

Support Children impacted by Adversity: A Trauma-informed Approach



Many children and young people who have lived through life's most overwhelming experiences will have survived by drawing upon their incredible inner strength and courage, making the adjustments needed to endure the risks of an unsafe life.



Those who have depended upon their survival resources often struggle to experience a sense of calm and connection, so it is vital that those who are working with them are aware of what might be being communicated and understand the approaches needed to form, maintain and end healthy relationships with children impacted by adversity.



Children and young people who are languishing in despair, or fluctuating within states of social defence such as terror or rage, can trigger feelings of helplessness and distress in those around them.



In order to attune to children in these emotional states, practitioners will often need to draw upon their own lived experiences, accessing parts of themselves which may have lived with these painful sensations before.



Bringing awareness to our inner life is necessary. By attuning to ourselves and accepting our own experiences with open minded curiosity and kindness, we become able to stay present and responsive within stressful or discomforting encounters with others.



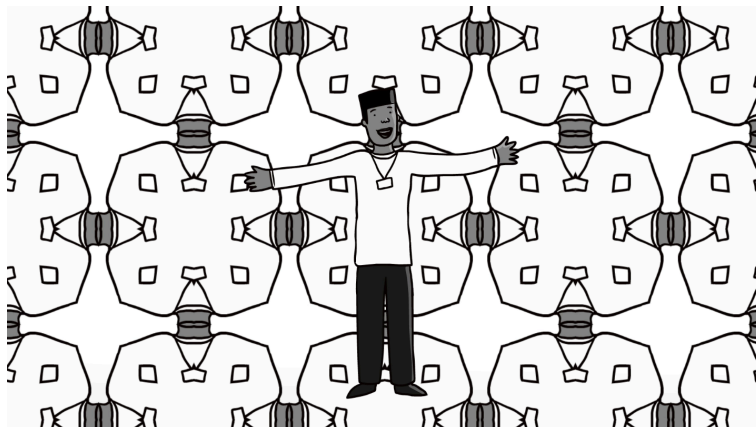
Creating relationships which are playful, accepting, curious and empathetic are vital for building relationships with young people who have faced adversity. Practitioners who can recognise and remove signs of danger, and increase cues of safety can support young



An enriched environment which offers sensory stimulation can increase curiosity and offer the space to feel grounded and well. Engaging in creativity, play, listening and mindfulness can support young people to develop the regulation skills needed for calm



Adults who can model a balanced emotional life; bravely speaking with a rich vocabulary of 'words for feelings' and actively Wonder, Imagine and Notice without judgement - will enable empathy to take seed and relationships to grow.



By using clear and open communication such as offering visual and verbal cues of kindness and acceptance; modelling lots of facial expressions, eye contact and adopting a melodic tone of voice, practitioners can offer children and young people greater access to engage and relate.



By building clear structures and fair boundaries into the day, a healthy routine can start to take shape. Processes which support everyone to restore and repair in moments of conflict will over time, build the bonds of friendship and care.



The impact of adversity can rupture a child's sense of trust in themselves and others. So by offering agency and choice, and focusing on the unique skills and interests of young people, we can create a space where they are seen and heard where they can experience their own inherent value and place in the world, and be supported to flourish as they deserve.

For more information visit <https://www.kazzum.org/trauma-informed-approach>

View the full animation [here](#)