#TraumaAware2026

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TRAUMA-AWARE
EDUCATION

LIGHTNING TALK POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Addressing the life impacts of trauma for Australian learners

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Before They Meet Patients: Student Perspectives on Trauma-Informed Care in Australian Medical Education

Hobbs C[1], Das A[2], Kaur M[2], Nandapurkar M[2], Silveri J[2], Hicks D[1], Radford J[1]
[1]University of Tasmania, [2]Australian Medical Students' Association

Aim:
To share a student-led exploration of how students in medical degrees in Australia understand, encounter and feel prepared to practise trauma-informed care.

Background/Context:
Trauma-informed care is increasingly recognised as essential to safe, equitable healthcare, yet its place in medical curricula remains uneven. This project was conceived by four medical students from Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales with a shared interest in advancing health equity. Although "trauma informed" is increasingly referenced in healthcare, the students wanted to understand its inclusion and perceived adequacy in medical degrees.

Relevance:
Centring student voice, this presentation connects trauma-aware education with students' experiences of learning at university and on clinical placement. It combines student reflections with survey data from more than 150 medical students across Australia to inform trauma-informed medical education.

Contribution:
By examining an under-researched area of medical education, this project supports advocacy for trauma-informed care to be embedded within all university medical degrees and reflected in graduate outcome standards, so future doctors are better prepared to provide safe, compassionate and responsive care for people affected by trauma.

Description:
An interdisciplinary education and medicine team worked with students to administer an anonymous online mixed-methods survey of currently enrolled Australian medical students. Quantitative items examined exposure to trauma-informed education and confidence across key principles, while free-text responses invited additional comments.

Engagement:
Audience members will participate in a polling activity: "what should future doctors learn before they meet patients?" This will be followed by a student-voice vignette and facilitated discussion on translating findings into action.

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Mapping the evidence on trauma-informed or sensory-based practices in preschool settings: A scoping review

Philpott-Robinson K[2], Hockey R[1], Ray K[1], Haracz K[1]
[1]University Of Newcastle, [2]La Trobe University

Aim:
To map and summarise the existing evidence on trauma-informed and sensory-based approaches in preschool settings, including the implementation and evaluation of these practices.

Background/Context:
Trauma is common in preschool-aged children and can influence development, mental health, and participation in everyday childhood occupations. Evidence suggests trauma may also affect sensory processing, which can impact engagement in daily activities. Preschool environments may help buffer these effects by providing social, developmental, and occupational opportunities. Occupational therapy can support children experiencing trauma in preschool settings at both individual and organisational levels. Trauma-informed and sensory-based approaches are increasingly used in early learning environments; however, the evidence base underpinning these practices in preschool settings remains varied and not well consolidated.

Relevance:
Understanding how trauma-informed and sensory-based practices are applied in preschool contexts supports the development of trauma-aware education systems and promotes more responsive and inclusive learning environments for young children.

Contribution:
This review provides an overview of current evidence and highlights gaps in the literature to inform future research in early childhood education.

Description:
A scoping review methodology was used to identify and analyse relevant literature. Databases were systematically searched, and studies were screened against inclusion criteria focusing on preschool-aged children and the implementation of trauma-informed and/or sensory-based practices. Data were extracted and thematically analysed to map key concepts and approaches.

Keywords:
Trauma-informed practice; sensory-based approaches; preschools

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Educational Talking Circles as reflective and culturally responsive tool in trauma informed professional learning.

Dunston S[1]
[1]Melodica Music Therapy, [2]Griffith University

Background/Context:
Early childhood educators working with children affected by complex and developmental trauma face significant wellbeing challenges, yet lack access to the structured reflective practice support available to allied health practitioners doing equivalent work.

Aim:
This poster presents the conceptual framework underpinning the CARRM (Connection and Regulation using Rhythmic play and Music) program — a trauma-informed, music based professional learning program for early childhood educators.

Relevance:
Whilst being conceptually grounded in Dr. Bruce Perry's Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics and Maggie Kline's '8 Essentials of Healthy Attachment', it also proposes the integration of Educational Talking Circles (ETCs)- not only as a tool for reflexive and reflective practice to support educator wellbeing, but as a way to embed cultural responsiveness into the professional learning process. Through the sharing of stories and lived experiences, it allows hierarchical systems of knowledge sharing to be flattened, non-dominant perspectives to be platformed and learning to be co-collaborative.

