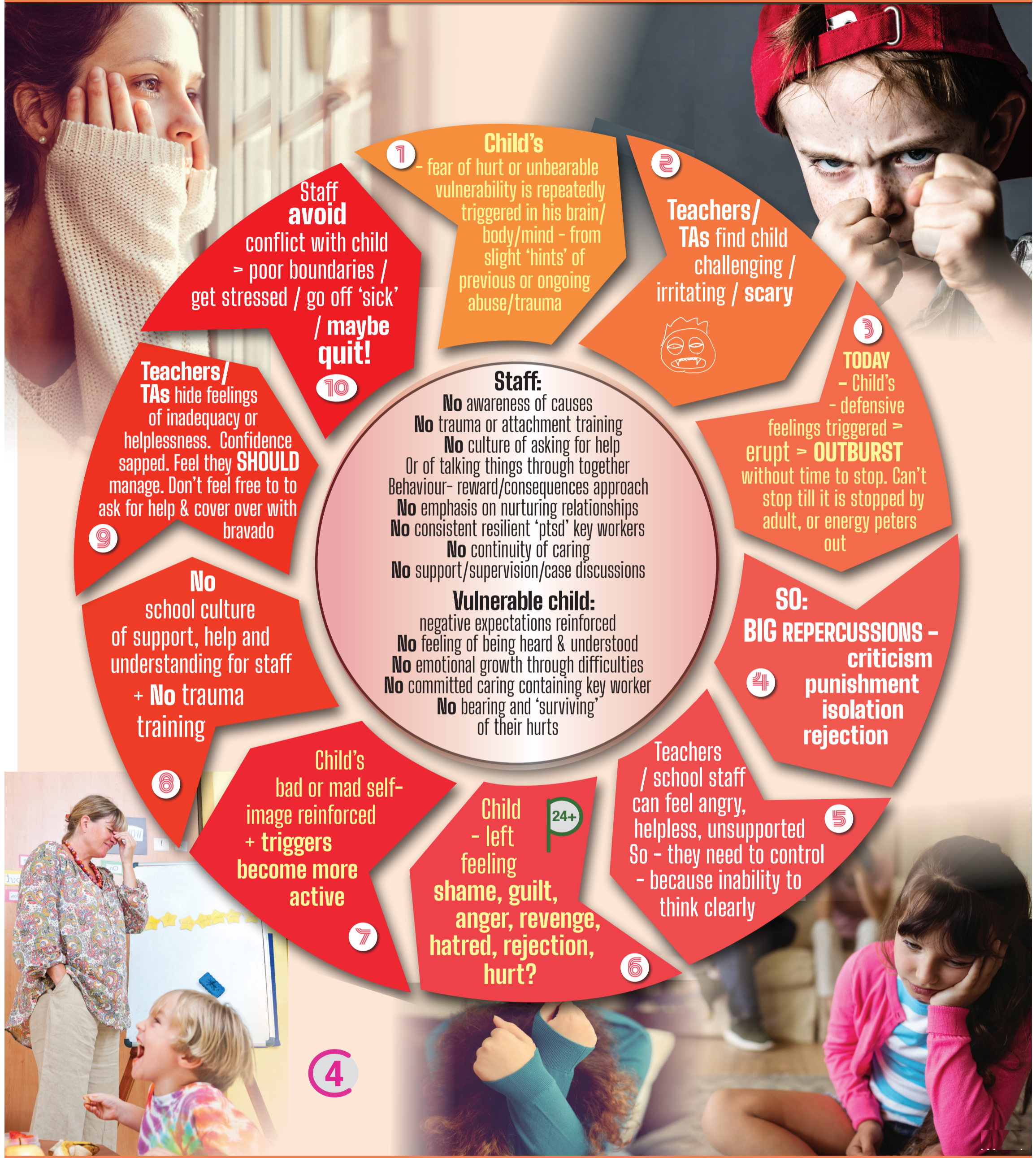
## For all children –

Always use a thoughtful, relationship based, caring and boundaried approach  
Wean to more 'normalised' teaching and relating as and when they can manage it.



