



BEING A TRAUMA INFORMED COMMUNITY

TOP 9 PRINCIPLES OF TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

The Australian Childhood Foundation has put together their top nine principles – in plain English – that underpin all the work they do with children and young people.

1 **Trauma significantly changes stress levels in children.** Carers need to pay attention to the child's emotions and behaviour, and provide calm, predictable environments and responses to reduce the child's stress.

2 **Trauma reduces the capacity of the thinking brain (cortex) to regulate behaviour (sub cortical activation) in children.** Caregivers need to know that when aroused, children cannot use logic to change their behaviour. So typical parenting techniques will not work.

3 **Trauma disrupts memory functioning in children.** Therefore children can benefit from strategies like using visual cues to help recall, and structured routines for learning new behaviour. Children need support to transfer learning from one environment to another.

6 **Trauma based behaviour is functional at the time in which it develops as a response to threat.** Caregivers should be supported to be curious about and understand the purpose and meaning of a child's trauma-based behaviour to help them better respond to the child.

5 **Trauma restricts the attentional capacity of children.** Children benefit from intensive, positive and playful experiences with their caregivers in the 'here and now' that directs their attention away from past trauma.

4 **Trauma diminishes social skills and isolates children from peers.** Caregivers have a role in modelling social skills and respectful interactions.

7 **Trauma limits children's response flexibility and adaptability to change.** Caregivers need to establish clear routines and provide predictability for children. Any changes to these routines should be introduced incrementally with children supported to cope with one tiny change before initiating another.

8 **Trauma undermines identity formation in children.** Caregivers have an important role in explicitly reinforcing to children what they see as their positive attributes to help nurture children's positive sense of self.

9 **Developmental trauma occurs within relationships. Healing from trauma therefore has to occur within the safety and comfort of relationships.** Children need daily repeated experiences of positive relationships that offer consistency, nurture and predictability.

Note: The terms 'child' and 'children' also refer to 'young person' and 'young people'.

Here to help! Come and talk to us if you'd like more practical ways you can be trauma informed.

Sources:

> Check out the Australian Childhood Foundation Prosody blog [9 Plain English Principles of Trauma Informed Care](http://childhoodtrauma.org.au/2015/april/trauma-informed-care) for all the details at <http://childhoodtrauma.org.au/2015/april/trauma-informed-care>



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