Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach

Nurturing Wellbeing to Build Back Better

A Trauma Informed Resource

Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service

May 2020

Renfrewshire Council

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Foreword

As we begin to reopen schools following the significant and long lasting impact of the COVID-19 crisis our primary focus must be on the wellbeing of all our staff and children and young people. As we build back better, I am in awe of the work that has been undertaken both before lockdown and during the time when we have all been working from home that has focussed on supporting and nurturing our children and young people and families. I am very proud of all our schools and services for the way that we have responded in this time of crisis and know that the next steps will be positive ones based on all our experiences.

We must not underestimate the importance of the work we are doing in continuing to focus on nurturing approaches to ensure a return to schools is a positive experience. There is a significant amount of work ahead and I am confident that the approaches in this pack will have a significant positive impact for all of us in the months which lie ahead.

I want to thank everyone who has played their part in the development of these resources and I commend them to you as you grapple with how we make sure that our schools are warm and welcoming places where we all want to be, grow and flourish.

Gordon McKinlay
Head of Schools

> *"Every interaction can be an intervention.*
> *Every moment or interaction can be positive or negative, it can be a snake or a ladder, it has the potential to open a door or close, it can be trauma inducing or reducing. A positive moment can provide an experience that is a stepping-stone to new possibilities and experiences."*
> (Triesman, May 2020)

Introduction

Nurturing approaches are recognised as being key to supporting mental health and wellbeing and attainment in Scottish educational establishments (Education Scotland, 2017). They are also crucial in supporting the needs of children and young people who have experienced ACES and trauma. There has never been a time when nurturing approaches are needed more than now to support our recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19).

Education Scotland (2018) makes the links between nurturing approaches, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma informed practice. They all:

- Recognise the importance of early adverse experiences on later outcomes
- Emphasise the importance of relationships to help reduce the negative impact of early adversity.
- Recognise that poor outcomes can be reduced with appropriate support that builds resilience in people affected by trauma and adversity
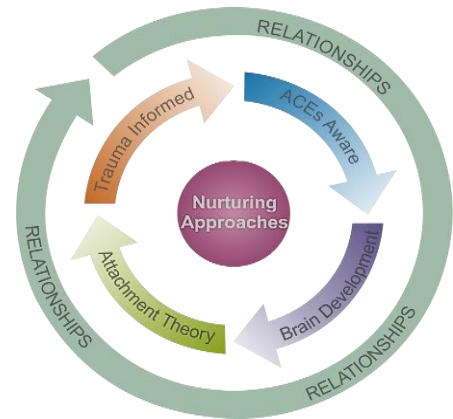
Figure 1: Nurture, ACES & Trauma (Education Scotland, 2018)

Figure 2: The Six Nurture Principles

Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA) is a relational and trauma informed approach developed by Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service (REPS) and sits within Renfrewshire's Attainment Challenge strategy. It seeks to improve wellbeing through developing relationships and putting nurturing approaches into practice throughout whole establishments. Putting the 6 Nurture principles into practice is key.

RNRA is ideally placed to support recovery from the effects of COVID-19. It is currently in place across many Renfrewshire establishments in early years, primary and secondary sectors and many are currently using RNRA approaches to support staff, children and young people and their families at home and in Hubs.

> *"I am so glad that RNRA is in place right now. The children attending the Hubs require so much support and nurturing as their parents try to cope with COVID-19 and the implications."*
>
> Head of Centre (Hub)

RNRA as a Framework for Recovery

"Our unwritten relationships curriculum must restore the damage of neglect (loss of relationships due to the pandemic); it must be a Curriculum of Recovery. Now is the time to address the damage of loss and trauma, so that it does not rob our children of their lifelong opportunities. Now is the time to ensure that we restore the mental wealth in our children, so that their aspiration for their future can be a vision that becomes, one day, a reality."
Carpenter (2020), 'Providing a 'Recovery Curriculum' following the pandemic'.

The wellbeing of staff, children and young people and their families must be our highest priority as we reopen schools. The knowledge, expertise and practices already in place as a result of RNRA are exactly those that will support recovery from the effects of COVID-19. REPS has refined and enhanced RNRA so that it serves as a framework for understanding the community trauma caused by COVID-19, supporting staff and children and young people back to establishments when they re-open and in aiding recovery over the longer term.

Nurturing wellbeing will look different in each establishment as each engages with its staff, children and young people, families and the community to plan its approach. The existing structure in place for RNRA (including core groups and RNRA Action Plans) provides a framework for establishments to discuss, plan, implement and evaluate recovery within individual establishment contexts.

This resource has been designed to be used by Renfrewshire's education establishments to support staff, children and young people and families during the period of remote learning and through recovery. It has been developed to use in a flexible manner, recognising the rapidly changing circumstances. Initially you may want to draw on different nurture principles reflecting what your staff, children and young people and their families need most at this time. Over time we would recommend that you decide as a staff which Nurture Principle is the most meaningful for your establishment to focus on, using information such as feedback and data you have gathered (see Appendix 1). Your link Educational Psychologist will support this process.

RNRA is a universal approach but also recognises that some children and young people require more targeted support. The suggestions provided within the Nurture Principle sections in this resource will support most children and young people in recovering well from the effects of COVID-19. However, some children and young people who have been most severely affected, or who have had other traumatic experiences in their lives, may benefit from the more trauma specific approaches, detailed in this document.

