

YOUNG MINDS

Monday 10 June 2019

Charities publish new guide on childhood trauma

Three charities – YoungMinds, the Anna Freud Centre and Body and Soul – are today (10th June) publishing a vital new guide on childhood adversity and trauma for professionals working to support people on the frontline.

Adversity and Trauma Informed Practice includes practical guidance on how Adverse Childhood Experiences can affect young people, and advice for professionals on spotting the signs of trauma and providing effective support. [1]

It will be launched at Love Vs Trauma, a day-long symposium of talks and performances by world class neuroscientists, cutting-edge therapists and creative artists including Emili Sande and Lemn Sissay, which takes place today at the Barbican Centre. [2]

Dr Marc Bush, Policy Director at YoungMinds, said: “Children who grow up in the most difficult and complex circumstances are more likely to develop mental health problems and more likely to become suicidal, so it’s crucial that all professionals working on the front line know how to recognise the signs of trauma and how best to provide support. “If a seven year-old boy who’s experienced domestic violence plays violent games with his friends, or if a young woman who’s been bullied and assaulted keeps missing appointments at her college, it’s important that their behaviour is understood in its context. If young people are punished for what may be a normal response to what they’ve been through, it can make things much worse.

“That’s why all professionals who work with children – including NHS staff, social workers, teachers and police – should know about the effects of trauma on behaviour and have clear guidance about how and when to ask about traumatic experiences. This should be a public health priority.”

Emma Colyer MBE, Director of Body & Soul, said: “The impact from experiencing trauma and adversity in childhood is stored within our mind, body and soul and can last a lifetime. Sadly, those living with childhood trauma often live with illness, some die 20 years earlier than their peers, and yet this does not have to be the case.

“By understanding people’s behaviour and the challenges they face, we can disrupt this cycle of suffering and transform the impact of their trauma for people of all ages. It does not have to be a life-sentence. Trauma-informed approaches help us to do that by underpinning care with kindness, compassion, curiosity and understanding. It saves lives. These approaches must be embedded in our systems and services throughout society to ensure that no-ones’ life chances are reduced by the experiences of their past.”

David Trickey, Consultant Clinical Psychologist at the Anna Freud Centre, said: “People are waking up to the huge impact that mental health problems can cause children and young people. In particular there is a growing realisation about the impact that trauma can have on their lives, and a better understanding of what trauma is. Sometimes it can be a response to a single event, but it can also be a result of repeated experiences such as abuse or neglect.

“We understand more than ever before about how these traumatic events can damage children and young people and more about what we can do to help those who have experienced it. What is absolutely essential is that we share this learning, and share the developing evidence base with professionals so that children and young people get the right sort of help when they need it. This booklet is an important contribution to that aspiration.”

Adversity and Trauma-Informed Practice includes an introduction to different forms of Adverse Childhood Experience - including maltreatment, violence and coercion, bereavement and prejudice – and examples and case studies providing a deeper understanding of how these can affect young people’s behaviour and mental health. The guide includes practical ways to embed trauma-informed approaches into practice to better support young people’s needs. Recognising the effect that working directly with people impacted by trauma can have, advice is also shared on how professionals can look after their own mental health.

NOTES

[1] Adverse Childhood Experiences are defined as highly stressful events or situations that occur during childhood and/or adolescence. It can be a single event or incident, or prolonged threats to a child or young person’s safety, security or bodily integrity.

[2] For more information about the symposium, or to book tickets, see

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/love-vs-trauma-the-frontiers-of-healing-childhood-trauma-a-symposium-tickets-59754586577>

YoungMinds is one of the UK’s leading children’s mental health charity committed to improving the mental health and emotional well-being of children and empowering their parents and carers. For further information please visit www.youngminds.org.uk

Follow us on Twitter: [@YoungMindsUK](https://twitter.com/YoungMindsUK) and [Facebook](#)

For free advice and support for parents, call our helpline on 0808 802 5544

Body & Soul is an innovative charity that uses a comprehensive, community-based and trauma informed approach to address the life-threatening effects of childhood adversity in people of all ages. Established in 1996 to address the gap in HIV services that provided targeted support for children, young people, and families. We have developed a ‘whole person’ model of care rooted in a strengths-based approach that nurtures connection, healing and growth.

Social media:

Twitter [@body soulcharity](https://twitter.com/body soulcharity)

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/BodySoulCharity/>

Instagram: [bodyandsoulcharity](#)

Anna Freud Centre The [Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families](#) has developed and delivered pioneering mental health care for children, young people and families for over 65 years. Our aim is to transform current mental health provision in the UK by improving the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of treatment.

Follow us on Twitter [@AFNCCF](#) and [Facebook](#).