# NEGATIVE TRAUMA CYCLE

3



**1** **Child's**  
 - fear of hurt or unbearable vulnerability is repeatedly triggered in his brain/body/mind - from slight 'hints' of previous or ongoing abuse/trauma

**2** **Teachers/ TAs** find child challenging / irritating / scary

**3** **TODAY**  
 - Child's - defensive feelings triggered > erupt = **OUTBURST** without time to stop. Can't stop till it is stopped by adult, or energy peters out

**4** **SO:**  
**BIG REPERCUSSIONS -** criticism punishment isolation rejection

**5** Teachers / school staff can feel angry, helpless, unsupported So - they need to control - because inability to think clearly

**6** **Child** - left feeling shame, guilt, anger, revenge, hatred, rejection, hurt?

**7** **Child's** bad or mad self-image reinforced + triggers become more active

**8** **No** school culture of support, help and understanding for staff + **No** trauma training

**9** **Teachers/ TAs** hide feelings of inadequacy or helplessness. Confidence sapped. Feel they **SHOULD** manage. Don't feel free to ask for help & cover over with bravado

**10** **Staff avoid** conflict with child > poor boundaries / get stressed / go off 'sick' / maybe quit!

**4**



# VULNERABLE CHILDREN



**BEHAVIOURAL COMMUNICATIONS**  
+ *WHAT THEY PUT INTO US*

50+

**REPEATED (ATTACHMENT?) PATTERNS**

6



**HELPFUL WAYS OF RESPONDING**

14 15 16

**WE CAN TALK WE CAN WONDER ABOUT**

EXERCISES 6,7,8

16

**ATTITUDE TO TASKS, TO BEGINNING, TO ENDINGS**

**ATTITUDE: TO CLOSENESS TO RELATIONSHIPS**

**FEELINGS THEY EXPRESS FEELINGS THEY EVOKE**

4

UNDERSTANDING, NURTURING AND WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS 'WHY CAN'T YOU HEAR ME?'

Chapter No.

Page No.

Box No.



# VIRTUOUS TRAUMA CYCLE





# Nurture group for needy children



**Staff team debrief, and have case discussions regularly + weekly clinical supervision**  
EX 7

**1 Staff discussion**  
about setting up a Nurture base for vulnerable/insecure children

**2** Selection of and training of staff. Setting up room with facilities for breakfast, creative work, circle-time, learning materials, selected story books, play both indoors and out.  
**Discussion of timetable, and nurturing**

One teacher and 2(?) assistants, who invest in their relationships with each child, their parents, and with the group - Staff respond thoughtfully to each child's needs and difficulties, each at their own developmental stages, and support them in meeting their emotional and learning goals - step by step. As the children begin to feel accepted, secure and valued, both individually and as a group, their confidence grows

**3** Children assessed and introduced to room, teacher and key workers, and daily timetable and layout.  
**Getting to know each other.** Story and play and art tasters + outdoor games

**7** Group story, chat and attachment based group game. Outside creative play. Final check-ins and back to class preparation

**6** Conversation over breakfast - listening to children's concerns. Group puppet discussion about relevant theme later. Children do individualised(?) learning tasks and share work with each other.

**5** **Child calms down** and returns to group. Given her special soft toy to keep nearby. She slowly integrates with others. Key worker watches from a distance & as needed for rest of session

**4** One child struggles and runs to corner screaming. Key worker takes her to safe place and quietly supports calm down (with soft toys?) Then conversation, puppets + story. Lots of empathic ('nurturing you') responses. Adult assesses her state





# Ways to Calm and Relax 17



# Ways to Enhance Wellbeing



# Ways to Calm Down after Anxiety or Outbursts





# Building Up Inner Resources is Important For Life



**Traumatised and vulnerable children can find developing and opening to their inner worlds **difficult, or even scary**, as their experiences and memories may have been very negative**



**They can however develop such resources through available, caring and boundaried relationships with significant school staff, and by observation of, and practice with others**





# YOU CAN MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE TO THE VULNERABLE CHILDREN YOU WORK WITH



Schools and school staff can become very stressed in these post Covid days. Along with **government targets** and **expectation**, staff changes and cuts, having a troublesome and troubled child in your class can feel like **'the last straw'..**



## BUT

...a thoughtful, nurturing and compassionate school and staff can make all the difference to such kids

16

## Through:

## HOW?

- Compassionate, caring management and support for staff (and parents)
- Working and sharing together as teams
- Talking and listening staff culture
- Mindful practices for staff and pupils
- Employing secure resilient staff who are open to learning, self development and asking for help, especially with the most vulnerable children

312

## + Support and supervision and training in:

- Trauma and attachment informed understanding 3
- Using knowledge of the 3 insecure attachment patterns when working and relating to children/students 6
- Relationship based nurturing approach 11
- Facilitating a committed relationship-based approach with vulnerable children
- Managing outbursts firmly and kindly 209+
- Bearing and surviving children's unbearable pain and outbursts 161+



## THEN

Slowly they can come to know a secure relationship and trust that they are held in mind anyway

They can discover a relationship *that:*

8

Bears and survives their hurts and resistances

Understands that change and closeness can bring anxiety

Talks everything through in a caring and timely way