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RNRA 'Nurturing Wellbeing to Build Back Better' Resource

This is a resource to support wellbeing. It should be used alongside other Local Authority and National guidance relating to COVID-19.

In this resource, for each Nurture Principle we have set out:

- Key features and how these help us to understand the effects of COVID-19 on staff, children and young people and families.
- Suggestions for how to support these groups during remote learning and recovery.
- Links to resources, videos, websites and further information.

Support from Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service

We will continue to provide:

- On-going training and continued development of resources to support you to improve the wellbeing of staff, children and young people and families.
- On-going coach consult support to help guide your discussion, planning, implementation and evaluation of strategies to support during remote learning and aid recovery (see Appendix 1).
- A platform through which establishments can support each other and share information coordinated by REPS, for example:
  - RNRA Networks
  - RNRA blog https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/re/rnra/
  - REPS blog https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/re/renfrewshireedpsych/
  - REPS twitter https://twitter.com/RenfrewshireEPS?lang=en-gb).
- Trauma-informed information, resources and training.

The Nurture Principles

Learning is understood developmentally

What is this nurture principle about?

This principle is about responding to children and young people in terms of their developmental stage not chronological age with a non-judgemental and accepting attitude. Thinking about what the child or young person needs to learn, giving consideration to what might have happened to them during their development. This should underpin thinking about all of the other nurture principles. It takes a holistic view of children and young peoples' learning and includes all aspects of their development including language, social and emotional development as well as cognitive development.

Why is this important for COVID-19 recovery planning?

While establishments have been closed pupils have lost not only opportunities to progress academically, but also to develop their social and emotional skills and deepen relationships with peers and adults. For teenagers whose self-image, identity and confidence are affected so much by their peer interactions, the loss of opportunities to socialise with peers is likely to have had a huge impact.

What I can do:

- **Think about levels of development**
  - Be aware of children and young peoples' level of development in all areas, including social and emotional development, and of the possible impact of their experiences of COVID-19 on these.
  - Provide modelling and opportunities for learning and catch up activities related to social and emotional, as well as academic development.
  - Provide information at an appropriate level when talking to children and young people about COVID 19 (see REPS blog for resources).
  - Be aware that children and young people might have a lower emotional than chronological age and could regress to earlier levels of development because of the stressful times we have been living in. They may need information and support appropriate to a younger age group.
- **Support emotional development**
  - Staff, children and young people can signal distress in different ways. It may helpful to identify a key adult who can support and lead in the planning going forward.
  - Support children and young people to understand and regulate their emotions (see also: Language and Wellbeing principles).
  - Model positive ways of coping with difficult situations/emotions (see also: Language and Wellbeing principles).
  - Identify children and young people who are finding things difficult and need individualised support, e.g. using the wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI), the GIRFEC resilience matrix, emotional check-ins/scaling/worry boxes. Remember some children and young people will internalise their distress.

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- o Children can think that they are responsible for things that happen, and might be feeling guilty, for example, thinking they had not washed their hands properly. Provide reassurance and relay that it is okay for them to play, have fun and enjoy the things that they find positive and fulfilling.
- **Scaffold learning**
  - o Provide additional scaffolding of learning to help reinforce previous learning and skills that may have been lost due to the trauma experienced. This will help to ease anxiety and build confidence before tackling new learning.
- **Support staff emotionally**
  - o Staff members will have been affected by and will be coping in differing ways to COVID-19. Notice signs of stress/distress in colleagues and have an agreement about how they would like to be supported. Consider using the Wellness Action Plan to do this (Mind UK, 2020) (see also: Wellbeing principle).

Find out more:
- Resources for different age ranges explaining COVID-19: https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/re/renfrewshireedpsych/signposting-online-resources/
- Caring and compassionate curriculum https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/compassionate-and-connected-classroom
- British Psychological Society paper 'Teacher resilience during the coronavirus crisis': https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Member%20Networks/Divisions/DECP/Teacher%20resilience%20during%20coronavirus%20school%20closures.pdf
- Mind UK, Wellness Action Plan: https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/employer-resources/wellness-action-plan-download/

Contact your Educational Psychologist for further information about:
- Self-regulation
- Calm Boxes

The Environment Offers a Safe Base

What is this nurture principle about?

> *"The healing environment is a safe relationally rich environment"*
> Perry (2008)

This principle stresses the importance of providing a welcoming, safe environment with an ethos which promotes warmth and emotional safety as well as physical safety.

Why is this important for COVID-19 recovery planning?

We have all spent a significant period of time being told and thinking that we have to stay at home to be safe. We are all going to need reassurance and time to trust that other places are safe for us. The physical environment of our education establishments will have to adapt in line with public health guidance. It is important that we consider ways to achieve these requirements which also take into account the psychological needs of the children, young people and staff in doing so.

What I can do:

- **Re-establish positive relationships and help all re-join the establishment community**
  - Build on the good contact and relationships with children, young people and parents that have been established through remote learning. Refer to 'what worked' during lock down and think of ways you might keep some of those things going.
  - Prioritise re-establishing a sense of belonging (See also: Environment and Transition Principles).
  - Prioritise and provide ample opportunities to rebuild relationships with peers and adults. Consider daily routines to promote wellbeing and build relationships: structured games, circle time, news etc. For children who require enhanced support consider small group time with a consistent key adult.
- **Be explicit about ways establishments are keeping staff, children and young people safe**
  - Keep COVID-19 related rules to a small number. State these simply and positively, use limited language and reinforce with visuals.
  - Develop individualised plans for those who require more reassurance.
- **Provide a stable, predictable routine**
  - Routines create a sense of safety because they are predictable, allowing those who are hyper-vigilant to lower their guard.
  - Routines will be different when establishments re-open; provide visual as well as verbal reminders.
  - Prepare for changes to routine, for example, virtual tours of the establishment (see also: Transitions principle).

