

Recommendations

We need to acknowledge that this is a journey for your child and some of the things that are noticed will endure. Change is not going to be quick – it will be over a life-time but everything you do now will have an impact for adulthood. Imagine you will meet your child when they are 30 years old. Who will you hope to meet? What will they have achieved? What will they value? What can you contribute now for this to happen?

We are offering strategies and interventions here as we hope to create a bank for you to draw on especially at times when situations seem stuck. However, remember you are best placed to know your child and your school. Your ideas, plans and creative ways forward will hopefully be enriched by these pointers but only you can integrate them into your own systems and ethos for the benefit of your child. Reminding yourself of what has worked well previously with other children can be helpful, and also collating the skills of your team and reflecting on how these can be best placed for supporting your child. Concentrating on what you can do (rather than on what feels too big) can be beneficial.

If you think further support is needed to do this then please ask your school EP as a first point of contact.



Just as we focus on co-regulation and emotional safety for children, we need to prioritise that for staff too. Supporting children who have experienced trauma can take a toll—it can stir up strong emotional responses, leave you feeling stuck, or even overwhelmed. This is sometimes called secondary trauma: the emotional weight of witnessing another's distress or pain. Often, children are communicating their inner world through behaviour, not words. You will feel that communication as much as you see it—and that can be heavy.

To sustain this work, adults need to look after each other. Building a culture of regular check-ins, supervision, or reflective practice sessions is essential—not a luxury. Staff who regularly work with children affected by trauma need to feel supported, heard, and 'held' too. When adults feel safe, children are more likely to feel safe.

It's important to remember: you don't need to have all the answers. Your consistency, compassion, and curiosity are enough. Together, as a whole-school community, you can create an environment where healing becomes possible.

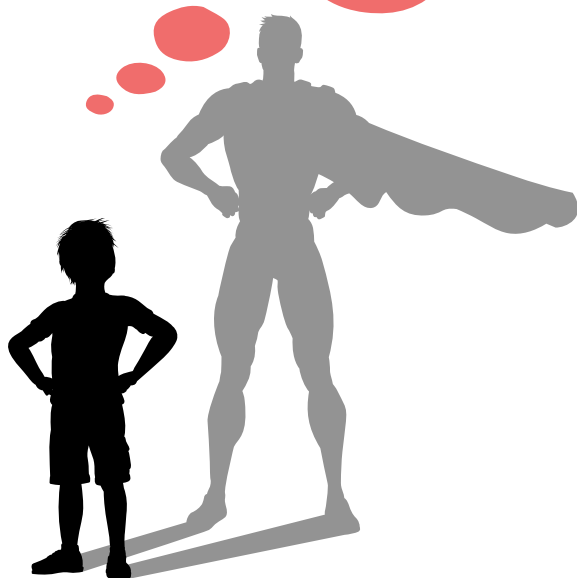
Jo Marriot, Chris Dawson, Tamara Leon and Amy Mitchell

Educational Psychologists, Virtual School Rotherham

SEMH

Recommendations

I may adopt a character for interacting with others and my environment as a way of ensuring I feel emotionally safe.



Please use language to reinforce togetherness and connection with me, for instance using 'we' and verbally positioning me alongside adults in tasks and activities (see Trauma Informed Schools/ Calmer Classrooms). This will scaffold and build my relational skills and awareness. Please do not position me as on my own in completing a task/ activity/ making a decision etc unless you know I am confident to do so.

Adopting a general relational approach and having a whole school ethos of nurture and trauma informed practice will support me and the team around me. Reflecting on my relational skill development within a trauma informed framework is essential. Ensure that the adults working with me have the relevant training, skills, and relationships in school and the resilience to work closely with me.

I may feel alone and scared of not being held in mind.

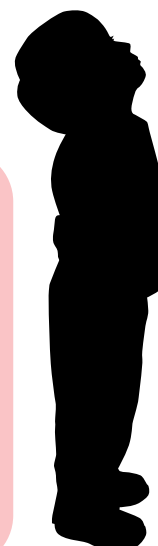


I feel safest when I'm close to my teacher or teaching assistant, so I try to stay near them. Sometimes, focusing on my learning feels hard when I'm worried about whether they are still there for me

I need frequent brief check ins, and reciprocal cues such as touch, eye contact, tuning into sounds to reciprocate, objects to retain connection, providing close physical contact in an agreed way, agreeing my position in class and for the adults to adopt ways to show that they are holding me in mind. If I show an inclination towards using character for safe interacting (to remove shame) it will be helpful for my team to work with this as a scaffold to relating with me (for example, some children take on character voices, have a character toy with them or talk about themselves through using a character's name sometimes). We do not want a child be reliant upon using characters for relating with others but as with any scaffold it is offered whilst needed with a view to gradually enabling our children to build relational skills over time (which the reduce the need for such scaffolds).

Building up a team around me with multiple adults with whom a relationship is already built (or having relational time to build the trust and faith required).