Contribution:
Set within the context of the Australian Early Years Learning Framework V2.0's shift from cultural competence to cultural responsiveness, this work addresses three intersecting gaps in the literature: a conceptualizing framework for a low resource reflective practice model to support ECEs in the child trauma space; the underexplored role of arts based approaches for supporting children with complex trauma histories ; and the nascent evidence base for culturally responsive approaches in early childhood pedagogical and professional learning research.

Keywords: professional learning, talking circles, arts based approaches, cultural responsiveness, reflective practice.

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Breaking down the Boundaries in a School's Physical Environment

Sachdeva S[1], Hanley W[1]
[1]Hester Hornbrook Academy

Aim:
To share how we have reconsidered our physical environment to create a trauma-informed, healing-oriented environment that support students to reengage in education.

Background/Context:
A key aspect of how we do school differently is through the focus on the built environment. We recognise that an environment needs to be safe, respectful, productive and inclusive to create a place where students want to be. So we ensure our built environments include principles of healing-oriented design, construction, and interior design. With all buildings of the school, including fit-out, intentionally designed with an emphasis on community, identity and belonging.

Relevance:
At our school we ensure all we do is from a healing-oriented lens that focuses on creating environments for students to feel safe, respected and productive. We will share some ways of rethinking the physical environment that is more trauma-informed and builds a strong sense of connection and belonging.

Contribution:
This presentation will share practical ideas for participants to consider how physical environment changes can improve engagement, attendance, wellbeing and learning outcomes for young people.

Description:
This session will provide an overview of what key considerations have helped in creating a sense of belonging and connection for our students within our physical spaces. We will draw on case studies from students, staff and Gray Puksand Architects who helped design the spaces.

Engagement:
Participants will be engaged in a presentation drawing on practical examples to show the thinking and positive impact of trauma-informed design for schools.

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Perspectives on teaching about trauma in VET youth work courses

Smith O[1], Cacciattolo M[1]
[1]Victoria University

Aim:
This submission will provide insights into two research projects conducted into Vocational Education and Training (VET) youth work qualifications at Victoria University. These projects focused on the perspectives of students and VET teachers when learning and teaching about trauma.

Background/Context:
The first project highlights the perspective of students when learning about being a trauma aware youth worker in the Certificate IV of Youth Work. Data findings include VET teacher knowledge of trauma playing a central role in enhancing student skills and knowledge in trauma-informed practice. Students also discussed a range of pedagogical practices that assisted them in being able to connect theory to practice when investigating trauma-aware teaching standpoints.

The second project encompasses the experiences of VET teachers when teaching about trauma in the Certificate IV and Diploma of Youth Work. Key findings about pedagogical approaches include creating a safe teaching and learning environment, the value of role plays, the inclusion of real-life scenarios and the need to have access to professional development on trauma education.

Relevance:
This research provides key insights about how VET youth work students learn about qualities that make up an effective trauma-aware practitioner. In addition this presentation will provide insight into how VET teachers approach teaching about trauma-aware standpoints in tertiary education.

Contribution:
The research provides insights about how best to approach teaching about trauma in VET settings.

Description:
A qualitative methodology was utilized, with semi-structured interviews and thematical analysis.

Engagement:
The audience will be encouraged to engage with the presentation through interactive slides.

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The healing nature: Why building opportunities for time outdoors is important for children and families.

Claughton A[1]
[1]Federation University Australia

Aim:
This presentation aims to draw on the parallel bodies of work between Trauma-Aware Practices (TAP) and nature play to explore shared approaches and recommendations.

Background/Context:
A recent report on the State of Nature Play in Victoria provides insight into the benefits of nature play for children and families. Benefits of nature play include increased connectedness, confidence and calmness. Wider contemporary research indicates the role nature can play in healing ACES and promoting positive childhood experiences.

Relevance:
TAP provide an integral approach to supporting individuals and making educational organisations a safe place for learning. Drawing on the research that explores healing and reviving qualities of nature can enrich the TAP used in educational spaces.