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- **Encourage staff consistency**
  - o Use consistent approaches and language to support wellbeing and self-regulation (see also: Language and Wellbeing principles).
  - o Designated key adult/staff peer can play a role in deescalating and supporting children and young people/adults in distress.
  - o Consider identifying a stable, staff team to support each child/young person and for staff to support each other.
- **Create a physical environment that promotes a sense of belonging**
  - o Involve the whole establishment community in re-creating their environment, for example, prominently display pictures of staff, children and young people, perhaps what they did in lockdown, what they are looking forward to now and the good things about lockdown that they would like to try and keep. Display pictures/photos of people who have helped the local community. Have a way of remembering the people who have sadly died (see also: Bereavement and loss section).
- **Emotional containment**
  - o Use empathetic listening and naming of emotions to receive children and young people and staff members' distress and worries.
  - o Convey the message 'it's okay to express your feelings safely with me'.
  - o Identify designated safe areas and calm corners in the establishment and encourage the use of these to help regulate distress.

Find out more:
- Trauma Informed Schools UK provides advice on how to provide psychological safety when physical distance is required: https://youtu.be/ep7Y5fpk8mA
- Five ways to help children heal when schools reopen: https://marymered.wordpress.com/2020/04/14/five-ways-to-help-children-heal-when-schools-reopen/amp/?__twitter_impression=true
- Providing a 'Recovery Curriculum' following the pandemic: https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/
- Ideas for creating a safe classroom: https://medium.com/@trainertribe/9-effective-ways-to-create-safe-spaces-in-your-classrooms-6cdfcc60a364

Contact your Educational Psychologist for further information about:
- Calm Corners and Safe Spaces
- Establishing Clear Routines
- Renfrewshire's Inclusive Communication Environments (RICE)

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Nurture is essential for wellbeing

What is this nurture principle about?

This principle helps us to consider and plan how we use nurturing relationships to support the development of resilience in our children, young people, families and colleagues. Staff wellbeing should be a fundamental consideration in the plan to nurture the wellbeing of our children and families. A dysregulated adult cannot calm a dysregulated child. Good organisational structures and processes to promote and protect staff wellbeing are essential.
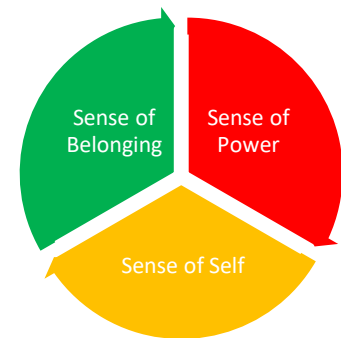
When planning for interventions to promote resilience, it can be helpful to think about three key features of resilience (see figure 3) (Gilligan, 1997).

Figure 3: Key features of resilience

Why is this important for COVID-19 recovery planning?

Individual resilience, alongside the supportive relationships that we foster within a nurturing establishment, acts as a buffer for traumatic experiences. This lowers the experience of stress and in turn contributes to more positive outcomes and improved wellbeing. During the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery process, personal resilience and a network of nurturing relationships will support all of us to cope with the stress of disruption to our routines and in some cases with the experience of distress and trauma during this time.

What I can do:

- **Be open and available:**
  - Demonstrate that you are available to talk but without forcing the conversation at a particular time (see also: Language principle).
  - Children and young people and staff may be experiencing fear and anxiety from a range of sources and they may express this in a variety of ways (see also: Development principle).
  - Talk about what is happening in a child-friendly and age appropriate way and help children and young people to find positive ways of expressing their fears (e.g. A creative activity) can help reduce fears in younger children.
    Avoiding talking about the current situation can add to their fears.
- **Start a conversation with your whole establishment community about what really matters to them (person centred planning approaches could provide a useful framework for this):**
  - Are we the same or have we changed?
  - What matters most to us now?
  - How do we translate that into how we go about our lives?
- **When they return to establishments, children and young people will need opportunities to explore**:
  - What has been difficult for them (*it is important to accept and acknowledge difficult feelings about missed opportunities, disappointments and specific challenges they have faced*).