How I relate to others requires scaffolding, modelling and coaching within every interaction. A whole school approach is needed so that all adults across school know how to respond to me to best support my communication with them and others.



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I find it difficult to concentrate on learning because I need to feel safe alongside a trusted adult / key adult.

Using an executive functions framework to identify where/ when I need closer support is helpful for my learning and development, in preparing me for adulthood. This is a useful resource ; [Attachment, Developmental Trauma and Executive Functioning Difficulties in the School Setting | Family Futures](#)



The EPS offer annual training around Executive Functioning through the Rotherham Virtual School Core training offer. You can also request this from your school EP within your school allocation.

The Rotherham Specialist Inclusion Team can also offer trauma informed support for learning. Also consider referring me to the SIT team to explore whether there may be some more specific learning barriers that mean I feel that I need an adult at close proximity to help them make sense of a task etc. Likewise, your school EP will have had experience of working with children in Care and can explore learning needs as part of a graduated approach for me.

Do an audit of the classroom with me. Complete a 'Mapping the Landscape' with me to see where I feel safest and least safe in school, (Rotherham EPS or the Virtual School can supply this).

This hypervigilance is my way of making sense of the environment and the people in it, constantly. This is exhausting for me and for the adults around me. Consider the pace of the lessons and of reducing the demands being made at times. Strategies and approaches which lead to as much sense of safety as possible will be helpful for reducing my hypervigilance. However, it is likely to be an effect of my early experience that will be with me throughout my educational journey. The team of adults around me can best support in modelling, offering commentary, routine and structure and getting to know me holistically to try to reduce my reliance on scanning the environment in order to feel safe.

Concentrating and focusing can be tricky for me as I cannot help but to scan the environment for signs of danger.



Routines and structure will support me to find predictability in my environment, as will building relationships and understanding how relating to each other works in your school environment.

·Encouraging all children to draw on what they know already and on school values/expectations to model what to expect to happen within our school. Shared values offer a clear strong ethos within which children feel protected and cared for.

·Using 'We' language, strengthening my sense of belonging and togetherness with the other members of my class – a sense of 'we've got this' together- a collective identity and creating a sense of safety.

Resources being organised and labelled and pre-planning of visitors/ people coming into the classroom etc will help me too.

Also having a Relational Policy to include; Teachers modelling their own self- talk / reassuring commentaries about what to do if there is uncertainty or if something is difficult.

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I tend to think of adults or situations as either all good or all bad depending on how I feel in the moment.



It is essential that my team recognise that this may be a long- term interpretation of relationships with adults and that there is not a quick fix. It may be with me throughout my educational journey. I cannot easily rationalise this so using words of explanations are unlikely to be helpful. I need to experience the nuances and subtleties of relationships with adults and learn that I can trust and rely on them no matter what I am feeling. A restorative approach is especially helpful in showing me this.

Building a richer picture of relationships through experience and narratives will contribute to easing this all good/bad perspective over time. In addition, long term teaching and modelling of emotional literacy and intervention supporting me to understand and feel agency over my emotional well-being will be helpful.

Someone in my team having an understanding of a Narrative approach to my development and life experience will be beneficial for me, see Rotherham VS Core training Narrative Approaches -Using stories through books, films etc to thicken the stories of characters and taking opportunities to thicken the stories of the adults in school through relationship building, gently offering evidence of a holistic character in their adults through experience.

Having a team around me in school builds my resilience and that of the adults working with me. I need my adults to not take things personally if they are the one who is the 'bad guy' for a while. Strengthening my team and widening my team is essential by being with my trusted adult in introducing 'new' members of staff.

Affirmation and reassurance are so important to me. This can be offered through active listening, please not to dismiss what I am feeling. Acknowledge my problems verbally to me so I can hear that you can understand my perspective (no matter how different this may seem to what others are experiencing) then I may be able to accept guidance as you are recognising what I am feeling.

I may project strong feelings onto adults of anger/hurt/ frustration/ despair/ fear

The adults around me need to take care of each other and themselves and build on prior knowledge. Weekly supervision and daily check ins of how the adult is feeling (in addition to problem solving sessions for me) are recommended for those working most closely with me in school. The same approach is advocated for the adults as for us children as staff who come into regular contact also need to feel 'held'. This is due to secondary trauma as well as experiencing the fall out of my prior experiences. Us children are communicating our pain in ways that do not use language and education staff will be tuned in and sense that pain. Adults around me may have their own painful experiences that are brought to the surface by empathising with me.

Keeping the wider team around me joined up is essential. It is important to be aware of when I am receiving therapy and if possible, to ensure the therapist is aware of the approaches you are using for my emotional well-being and social and relational growth.

Again, if you think further support is needed to do this then please ask your school EP as a first point of contact, and the Virtual School Education Advisors.



SEMH

Recommendations

I can easily feel overwhelmed by shame.



Shame can affect my friendships. I might not want to share my family narrative with my friends, please support and mediate to develop a preferred story about my life experiences for example, who I live with. I will need to rehearse this with adults first and develop things over time. How do I describe my stories of holidays, or times with my birth families for instance?