Contribution:
Children and young people's access to nature play is examined in this presentation. Drawing on the benefits of nature, there is a focus on the examples of embodied and sensory rich experiences that build connection and resilience in children. Attention is given to how nature can provide opportunities for regulation and movement that provide experiences that are nurturing and healing.

Description:
Positioned to explore the intersection of play, TAP and wellbeing, this research aims to identify how TAP can be enriched through nature play. Contemporary research grounded in neuroscience is used to deepen the connection between nature play and trauma-informed approaches.

Engagement:
This presentation will utilise visual media, incorporating images, to represent content and information. The use of story will be employed to connect with the audience and draw them into the presentation.

126

Relational and Participatory Approaches in Early Childhood Education: Responsive Relationships in South Australian Preschools

Varona L[1]
[1]Department for Education

Aim:
To share the practice and insights of Responsive Relationships, a South Australian initiative designed to strengthen educators use of relational skills, enriching educator and child experiences in educational environments.

Context:
Responsive Relationships is based on evidence, frameworks, and practice needs that highlight the vital role of secure, relational interactions between children and educators. These interactions directly support child development, trauma informed practice, belonging, curiosity, cultural inclusion, and educator wellbeing—essential for thriving educational outcomes. Beginning in children's centres, the initiative has since been thoughtfully adapted for preschool site implementation.

Relevance:
The practice of Responsive Relationships prioritises unconditional positive regard, child-centred understanding of trauma and early childhood development. By fostering a consistent, individual, and team-based approach, it promotes a supportive learning environment for every educator and child, encouraging sustained inclusivity and wellbeing.

Description:
A statewide pilot program that delivers targeted professional learning in both metropolitan and regional preschools, educators learn to use ten relational skills through a series of workshops reflective and intentional practice. The model embeds collaboration between allied health, educators, leadership, Aboriginal and multicultural services, supporting diverse perspectives and shared learning. Impact, sustainability, and practice quality is managed through evaluation and a governance group.

Contribution:
Responsive Relationships transforms theory into practical, accessible skills that strengthen trauma responsive and relational practice in education.

Engagement:
This presentation will provide insights, examples and reflections on a professional practice and learning model, inspiring participants to embed trauma-aware, relational approaches in their settings.

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From Royal Commission to Reform: Embedding Trauma-informed Practice Across Universal 3-year-old Preschool in South Australia

Meadows O[1], Paku S[1]
[1]Office For Early Childhood Development

South Australia is investing in the early childhood system to give our children the best possible start. The Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD) was set up in 2023 to respond to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care, with a mission to reduce the rates of developmental vulnerability in children beginning school. In addition to our headline reforms, aimed at giving children aged 3-5 access to quality preschool programs, it also made recommendations on investing in early years' services capability to support children affected by trauma.

This presentation describes the development and implementation of a mandated, statewide Trauma-informed Practice training module for services delivering 3-year-old preschool in South Australia. It is designed to build capability of the workforce to respond to the increasingly complex needs of children and families. Developed in collaboration with the Department for Education, the training comprises of two self-paced online modules. These modules sit within a multi-tiered framework endorsed by the South Australian Minister for Education and are mandated for Early Childhood Teachers, educators and other staff working in direct contact with children and families in the preschool program. Together, these modules support understanding of trauma theory and its application within early childhood contexts.

This initiative represents a shift from trauma-informed practice as an optional, self-directed professional learning opportunity to a mandated system expectation embedded in policy and service contracting. The presentation will explore the policy levers, cross agency collaboration, and implementation strategies that enabled statewide roll out of the initiative.

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Developing Trauma-Informed and Culturally Responsive Teachers: Insights from the SWiRL Program

Agborchi A[1], Sirca K[1]
[1]Victoria University

Aim:
This presentation examines the development of a professional learning resource designed to support pre-service teachers participating in the Story Writing in Remote Locations (SWiRL) program in First Nations communities.

Background/Context:
Although trauma-informed practice is increasingly recognised as essential in teacher education, limited research explores how pre-service teachers develop trauma awareness and culturally responsive capabilities in remote First Nations contexts. This study addresses this gap by examining pre-service teachers' reflections before and after the SWiRL program to understand how their perceptions of trauma, cultural safety, and professional identity evolve.