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- o What they have learned about their own ways of coping with challenge *(Encourage, children and young people to record what they learned and think about how they could use these at home and in establishments when they need to)*.
- o What they feel hopeful about for the future *(The message about hope for the future is important to all of us)*. (See also: Transitions principle).
- **The questions above could also be used with staff groups**, along with opening a dialogue to try to identify what promotes or prevents the meeting of their professional, social and psychological needs in the workplace. The following prompts may help this dialogue with staff:
  - o What makes you proud to work here?
  - o What matters to you in your work?
  - o When we are at our best, what does that look like?
  - o What gets in the way of a good day?
- **Provide a sense of agency** (agency can help build our sense of power and control, which is particularly important when we feel anxious or uncertain).
  - o Encourage problem solving rather than always simply offering reassurance. E.g. *'I know you are worried about getting sick, but what are the things you are doing to keep yourself safe?'*
  - o Give children and young people the opportunity to talk about what has been going well and what has not gone so well.
  - o Guiding children and young people through imagining themselves as confident and successful in a stressful situation can help them feel the same in real life.
  - o Feelings of having choice and autonomy make important contributions to adult wellbeing too. Consider the following:
    - ▪ Do staff feel like they have some choice in how they do their job?
    - ▪ Do they have voice in the way things are done?
    - ▪ Are they a part of decisions on processes, changes, and improvements that affect them?
- **Model positive ways of managing anxiety**
  - o Exploring ideas about 'what helps me to feel calm?' will help children to come up with what works best for them. Breathing exercises are a good place to start.
  - o Encourage and support parents and carers to model these at home.
  - o For staff members and parents, the NHS recommend '5 ways to wellbeing'.
  - o Adults, children and young people can benefit from short regulation breaks throughout the day (1-2 minutes can be enough!). E.g. breathing exercises, mindfulness, movement or checking in with a trusted person. (See also: Trauma section and REPS blog for wellbeing resources).

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Find out more:

- '7 ways to support children and young people who are worried' Anna Freud Centre https://www.annafreud.org/media/11453/7waysanxiety.pdf
- 'Developmental relationships framework' SEARCH institute: https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/ideas-building-developmental-relationships/
- Dr Bruce Perry discusses a range of regulatory techniques to support staff wellbeing which can be built into the school day. (Listen for the '6 R's – key elements of a positive workplace near the end!): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcDTXJpCMiY&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop
- '10 steps to staff wellbeing' Anna Freud Centre: https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/resources-for-schools/ten-steps-towards-school-staff-wellbeing/
- A summary of Louise Bomber's YouTube 'Sofa Times', focussing on 'recovery in the community': https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/re/public/renfrewshireedpsych/uploads/sites/2916/2020/05/14134533/Louise-Bombers-Youtube-Sofa-Time-Summary.pdf
- Renfrewshire EPS wellbeing resources https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/re/renfrewshireedpsych/wellbeing/
- Mind UK, Wellness Action Plan: https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/employer-resources/wellness-action-plan-download/

Contact your Educational Psychologist for further information about:

- Resilience
- Mindfulness
- Living Life to the Full (LLTTF): Secondary school resource
- Person centred planning (PCP)

Language is a vital means of communication

What is this nurture principle about?

Understanding that language is more than a skill to be learnt and is valued as a way of putting feelings into words. Understanding that the language we use when communicating with our children and young people, family and colleagues can shape thinking, feeling and subsequent behaviours.

Why is this important for COVID-19 recovery planning?

Reflecting on the language we use is more pertinent than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery process, as the language we use can help create a sense of belonging and reconnection and help staff, children and young people and families to understand, process and manage their emotions.

What I can do:

- **Listen and validate emotions**
  o Listening to others and validating their emotions helps to make people feel heard, valued, safe and secure. *'I understand it's very hard for you when you are worrying about your mum working in the hospital.'*
- **Running commentaries**
  o Adults providing a running commentary (say what you see) can help children and young people (and other adults) make sense of situations and understand their feelings. Using phrases such as 'I wonder' and 'I notice' can be a nice way to do this. E.g. '*I notice that you seem a little upset, I wonder if that is because you're missing being at home with your family'.*
- **'Name it to tame it'** *(*Siegel & Bryson, 2012)
  o Naming feelings (as above) can help people process what they are feeling and make the connection between emotions and behaviours. It can also help people feel heard and understood.
- **Use the language of belonging**
  o Using language such as *'Let's', 'We', 'Us'* can promote a sense of connection and belonging during lockdown and into the recovery process. E.g. *'We may all be at home but we're still Mr H's P4/S4 Art and Design class.' 'I can't wait until we are all together again.'*
- **Making time and space for talking**
  o Demonstrate that you are available to talk. Both speaking and listening are important to develop language, idea formation and social skills (see also: Environment and Wellbeing principles).
- **Tuning In**
  o Effective communication not only involves an awareness of the language that we and others are using, but also our tone of voice and non-verbal communication. Tuning in to children, families and colleagues by noticing, listening and responding to their communication can help develop positive relationships and reach new shared understandings.

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Find out more:

- Get PsychEd Blog: https://getpsyched.co.uk/2020/03/17/telling-children-about-covid-19-advice-for-parents-those-working-with-children/
- Beacon house 'What we say': https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/What-We-Say-Comic-1.pdf
- Dr Megan Gunnar: https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=harvard+serve+and+return+&view=detail&mid=F371EFDFBC6D14E444F7F371EFDFBC6D14E444F7&FORM=VIRE&adlt=strict
- Dan Siegel explains 'name it to tame it': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcDLzppD4Jc

Contact your Educational Psychologist for further information about:

- Self-regulation scripts
- The Attunement Principles
- Renfrewshire's Inclusive Communication Environments (RICE)

All Behaviour is Communication

What is this nurture principle about?

This principle emphasises the importance of looking deeper into the behaviour that a child or young person (or adult) is displaying and trying to figure out, 'what is this child or young person (or adult) trying to tell me?'. Children and young people (or adults) who have been severely impacted by the pandemic may not find it easy to settle and be ready to learn/work once returning to the establishment.

Why is this important for COVID-19 recovery planning?

You may see lots of different behaviours which communicate stress and/or anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery process, from children and young people, staff and parents/caregivers. It is important to remain aware of this and expect to see some cases where psychological distress manifests through behaviour.

