

Developing Trauma Informed Care Packages for Individual People

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What is “Trauma Informed”

- We start with the recognition that people have suffered traumatic experiences
- We recognise that this may have been in very early childhood
- There may have been more than one
- The earlier the trauma, the less the resilience
- Huge factor in behavioural disturbance

How do we know?

- Arrested emotional development
- We can measure this
- The stage of development corresponds with the traumatic events
- The type of behaviour often reflects the traumatic events
- Most trauma involves close people and breakdown of trust

How do we measure?

- Observational methodology
- Can establish the stage of emotional development
- Quick and easy and reliable
- Once we know we can design an intervention
- Then we can measure outcomes

Stages

- Differentiation – very cut-off from people, engaging in self-referenced behaviours
- Practicing – engaging in repetitive behaviours, noticing people
- Early rapprochement – engaging with people in two-way interactions
- Late rapprochement – able to engage and negotiate

Differentiation

- Relates to time from a few weeks to a few months of age
- Trauma could be SCBU related, early rejection, early illness
- Primary bonding affected
- Ability to relate to another seriously impaired
- Not necessarily related to level of IQ

Practicing

- Relates to approx 8 to 15 months
- Repetitive behaviours as new skills available and practiced
- More activity with more attention
- Do it “because they can” so not purposeful
- Trauma could be early and prolonged separation or failure to bond with parent

Early Rapprochement

- Relates to 15 to 24 months approx
- Demanding behaviour with expectation that another can solve the problem
- Two-way interactions, vocal behaviour
- Trauma relates to separation, rejection, arrival of sibling, abuse and neglect
- Very demanding to be with

Late rapprochement

- Relates to 24 to 40 months
- Negotiating behaviour can be seen as manipulative
- Very demanding and taxing to be with
- Trauma relates to separation, rejection, abuse and neglect
- Notice more so other traumatic events have impact eg car accident

Addressing the Need

- Traumatized individuals can't achieve their cognitive potential
- There is usually a mismatch between cognitive and emotional development
- They need help to process their experiences in the past and present
- They may need individual therapy
- They always need a nurturing environment

Nurturing Environment

- There are four components to a nurturing environment
- The first is a “secure base” which is a secure tenancy that is not dependant on behaviour. Damage must be repaired quickly to prove that things can be mended
- The fear of the ability to destroy is challenged

Nurturing Environment

- Second component is a staff group in sufficient numbers for the individual to feel safe, important and cared for. This can be 3:1 to start with but reduces as relationships develop. The initial investment is worth it as the outcome is a better life, not locked up for life

Nurturing environment

- The third component is staff training. All staff need to be trained to both recognise and attend to the emotional needs of the people they support. The support must be on a real human level, to avoid objectification, if the individual is to develop a sense of self that they can take forward for the rest of their lives

Nurturing Environment

- The fourth component is therapeutic support for the staff and the client. This may include individual or group therapy, and the need for this will depend on the type of trauma
- There will be a need for staff support sessions to enable them to process their response to working with traumatised people

Matching the support to the stage

- At all these pre-individuation stages the presence of a primary carer is essential. This means that the individual must know at all times 24/7 who their person is. They don't have to be in close contact all the time but must be visible and say if they need to leave briefly. Handover at shift change must be visible and physical

Matching the support to the stages

- Differentiation – at regular intervals approach and offer something. Never ask for a response but be pleased if there is one. After a while, maybe a couple of weeks they will look for you coming. At that point you can introduce activities and you are moving to next stage
- They need rests like “naps”

Matching the support to the stage

- At the practicing stage there is a need for lots of activity and learning new skills. These will be repetitive and it will be up to you to provide the input. When they start to initiate activities they are moving into early rapprochement. This can take months and the early signs are always tentative.
- Still need rests at this stage

Matching the support to the stage

- Early rapprochement involves lots of two-way interaction, and can be exhausting as less inclined to “nap” usually.
- Time of rapid cognitive development so begin teaching colours, shapes etc and generally stimulate awareness
- Always respond to initiation from them

Matching the support to the stage

- In late rapprochement there may be lots of arguments and challenges to authority. This gives an opportunity to develop negotiation skills and “if this, then this” to encourage thinking about cause and effect and the needs of others.
- Support must be consistent and reliable.

Does it work?

- Evidence based on experience of using it
- Placement breakdown reduced
- Quality of life improved
- Movement through stages from differentiation to early rapprochement achieved.
- Direct care staff less able to help people through late rapprochement to independence

What next?

- Offer appropriate support to existing people who are mostly in locked facilities
- Change the approach to the profoundly disabled
- Look at early interventions when traumatic response first noticed- the younger the better for the intervention to have most benefit

Conclusions

- We know what helps
- It is not hard to do from a position of understanding
- It is cost effective
- People who are traumatised deserve to be helped
- All the elements **MUST** be there

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