Relevance:
Initial findings indicate that engaging in remote community contexts, when viewed through a trauma-informed lens, deepened pre-service teachers' recognition of the impacts of trauma and intergenerational trauma on learning and behaviour. Participants also reported increased awareness of their own cultural positioning and a strengthened commitment to relational, culturally responsive teaching practices.

Contribution:
These insights informed the design of a professional learning resource that integrates trauma-informed principles with culturally responsive pedagogy, supporting pre-service teachers to work respectfully, safely, and effectively with First Nations students and communities.

Description:
A qualitative design was employed using semi-structured interviews conducted before and after the SWiRL program. Pre-program interviews explored perceptions of trauma, cultural competency, anticipated challenges, and support needs, while post-program interviews examined how immersion in remote contexts shaped knowledge, attitudes, and pedagogical approaches. Thematic analysis was utilised.

Engagement:
The presentation will feature a 5-minute video created across three remote First Nations communities and interview vignettes illustrating key themes and pre-service teachers' experiences.

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Growing Trauma-Informed Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand: A Braided Relational Neuroscience Approach

Hunter E[1]
[1]Queensland University of Technology

Aim:
To explore what is required to support schools in Aotearoa New Zealand to grow sustainable, culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and resilience-building practice, informed by relational neuroscience.

Background/Context:
Educators in New Zealand are increasingly responding to complex behavioural and engagement needs. While trauma-informed approaches are growing, there remains a need for guidance that is locally grounded, culturally responsive, and sustainable within the Aotearoa context.

Relevance:
This research positions trauma-informed practice as a shift from behaviour management to understanding neurobiological responses to safety and connection. It aligns with growing evidence that learning relies upon relational safety.

Contribution:
This study seeks to develop culturally grounded, evidence-informed guidelines that support educators, leaders, and communities to implement trauma-informed, resilience-building practice in meaningful and sustainable ways across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Description:
This research adopts a braided methodology (He Awa Whiria), weaving mātauranga Māori and Western knowledge systems within a relational, multi-phase design. Through hui (meetings), surveys, and mana-enhancing focus groups with educators, whānau, and community leaders, the study explores lived experiences, alongside the barriers, enablers, and conditions required for effective and sustained implementation.

Engagement:
The presentation will reflect the braided, relational research design, engaging participants through storytelling, visual frameworks, and reflective prompts that promote participant voice and the shared exploration of culturally responsive, trauma-informed practice.

Keywords:
Trauma-informed practice; Relational neuroscience; Mātauranga Māori; Culturally responsive education; Resilience

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Practical trauma-informed pedagogy for classroom teachers

Eastman K[1,2]
[1]Macquarie University, [2]NSW Department of Education

Aim
This session aims to explore how primary school teachers implement trauma-informed practices (TIP) in classrooms and share practical strategies to enhance trauma-informed pedagogy at the classroom level.

Background/Context
While TIP frameworks have increased at the school and system levels, less is understood about classroom-level teacher implementation. Recent research with 226 Australian primary teachers found that half reported using TIPs, mainly for self-regulation, psychological and classroom safety, and relationship building, with less focus on cognitive and pedagogical strategies. The use of TIP was predicted by the classroom teachers' trauma literacy, trauma-related professional learning and the experience of teaching students with a trauma history.

Relevance
Understanding teachers' use of TIP is critical for advancing trauma literacy, improving inclusive classroom environments through the implementation of TIP, and ensuring equitable educational outcomes for trauma-affected students.

Contribution
The findings of this recent peer-reviewed research contribute by identifying and synthesising actionable classroom practices, highlighting areas for growth in current teacher pedagogy, and fostering teacher self-efficacy to embed trauma-informed strategies effectively.

Description
Participants will engage with research findings that explored teacher-identified TIP strategies, discuss examples of teacher practice, and participate in collaborative activities to contextualise trauma-informed responses. Emphasis will be on balancing individual support with whole-class pedagogies to promote safety, learning, and connection.

Engagement
Attendees will be actively involved in reflecting on their own practice, contextualising research findings, sharing their experiences, and planning actionable trauma-informed practices and pedagogies to implement through interactive activities, small-group discussions, and the exploration of teacher-provided examples.