> *"A child or young person experiencing chronic stress may appear jumpy, volatile, hyper-vigilant and perhaps operating in survival mode; easily triggered into fight or flight survival reactions. Others may seem dazed or tuned-out. More likely to be girls, these are the children whose survival strategy is to freeze or submit, retreating from a world they view as scary and/or unpredictable into a mind that feels safer."'*
>
> Meredith (2020)

This can also apply to adults.

What I can do:

- **Identify hidden needs**
  - Remember that behaviour is always telling us something. Respond to the **need** rather than to the **behaviour** you see.
  For example, if a child or young person is displaying controlling behaviour, it may mean they feel the world around them is out of control, which is very understandable given COVID-19 circumstances. Try offering choice or giving a role to allow them to feel more in control.
- **Demonstrate empathy and acceptance of the child or young person's thoughts and feelings:**
  - *'Your feelings are okay with me.'*
  - *'I know how difficult it must be to come back to school after all that time off- I'm really tired too!'*
- **Reframe the behaviour**
  - Remember that how we speak about children and young people impacts our own behaviour. For example, if you say the child or young person is attention seeking, it may make us feel frustrated and withhold attention.
  - By reframing this behaviour and saying the child or young person is attention needing, it is more likely you will feel more sympathetic and give the child or young person the attention s/he needs. Children and young people's trust in adults is likely to have been shaken by COVID-19 experiences. It is expected that they will be more attention needing as a result.

- **Sequence of engagement- Dr. Bruce Perry's 3 Rs: Regulate, Relate & Reason**
  - You need to calm the body's physical reactions, then relate by making connections. Only then can the reasoning happen. Remember to **connect before you correct**!
- **Playfulness to reduce anxiety**
  - Creating new fun morning routines, telling jokes, sharing funny stories and learning through music and rhythm are all ways to help promote calm.
- **Recognise that adults are affected by stress and trauma too** and you may witness adult behaviour related to stress. Try and use some of the strategies above to support one another. (See also: Wellbeing principle).

Find out more:
- Get PsychEd Blog: https://getpsyched.co.uk/2020/03/17/telling-children-about-covid-19-advice-for-parents-those-working-with-children/
- Dr Karen Treisman discusses some common survival, protective, and coping tools, skills, and resources: https://youtu.be/tVw6naHFLKc -
- Beacon House resource explaining Bruce Perry's 3 R's: https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-Three-Rs.pdf
- Inner World resource 'What survival looks like in the primary school': http://www.innerworldwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Survival-In-Primary-School-2019.pdf
- Inner World resource 'What survival looks like in the secondary school': https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Survival-In-Secondary-School.pdf

Contact your Educational Psychologist for further information about:
- Hidden needs
- Survival responses: fight, flight or freeze
- Shame reactions, stress responses and related strategies
- Reframing behaviour

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Transitions are important in children's lives

What is this nurture principle about?

This principle recognises the importance of how day to day transitions are managed, as well as carefully preparing children and young people (and adults) for more significant challenges and events. Transitions can be difficult because they involve change, and this can cause anxiety. Even small changes during a day can cause anxiety for some.

Why is this important for COVID-19 recovery planning?

All the restrictions due to COVID-19 and moving out of these are major transitions in all our lives. A predictable routine and structure can help ease anxiety about transitions, because it helps us to know what to expect, however COVID-19 has changed all of our usual routines and our ability to predict what the future, even in the short term is going to look like. This is likely to cause a level of anxiety in everyone. Even for the least affected, this needs to be processed or it will continue to have an effect. It is therefore crucial that we find ways to support all with these transitions. Some staff, children and young people and their families will find it relatively easy to adjust, however many will face challenges and may require more support.

What I can do:

- **View all staff, children and young people as new starts**
  - All will have worries about returning to establishments and will benefit from careful planning for this.
  - Plan a welcome back and curriculum that focuses on staff and children and young peoples' wellbeing. Consider ways to listen to staff and children and young peoples' worries and respond to their needs by using this data to construct a curriculum together (see also: Wellbeing principle).
  - Plan a return that allows time for the rebuilding of relationships, trust and friendships.
  - Plan time for children, young people and staff to share and celebrate things they did and achieved while staying at home.
  - Some staff and families will sadly have suffered bereavement. Involve them in planning their particular needs for return (see also: Bereavement and Loss section).
  - In the longer-term plan events to recognise community members who have played a significant role in helping during the crisis, to thank staff for all the ways that they helped families at this time and to remember those who have sadly died.
- **Listen to and validate emotions**
  - Many children and young people will have missed out on experiences and important transitions in their lives, such as school trips, moving from primary to secondary schools, sitting formal exams, proms, etc. Show empathy, acknowledge this loss and associated feelings, such as anger, sadness and the unfairness of what has happened. Plan alternatives to mark 'rites of passage.'
  - Some children and young people will have real anxieties about separating from parents/carers. Trauma informed schools UK stress the need to 'regulate, relate and offer compassion, empathy and comfort'. See link below.