I need my team to have a very clear understanding of my familial/ care relationships and to know what I name different people in my life (for example, mummy/ mamma).

Please normalise the diversity of family and living arrangements. Let me know that it is ok to have different carers in my life

Friendships feel fragile for me so I want to hold on to them.

I am likely to need help to create and encouragement to maintain a safe and supportive friendship group.

I may identify with other children who experience a sense of disconnection.

Nurturing the whole group I belong to will be important for building a firm relational ground for us all to have warm connections with each other.



Be child led though so accept and acknowledge that I may prefer to spend time on my own as well.

Effort and time needs to spent on building up aspects of my character, interests and strengths for example, if I like football, encourage and build on the positive qualities of my footballer identity to promote connection through shared interests.

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Spend time with me try to work out why those times are particularly difficult for me.

Communication with the wider team around me is important through a multi -agency PEP meeting and decisions taken by my wider team about how to manage these complexities. There should be a recognition from the school if this is the case and some collaborative problem solving done to take the responsibility from me.

Key thing: I should not feel alone with this problem.

I need you to plan for unsupervised times and to pre-empt times where I may wobble. Talk it through with me, model a possible internal narrative for me and offer co -regulation.

I can feel very wobbly during unstructured and/or unsupervised times.

I might be described as being self -directed in terms of what I will do in class.

Bonding through play and Theraplay is helpful for me. And I need a nurture approach where my trusted adults are in charge but routines and structure are predictable and reassuring, and I have choice within the boundaries set by my team. **Within this I require unconditional positive regard from key adults.**

Please acknowledge that I may know what I need in the moment even if I am missing out on what is timetabled, I may be doing something that feels important to me and it might be something that helps me to learn or feel more regulated.

I need **flexibility within the curriculum** to allow me to become completely immersed in an activity. Staff might notice that I am in a 'flow' state and will choose to let me continue with an activity if it is possible to do so.

Please **give me periods of time for settling**. I might need extra time to settle and the staff who know me well will know when I need this for preferred/ sensory/ regulating activities.

Sometimes I might come across as controlling or needing to be in charge. This often happens when I feel afraid or uncertain—acting powerful can feel safer than showing I'm vulnerable

A variety of strategies to reduce my anxiety will help. See the annual Emotionally Based School Avoidance training offered through the VS core training- EBSA approach [Rotherham-EBSA-Guidance-September-23.pdf](#) – strengthening safety and belonging and Rotherham EPS training



Emotions can be confusing to me, I don't always know how to identify and respond to my own or others feelings.

SEMH

Recommendations

I may feel uncomfortable in my school due to reminders of my family and/or my past

Check my chronology to see if I ever lived in this area or if I have extended family living close to the school. Be prepared for adults in school reminding me of people from within my life.

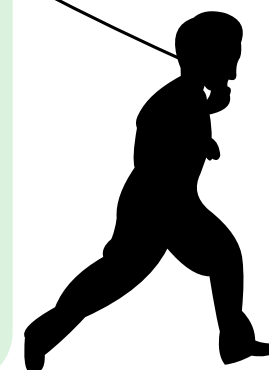
I like to keep busy to keep separated from my thoughts and feelings as they can be overwhelming. Lack of structure means I have no control and puts me in a fearful state.

I crave predictability, routine and consistency.

Provide structure, routine and consistency.

Showing me that the adults notice how difficult certain situations are for me is affirming. During planned intervention for unstructured times my key person may offer the structure to a game, use the time as an opportunity to teach me how to interact appropriately during social times, model reciprocal play and team games etc.

Recognise that the unstructured times may be where my pain and distress are felt more strongly, and these are exactly the times when I need an attuned and responsive adult to be with me.



SEMH

Recommendations

I feel sad. The depth of sadness I experience will likely overwhelm me at times.

I have experienced many losses and changes, and maybe bereavements too. Please give me time and space with my trusted adults to experience someone being alongside me in my grief. I will benefit from the many resources and approaches used within my school already for supporting childhood loss and bereavement, especially in the form of stories.

Be aware of my emotional vulnerability in the event of changes, losses or bereavements within our school community.

Consider my grief in response to loss and bereavement when these themes occur within the curriculum and provide me with additional check ins/ support if needed

See [Bereavement and Loss | The East Midlands Education Support Service](#) for further helpful guidance and for understanding how best to support me and other children in living with grief.

Ensure that my team within school are working jointly with those in my home, and my wider team, to understand ongoing themes of loss and bereavement within my life.

I may have gaps in my knowledge of my educational journey

Help me to build a cohesive narrative of my educational journey so far. This may involve liaising with my social worker and carers, and the teams at my previous schools. A focus on my positive memories is recommended with hopeful reframes of the challenges I have experienced and presented (to indicate growth and development can and does occur).

It may help me to keep a scrapbook/ photo album that is updated weekly to help me build a momentum of belonging to a school and to have visual reminders of my sense of place.

For more information on 'School Journey Reminders' click the school >>>