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Caring in Crisis: School Counsellors' Lived Experiences and Self-Support Following Critical Incidents

Henderson L[1]
[1]QUT

This presentation draws on findings from research exploring the lived experiences of school counsellors responding to critical incidents. While school counsellors were the focus of the research, the experiences shared reveal broader insights that are highly relevant to all education professionals. Drawing on the lived experiences of school counsellors, this presentation explores how school-based support professionals manage uncertainty, navigate expectations to remain calm and available during times of crisis, and make sense of their roles while holding others' distress.
Understanding that schools are complex workplaces, this presentation explores how experiences are shaped by individual coping strategies, school culture, leadership practices, collegial relationships, and role expectations.
Practical implications are central to this presentation, offering considerations for school leaders, wellbeing teams, and educators. Attendees will be invited to consider how schools can prepare for critical incidents in a trauma-informed way. Sustainable, trauma-area practice depends on systems that actively support those in caring roles, recognising that protecting staff wellbeing strengthens the entire school community.

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Trauma-informed career development in flexible and inclusive education

Greaves K[1], Chesters J[1], Brunzell T[1], Stokes H[1]
[1]University Of Melbourne

Aim
This Poster Lightning Talk explores the key takeaways from my Masters of Education (Research) thesis, which explores trauma-informed implementation of career development resources available to school staff, particularly in flexible and inclusive education settings. Key findings and discussion points will be shared, including the trauma-informed audit tool and adapted Systems Theory Framework (McMahon and Patton, 2022) model developed as part of the research.

Background/Context
Young people in flexible and inclusive education settings deserve high quality career development support, just like their peers. Trauma-informed delivery of career development provides an opportunity to provide this. The research explores the strengths and gaps within current resources and opportunities for these to be further integrated with trauma-informed practice.

Relevance
Trauma-informed practice is a major component of the research, specifically through how it intersects with the areas of career development and flexible and inclusive education. The research expands understanding of how trauma-informed practice can be embedded in these areas.

Contribution
The research contributes to the field through the development of a trauma-informed audit tool and adapted Systems Theory Framework (McMahon and Patton, 2022) model. These support staff to understand career development through a trauma-informed lens and implement programs in practice.

Description
A document analysis, underpinned by Systems Theory Framework (McMahon and Patton, 2022), was undertaken to understand whether elements of trauma-informed practice were present in career development resources. A trauma informed audit tool, informed by review of the literature, provided the structure for the analysis.

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Secondary trauma and educators' pathways to mitigating its impacts: Evidence from 107 interviews

Molineux J[1], Valizadeh R[1]
[1]Deakin University

Aim:
The purpose of this presentation is to inform participants about educators' pathways to mitigate the impact of secondary trauma.

Background/context:
The lead author interviewed 107 people across Australia who were volunteers drawn from a survey of over 2000 educators. The interviews included stories of trauma, the impact of trauma on the educators, and detailed strategies of coping with and mitigating the impact of trauma. The findings are that three main strategies of recovery, psychological coping and obtaining support mitigated the level of secondary traumatic stress experienced by individuals.

Relevance:
The findings are highly relevant to educators across Australia and beyond in showing detailed strategies that can enhance their wellbeing through mitigating the impact of trauma.
Contribution: The research demonstrates clearly how educators in high trauma situations can mitigate impacts. Recommendations for individual change and school support systems are put forward for consideration.

Description:
The research process used mixed methods, with a survey including measures and open comment questions, followed by interviews. All interviews were electronically transcribed and analysed using NVivo software.

Engagement:
Plan to engage audience. The audience will be asked questions by the presenter first in hands up on experience of secondary trauma and then asked to discuss with people nearby their own experiences of mitigating the trauma. Volunteers will be asked to share some of the stories discussed.