- **Engage with staff and children and young people about what the transition will look like.**
  - Communicate information about school routines – model routines via video/ communication friendly resources (e.g. social stories).
  - Virtual tours: to show layout of classrooms, corridors and communal areas, stressing what has been done to try and make the environment as safe as possible.
  - Try to make a personal connection with your class/pastoral group/year group. E.g. video messages, phone calls, post cards.
  - Transition passports- send out to be completed at home.
- **Supporting transitions**
  - Mini-rituals; simple sequences of activity can set the tone of the day and be of real benefit e.g. morning song, mindfulness, music after intervals. For those needing more support, time and space at the beginning of the day to scan their environment, key adult meet and greet and planning for the day, highlighting times that more support may be needed.
  - Transitional objects: allow the child or young person to bring something from home into school. For younger children this might be kept in a 'treasure box' which provides a useful boundary to limit what the child can bring. For older ones it is more likely to be something that they can keep about their person or in their pencil case/bag. We might need to be creative about how we do in the context of infection control.

Find out more:
- Anna Freud Centre: Managing unexpected endings and transitions. https://www.annafreud.org/media/11627/managing-unexpected-endings-transitions-may2020.pdf
- Trauma informed schools UK. Advice about supporting the children of key workers who have difficulty separating from their parents (principles apply to all, not just key workers children). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fndOOo33_r4&feature=youtu.be
- 'Recovery Curriculum' information: https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/
- 5 ways to help children heal following lockdown (useful trauma informed article): https://marymered.wordpress.com/2020/04/14/five-ways-to-help-children-heal-when-schools-reopen/
- Transition tips for parents/ carers: https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Supporting-Transitions-2.pdf
- Bereavement support for children during COVID-19: https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/

Contact your Educational Psychologist for further information about:
- Survival responses: fight, flight or freeze
- Self-regulation scripts
- Renfrewshire's Inclusive Communication Environments (RICE)

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Trauma informed Approaches

Talking about trauma can be distressing, so please be aware that some of the content may be personally relevant to you. If this is the case, please look at the self-care section in this document in the first instance. If you are worried about yourself or someone else who has experienced trauma, please seek help from trusted family or friends, your employer or contact NSPCC, Young Minds, Children1st, Barnardo's, Samaritans, Local health care practitioners**.**

What is trauma?

This document contains a brief introduction to trauma and some guidance about what every adult can do to support. Furthermore, in-depth information is contained within REPS Trauma Informed Approaches Resource.

There are different definitions of trauma. Perry's (2002) definition relates specifically to children and young people:

> *"…a psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of normal childhood experience and involves a sense of intense fear, terror and helplessness"*
>
> (Perry, 2002 p12)

Why is this important for COVID-19 recovery planning?

As we navigate through the Coronavirus pandemic and consider the recovery from it, nurture, ACES, and trauma informed responses will be needed more than ever. Everyone is experiencing this situation and for some it may be worrying, stressful, confusing, or even frightening. Children and young people and the adults who look after them may experience anxiety, stress, loss, bereavement, grief, and trauma and it is normal to experience a stress response. Experiences will vary greatly depending on exposure to events, previous experiences and the relative amounts of risk factors and protective factors during this time. For some, the experience will be traumatic and result in a trauma response.

The trauma continuum shows the different types of trauma (Solomon and Heide, 1999).

Trauma Continuum

Type 1
Single incident trauma

Type 2
Multiple traumas

Type 3
Multiple ongoing traumas from an early age
Sometimes called
Developmental Trauma
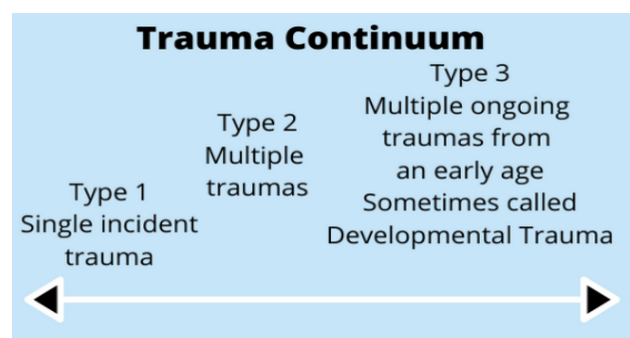
Figure 4: The Trauma Continuum (Solomon & Heide, 1999)

Bereavement and Loss

Many children and young people will have experienced some kind of loss or bereavement during the COVID-19 pandemic, which could be traumatic. Losses during this time include, illness, loss of familiar routines, loss of education, missing rites of passage, loss of connections with friends and family. Being cut off from family, friends and communities is difficult for everyone, but especially for children, young people and families who are grieving for a loved one.

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Experiencing intense feelings is a common, normal reaction to bereavement and loss and part of the healing process. Sometimes we learn to live with the loss, but for some people the difficulties associated with it are prolonged and persistent. Many of the actions detailed in the section below will support most children and young people through bereavement and loss, however some may require more specific support.

How the Nurture Principles can support with recovery from Trauma

Developing your response to Trauma

Developing trauma informed practice can be achieved through nurturing approaches and positive relationships. It is not accomplished through any single technique, strategy or checklist. Education Scotland (2018) makes the links between nurturing approaches, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma Informed Practice.

Figure 5: Nurture, ACES & Trauma (Education Scotland, 2018)

Why are relationships so important?

> "*The healthier relationships a child or young person has, the more likely s/he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love.*"
> (Perry, 2006)

Evidence tells us that the presence of one safe, supportive, dependable, responsive adult in a child or young person's life can buffer the effects of trauma, helping to restore and rebuild their wellbeing. There is no expectation for educational staff to provide therapy, but Dr Karen Triesman, trauma specialist, encourages us to consider that:

> "*Every interaction can be an intervention.*
> *Every moment or interaction can be positive or negative, it can be a snake or a ladder, it has the potential to open a door or close, it can be trauma inducing or reducing. A positive moment can provide an experience that is a stepping stone to new possibilities and experiences.*"
> Triesman (2020)

Trauma informed Actions

Please see also Appendix 2 for a printable table which contains the examples of Trauma informed actions detailed in the following section and highlights where these link to specific Nurture Principles.

