What’s Trauma All About

Child Bereavement, Trauma & Emotional Wellbeing Service

Sharing the journey.....
Because early abuse impacts on the developing brain of these infants, it has enduring effects. There is extensive evidence that trauma in early life impairs the development of the capacities of maintaining interpersonal relationships, coping with stressful stimuli and regulating emotion.

Schore (2001)
Life goes on but in two temporal directions at once, the future unable to escape the grip of a memory laden with grief”.

Langer (1991)
Traumatic Events or PTSD?

?MEANING?
Meanings

• BREAKING THE RULES
Children’s Trauma

- Mental, Physical or Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Parental MH problems
- Painful medical procedures
- D.V., threats or conflicts witnessed by the child
- Discontinuity in the attachment process (death, adoption, hospitalisation)
PTSD DX DSM-V

- Exposure, either directly or indirectly, to traumatic events (Previously had to register intense fear at the event).
- Intrusive symptoms
- Persistent avoidance
- Hypervigilance or hyperarousal
- Persistent distorted cognitions re blame
- Persistent negative emotional state
- Reckless or self destructive behaviour
SYMPTOMS

Intrusion

Avoidance / numbing

Arousal
WHAT’S IMPORTANT?

• The Experience
• The Interpretation
• The Explanation
• The Reaction of the Environment, then and now.
Waking the Tiger
Negative appraisals

What is appraised

• It happened
• It happened to me
• Anger outburst
• Flashbacks
• Concentration problems
• Other peoples reactions

-VE Appraisal

• Nowhere is safe
• I attract bad things
• I am bad, I can’t cope
• I’m going mad, I’ll never get over this
• My brain is damaged
• Others think I’m weak
• No one can help
Radar Exercise: Attentional Biases
Internal Working Model

• The world as either safe or not, general view

• It helps shape personality and way of interacting with other people.

• This is continually being revised
Memory
Traumatic Memories
Brain Indigestion???
Trauma robs you of feeling you are in charge of yourself, the challenge is to recover your ownership of your body and your mind.

- Become calm and focussed
- Maintain this calm to triggers
- Be fully alive and engaged in the present
- Do not have to keep secrets from your self about how you survived.

Bessel van der Kolk. (2014)
Tasks for Grieving Children

- Experience the deep pain
- Accept the permanency
- Accepting the totality of the loved one (good and Bad)
- Converting the relationship from interaction to memory
- Incorporating aspects of the loved one into self identity
- Committing to new relationships
- Re-establishing health developmental trajectory
  - Wolfelt (1991)
Separation from parents during childhood trauma predicts adult attachment security and post-traumatic stress disorder (Bryant et al 2017)
Childhood Traumatic Grief

Unresolved Grief

PTSD
Intrusive Images
Complex Trauma and Children

- Multiple or Chronic Events
- Developmentally adverse
- Interpersonal
- Often within the care giving system
- Developmental Trauma Disorder
- Trauma creates a vulnerability to learning, neurodevelopmental problems and adult Mental Health problems
Childhood Symptoms
SYMPTOMS

- Intrusion
- Arousal
- Avoidance / numbing
Triggers

I can taste

I can hear

I can smell

I can see

I can feel
THE ANSWER

IS

AVOIDANCE?
Keep it all in

You know your problem
You keep it all in
You know your problem
You keep it all in

Midnight, a husband getting ready to fight
A daughter sleeps alone with the light
Turned on, she hears but
Keeps it all in

Just like that murder in '73
Just like that robbery in '62
With all these things that have happened to me
I kept them all in
Controversies / Urban Myths

- Traumatic events always cause PTSD  FALSE
- Exposure to trauma is rare  FALSE
- Children are too young to understand so won't be effected  FALSE
- It is best to just avoid thinking about the trauma  FALSE
- Your memory will just fade over time  FALSE
Treatment

- Safety
- Trust
- Affect Regulation
- Containment
- Trauma Focussed CBT,
- EMDR,
- Narrative work.
- Recreational group, Music Therapy.
What can I do?

• Be clear of the symptoms of trauma
• Do not offer debriefing
• Support family to reconnect with their life
• Offer psych-education re symptoms and maintenance factors.
• Offer trauma focussed intervention if available
• Protect yourself
References/resources


• [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/.../posttraumati cstressdisorder.aspx](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/.../posttraumaticstressdisorder.aspx)

• [Emdassociation.org.uk](http://Emdassociation.org.uk)


• [www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg26](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg26)