

Adverse Childhood Experiences: Repairing the Damage™

For whole teams working with young people who have been through experiences which are by any standards 'damaging'.

A 3-day course for 6-15 people.

Executive Summary:

Some children - and adults - who have been through difficult or traumatic experiences are referred to as 'damaged'. It's an unpleasant word but can, unfortunately, be an apt one. The damage can take various forms but usually results in changes in the deepest parts of the brain, resulting in effects which are behavioural, cognitive, biological, social and emotional. Examples include: aggressive behaviour, withdrawal, poor self esteem, hostility to others, lack of interest in activities, disturbed sleep and appetite, sadness, anxiety or anger problems, and poor relationships. Although this is a disturbing list there are many children who exhibit most or all of these as a complete 'package' of apparently self-perpetuating – and worsening - problems, resistant to repeated intervention and thereby the cause of great frustration to professionals.

As the title suggests, the aim of this course is to repair the damage and so avoid those consequences.

Who should attend:

This is a course intended for multidisciplinary teams, mainly in facilities for looked after children and foster care. There is a separate version of the same course for professionals working with adults.

The Course Covers:

- Recognising the damage. It is important to be able to recognise children who have had experiences which are damaging enough to cause significant long term damage. (In fact relatively little time is spent on this because most delegates will be from facilities where this applies to most of the children.)
- Why 'damage', although an unappealing term, is an apt one because of the effects on neural structures in the brain. Why it is helpful to know about this for intervening successfully.
- What events cause this damage? Traumatic events can certainly cause permanent damage but, equally, so can the absence of positive events. In between there is the drip feed of events which are less than traumatic but add

up to a similar effect. Why we need to know this, so we can institute 'neutralising events'.

- Counter-traumas. If a trauma is a complex network of interlinking neurones that can be easily or spontaneously triggered, with disturbing effects, then a counter-trauma is the same thing but with pleasurable effects. An event so good that it effects the person for ever.
- Re-treading the neuronal path. Why it is so important to reflect on counter-traumas with the young person, to laugh about them and be pleased about them. How to do it.
- Making sense of bad experiences, especially where 'logical, evidence-based reasoning' turns bad. Where is the logical fallacy in the following: "My parents got rid of me. Everybody knows that parents always love their children. So I must be really abnormal, unlovable, and disgusting"?
- Talking about sex. We all know that an intimate relationship with the right partner reaches parts of the brain that talking therapies will always struggle to do. And yet adolescents having sex can be 'administratively inconvenient', worrying, and disturbing for us. So how do we square that circle and tackle this most important of taboos constructively?
- How to work on 'maladaptive schemas' in an everyday, non-clinical fashion, so as not to further 'pathologise' the person.
- Why positive approaches – even to severely negative behaviours – are so important. And particularly, what are the key positive approaches and how do you apply them.
- Validation, what it is, how it is different from empathy, why it is so important, and how to get good at it.
- Validation Plus. Why validation, though marvellous, is never enough, even when it is relevant. The other half of the jigsaw.

The creation of a clear self-image and good self-esteem, and why these are important.

Continued overleaf

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- Self-efficacy: quite different from self-esteem, self-efficacy is one of the common threads of successful interventions with adolescents; a key concept which we can actively enhance in young people.
- Hope for the future. Why this is such an important concept, and how to stimulate people to plan and work towards their futures.

The Course Covers:

1. You will understand what damage can be done to individuals while they are developing, in neuropsychological terms.
2. You will know what events can cause this damage, and that they are not always 'dramatic' events – though they can be.
3. You will learn why people react disproportionately, self-destructively, or simply 'strangely', to certain situations, and how to help, using simple everyday interactions.
4. You will learn about positive approaches to negative behaviour, and why it is so important – and counter-intuitive – to use them.
5. You will know about – and how to use – a key technique, alleged to be the secret of friendship, and is certainly one of the secrets of influencing people who have been through damaging events.
6. Slogans are good! And you will learn why, and have slogans you can use post-course, and be keen to develop your own.
7. You will understand the key element which holds people back from even trying to make progress, how this is so obviously damaging, and how to overcome it.
8. You will know how to create hope for the future, and understand why this is so important to do.
9. You will understand the concept of counter-traumas, how to create them for others, and the result you can expect.
10. Overall, you will understand the damage that events can cause to young people, and what you can do in everyday interactions to rectify it.

Delegates' Feedback

Average presentation rating: **97%**



Average relevance rating: **98%**



Written Feedback:

"I can honestly say as a Manager who has worked in Residential Care for 8 years that this was one of the most beneficial courses that I have been on. It was very well executed and the information was clear, well explained, interesting and beneficial ... There has been relevant learning that I can take back to my team that will benefit our work practice in the future."