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Early Years Framework (EYLFv2) through a Trauma informed Lens

O'Donnell A[1], Carlson A
[1]Goodstart Early Learning

Goodstart Early Learning is Australia's largest early learning provider and a not–for–profit social enterprise. Our inclusion goal is to ensure that those children at greater risk of falling behind, such as children that have experienced trauma have an opportunity to learn and grow through early learning. We know high quality early learning settings can offer an opportunity to create a safe place for a traumatised child's development to progress. To meet the needs of their most vulnerable children and improve early learning outcomes, Goodstart developed trauma informed policies, procedures, and practices to be implemented nationally. Informed by trauma science, attachment and neurodevelopmental research, the presentation focuses on the alignment between trauma informed practice and the EYLF, using practical scenarios to illustrate how this alignment is enacted in daily pedagogy.

This presentation will introduce a practice-based guide that positions trauma informed practice as core early childhood pedagogy, explicitly aligned with the Early years learning framework V2.0 (EYLF). Participants will learn how trauma informed principles can be enacted through everyday teaching practices. Each EYLF outcome is explicitly mapped against trauma informed principles, demonstrating how practices including relational rituals, environmental structuring, co-regulation and opportunities for agency support children identify belonging, wellbeing, confident learning and communication.

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Beyond awareness: designing trauma informed education systems that integrate wellbeing, learning and positive destinations

Hoover C[1], Harris J[1], Sheppard K[1]
[1]The BUSY School

Aim:
To present a trauma informed, student centred education model that integrates wellbeing, learning, and vocational pathways through a structured case management system, positioning hope and pathway development as protective, evidence-aligned core outcomes of trauma aware practice.

Background/Context:
Trauma informed education requires more than awareness of trauma or the introduction of isolated wellbeing initiatives. Many young people impacted by trauma experience disrupted engagement with education, shaping learning, identity, and beliefs about their future pathways. Trauma aware systems must therefore be intentionally designed to restore safety, agency, and a sense of possibility.

Relevance:
This submission addresses trauma aware practice by demonstrating how integrated, systems level case management can strengthen continuity of care, sustain engagement, and intentionally cultivate hope and pathway clarity as protective outcomes of trauma informed education.

Contribution:
The presentation contributes a practice informed systems framework that positions case management as a core mechanism for trauma aware practice, enabling coordinated support, shared responsibility, and consistent pathways across wellbeing, learning, and vocational domains.

Description:
The model is structured around three equally valued and interconnected pillars: wellbeing, learning, and vocational pathways. A structured, systems level case management system underpins integration by coordinating multidisciplinary input, maintaining visibility of supports, and enabling purposeful review over time. Practical examples illustrate how this approach strengthens learning, wellbeing, engagement, and future pathways.

Engagement:
Participants will engage through guided reflection and applied discussion, exploring how trauma aware, wellbeing underpinned case management can be implemented to reinforce hope, consistency, and sustainable practice.

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Beyond Behaviour: A Developmentally Led, Trauma-Informed Approach to Primary School education in Regional Australia.

Sperling S[1]
[1]La Trobe University

Aim
This research examines how a developmentally led, trauma informed framework is implemented, experienced, and sustained in Australian primary schools. It explores whether such a framework supports students' social, emotional, and cognitive development, while amplifying the voices of students, families, and communities who are often marginalised.

Background / Context
Children experiencing complex often face significant disruptions across social, emotional, cognitive, and physiological domains, affecting attachment, regulation, learning, and engagement. While trauma informed education is increasingly recognised internationally, empirical research in Australia remains limited. This gap is evident in regional and rural contexts characterised by socioeconomic disadvantage, limited services, intergenerational trauma, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation on First Nations Peoples.

Relevance
This study addresses a critical evidence gap regarding trauma informed frameworks in Australian schools. It is highly relevant for regional communities and schools supporting First Nations students, where culturally responsive, relational, and developmentally informed approaches are essential. The research also responds to calls for whole school approaches that extend beyond behaviourist models.

Contribution
The study provides original empirical evidence by identifying enablers and barriers to trauma informed implementation. It advances knowledge through a critical, decolonising lens that foregrounds intersectionality, cultural humility, and systemic inequities, while centering community, family, and student voices.

Description
Using a mixed method, transformative case study, the research involves two regional Victorian primary schools. Semi structured interviews are triangulated with quantitative data. Analysis draws on critical theory, attachment research, Polyvagal theory, and neurodevelopment to inform policy, practice, and systemic reform toward trauma sensitive, culturally responsive schooling.