What I can do:

- **Provide physical and emotional safety**
  - Create a welcoming environment that is physically and emotionally safe.
  - Smile and show relaxed open body language and facial expressions.
  - Amplify messages of safety and give lots of reassurance.
  - Provide clear, accurate information about the COVID-19 situation
  - Listen to children and young peoples' fears and worries and address them as clearly and honestly as possible.
- **Be Responsive and Supportive**
  - Be calm and manage your own reactions by slowing down breathing and talk less
  - Give practical and emotional support.
  - Give comfort and reassurance.
  - Use key adult approach to provide a predictable and consistent relationship.
  - Show children and young people that you notice them and keep them in mind.
- **Be Trustworthy**
  - Allow children and young people time to gently build up trust with you.
  - Be patient and go at the child or young person's pace.

  'Trust is earned in the smallest of moments. It is earned not through heroic deeds, or even highly visible actions, but through paying attention, listening, and gestures of genuine care and connection.' (Brene Brown, 2020)
- **Be Dependable**
  - Persevere in providing a safe, accepting relationship
  - Keep showing up, smiling, and interacting with warmth and unconditional positive regard
  - Don't make promises that you can't keep
- **Be predictable**
  - Try to respond and behave in a consistent manner
  - Create predictable routines.
  - Provide clear accurate information about any changes to routines and staffing
- **Be curious about behaviour**
  - Observe and try to work out if there are any triggers
- **Be understanding and compassionate**
  - Reframe the behaviour by seeing it as the child or young person's way of keeping themselves safe and trying to cope
- **Regulate and co- regulate**
  - Model the calm behaviour you want other people, children and young people to mirror.

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- Create frequent opportunities for regulation for all, such as breathing, grounding exercises, and movement.
- Collaborate with the child or young person to select and plan regulation activities.
- Practice these regularly when the child or young person is calm so that they become familiar with them and can use them during times of stress.

- **Teach children, young people and adults about their stress responses**
  - Help children, young people and adults to notice how their body feels when they are anxious and what kind of activities help them to feel calmer.

- **Reduce the child or young person's burden.**
  - Remind them that they are not to blame or responsible for what has happened and that it is okay to ask for help

- **Amplify Joy**
  - Notice and join in with activities or objects the child or young person shows pleasure in.
  - Use humour and fun where appropriate
  - Avoid sarcasm

- **Resist re- traumatisation**
  - Be aware of trauma triggers and limit exposure to them

- **Rebuild**
  - Support children and young people to use their unique strengths, abilities and talents and to reconnect with their sense of identity.
  - Use 'I am' 'I have' I can' statements as sentence starters.

- **Recognise effort, good choices and achievements.**
  - Give specific praise and feedback rather than vague, general praise.

- **Maintain Boundaries and roles**
  - Do not allow children or young people to have too much responsibility
  - Set boundaries and limitations
  - Talk about returning to routines, school, expectations for behaviour post COVID-19

- **Reflect and Repair**
  - If you do 'get it wrong' by saying or doing the 'wrong thing,' go back and repair the situation rather than letting it fester. Apologise and explain you were trying to help.

- **Collaborate with colleagues and the child or young person's family**
  - Apply all actions above in your interactions with them.

- **Re-evaluate your values**
  - Prioritize relationships, regulation, repair and wellbeing.

- Remember self-care and self-compassion
  - Look after your own wellbeing. Rest, relax, recuperate.
  - Monitor your own emotional reactions.
  - Seek help when you need it.
  - Connect with others
  - Remind yourself that you are doing your best

- Refresh
  - Review procedures and policies reflecting trauma informed practice and actions.

Find out more:

- Barnardo's video, *'It's all about relationships'*:
  https://youtu.be/0RyD-ueKCOc
- British Psychological Society , *'Supporting care-experienced children and young people during the Covid-19 crisis and its aftermath'* https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/public/supporting-care-experienced-children
- Dr Karen Treisman explains her quote, *'Every Interaction can be an Intervention'*:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pBkXbCP3Q4&feature=youtu.be
- Julie Herman Co director of Trauma Informed Schools, talks about providing reassurance and comfort whilst social distancing
  https://www.traumainformedschools.co.uk/resources
- Safe Hands Thinking Minds (for trauma informed resources):
  http://www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk/covid-anxiety-stress-resources-links/
- NHS, Sowing Seeds Animation - Trauma Informed Practice for Anyone Working with Children and Young People:
  https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-discipline/psychology/multiprofessional-psychology/national-trauma-training-framework/trauma-informed-resources-opening-doors-and-sowing-seeds-animations.aspx
- Trauma informed schools UK. Resources to support children and young people experiencing trauma.
  https://www.traumainformedschools.co.uk/
- Karen Triesman (2017), 'A Therapeutic Treasure Box for Working with Children and Adolescents with Developmental Trauma'
- Beacon House, *'Brainstem Calmers'* – simple activities involving Patterned, repetitive, rhythmic activities which help to regulate our nervous system.
  https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Brainstem-Calmer-Activities.pdf
- Education Scotland (2019) Compassionate and Connected Classroom Curriculum Resource for Upper Primary:
  https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/compassionate-and-connected-classroom
- Winston's Wish offer support for Bereavement:
  https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/
- The Childhood Bereavement Network have specific information about bereavement during the COVID-19 pandemic:
  http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/help-around-a-death/covid-19.aspx
- Dr Karen Treisman discusses bereavement and loss during COVID-19:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9a79NeUARo

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Appendix 1: Planning Process for Whole School Nurture

What information will help us to understand what is & isn't working well?

Core group gather information from staff, parents/carers and children/young people

How can we gather the information we need in the most efficient way?

What do we want to accomplish?

Core group consider the information & agree aim

Specify, quantify & include timescale in aim

How do we want things to be different?

Core group decide which nurture principle will best guide planning and interventions to meet this aim

What changes can we make that will lead to the improvements that we seek?

Core group agree on a small number of changes to test (using PDSA where appropriate)

How will we measure the impact of these changes?

How will we share this plan with staff, families and pupils?

Changes are implemented and adapted according to impact and need

Use RNRA action plan and PDSA paperwork to record

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Appendix 2: Trauma Informed Actions & Nurture Principle Links

NP1	Learning is understood developmentally	NP2	Environment offers a safe base
NP3	Nurture is important for Wellbeing and Self-esteem	NP4	Language is a vital means of communication
NP5	All behaviour is communication	NP6	Transitions are important in children's lives

The table below contains examples of Trauma informed actions which will help to reconnect, rebuild, repair and resist traumatization. Links to Nurture Principles are listed. Please refer to the corresponding nurture principle for more details.

Relate, Regulate, Rebuild and Repair	Nurture Principle links
Provide physical and emotional safety Create a welcoming environment that is physically and emotionally safe. Smile and show relaxed open body language and facial expressions. Amplify messages of safety and give lots of reassurance. Provide clear, accurate information about the COVID-19 situation. Listen to children and young peoples' fears and worries and address them as clearly and honestly as possible.	NP1 NP2 NP6
Be Responsive and Supportive Be calm and manage your own reactions by slowing down breathing and talk less. Give practical and emotional support. Give comfort and reassurance. Use key adult approach to provide a predictable and consistent relationship. Show children and young people that you notice them and keep them in mind.	NP2 NP4 NP5 NP6
Be Trustworthy Allow children and young people time to gently build up trust with you. Be patient and go at the child or young person's pace. *'Trust is earned in the smallest of moments. It is earned not through heroic deeds, or even highly visible actions, but through paying attention, listening, and gestures of genuine care and connection.'* (Brene Brown, 2020)	NP2 NP4
Be Dependable Persevere in providing a safe, accepting relationship. Keep showing up, smiling, and interacting with warmth and unconditional positive regard. Don't make promises that you can't keep.	NP2 NP3 NP4

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Relate, Regulate, Rebuild and Repair	Nurture Principle links
Be predictable Try to respond and behave in a consistent manner. Create predictable routines. Provide clear accurate information about any changes to routines and staffing.	NP6
Be curious about behaviour Observe and try to work out if there are any triggers.	NP5
Be understanding and compassionate Reframe the behaviour by seeing it as the child or young person's way of keeping themselves safe and trying to cope.	NP5
Regulate and co- regulate Model the calm behaviour you want other people, children and young people to mirror. Create frequent opportunities for regulation for all, such as breathing, grounding exercises, and movement. Collaborate with the child or young person to select and plan regulation activities. Practice these regularly when the child or young person is calm so that they become familiar with them and can use them during times of stress.	NP3 NP4 NP5
Teach children, young people and adults about their stress responses Help children, young people and adults to notice how their body feels when they are anxious and what kind of activities help them to feel calmer.	NP3 NP5
Reduce the child or young person's burden. Remind them that they are not to blame or responsible for what has happened and that it is okay to ask for help.	NP3 NP4 NP5
Amplify Joy Notice and join in with activities or objects the child or young person shows pleasure in. Use humour and fun where appropriate. Avoid sarcasm.	NP1 NP3 NP4
Resist re- traumatisation Be aware of trauma triggers and limit exposure to them	NP5
Rebuild Support children and young people to use their unique strengths, abilities and talents and to reconnect with their sense of identity. Use 'I am' 'I have' I can' statements as sentence starters.	NP3

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Relate, Regulate, Rebuild and Repair	Nurture Principle links
Recognise effort, good choices and achievements. Give specific praise and feedback rather than vague, general praise.	NP3 NP4
Maintain Boundaries and roles Do not allow children or young people to have too much responsibility. Set boundaries and limitations. Talk about returning to routines, school, expectations for behaviour post COVID-19.	NP1 NP5 NP6
Reflect and Repair If you do 'get it wrong' by saying or doing the 'wrong thing,' go back and repair the situation rather than letting it fester. Apologise and explain you were trying to help.	NP4 NP5
Collaborate with colleagues and the child or young person's family Apply all actions above in your interactions with them.	NP3
Re-evaluate your values Prioritise relationships, regulation, repair and wellbeing.	NP3
Remember self-care and self-compassion Look after your own wellbeing. Rest, relax, recuperate. Monitor your own emotional reactions. Seek help when you need it. Connect with others. Remind yourself that you are doing your best.	NP3 NP5
Refresh Review procedures and policies reflecting trauma informed practice and actions.	

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