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Building compassion fatigue resilience in schools

Phillips M[1]
[1]Compassionate Schools

Aim:
The Compassion Fatigue Resilience model (Ludick & Figley, 2017) outlines a stressor-strain-resilience process in the face of compassion-fatigue related stressors. Elements of the model will be unpacked to aid in conceptualising how schools/organisations may design work and enhance workplace structures to promote protective factors and best support the wellbeing of their staff and leaders.

Background/Context:
The Compassion Fatigue Resilience model is an established (research and practice) secondary traumatic stress/ compassion fatigue model with numerous iterations, and is a key component underpinning author's current PhD study (Australian university) - Staff wellbeing and engagement in schools: What role do trauma-aware psychosocial workplace conditions and personal characteristics play?

Relevance:
Exploring the model provides a worthwhile professional learning opportunity for attendees to learn more about the approach of one of the original scholars in the secondary traumatic stress /compassion fatigue field (Charles Figley); and how its elements are now applied across a broad range of workplace sectors including school education.

Contribution:
Four protective factors (self-care, compassion satisfaction, detachment/ decentering, social support) will be explored, from the evidence base and in practice, that are immediately applicable in trauma-aware/ trauma-informed schools and organisations; alongside the other elements in the model.

Description:
Author's published peer-reviewed research applying the model in Australian schools will be referred to during the presentation.

Engagement:
Research, practical examples, and recommendations from a range of school contexts will be shared. Worksheet (hard-copy) provided to enable notes about protective factors to be considered for own professional context. Q&A invited throughout presentation.

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Developing trauma aware early years educators through arts-based critical reflection

Murphy A[1]
[1]La Trobe University

Aim:
Developing trauma aware early years educators through participation in arts-based critical reflection.

Background/Context:
Critical reflection is central to effective early childhood education, particularly in responding to the complex needs of children who may have experienced trauma. Emerging research highlights arts-based practices as powerful tools for deepening reflective processes. These approaches create opportunities for educators to effectively engage with emotions, challenge assumptions, and explore multiple perspectives. Findings from stage one of PhD research conducted in the UK suggest that the art part is a valuable addition to the critical reflection process in the early years.

Relevance:
This submission demonstrates how incorporating creative methods in critical reflection can foster empathy, self-awareness, relational understanding and educator wellbeing. Strengthening these relational elements with self and others is a critical component of building the strong relational connections with children that are required in trauma responsive environments.

Contribution:
The work contributes to the field by offering an innovative intersection between arts-based methodologies and trauma-informed early childhood practice. It highlights the potential of creative reflection to strengthen educator capacity, promote inclusive and responsive environments, and improve outcomes for all children, inclusive of those who have experienced traumatised backgrounds.

Description:
A qualitative research methodology was employed, informed by critical theory, ecological systems theory and an arts-based practice approach. A comparative nested case study design was selected for research in the UK and Australia. A series of arts-based critical reflection group sessions using collage, plasticine and collaborative drawing were facilitated, followed by an arts-based individual interview.

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How student voice can inform change in the experience of school for autistic students

Kermond C[1], Southall A[1]
[1]La Trobe University

Aim:
This paper explores the school experience of autistic students. It addresses the conference themes of lived experience voices and participatory approaches, and aims to inform researchers and educators working with young people with complex needs and vulnerabilities.

Background:
Autistic adolescents overwhelmingly have a poor experience of school, including social, emotional and academic challenges. Research into this area has been limited and seldom includes students' first-hand perspective.

Student voice was critical to this study's design. Findings revealed distinctly different views from the three participant groups. Students reported negative feelings about their school experience, whereas parents and teachers' view was that autistic students often enjoyed school. Teachers and parents reported that autistic students chose not to participate in extracurricular activities, however students said they wanted to participate with the right support.

Relevance:
Research design, methodology and findings are relevant to the theme of trauma transformation, illustrating the critical importance of student voice in driving transformation.

Contribution:
Omitting the autistic perspective from research into schooling means that this perspective rarely informs practices, policies and support aimed at improving their experience. This innovative research can inform research design, policies and practices aimed at improving school experience.

Description:
Using a Critical Participatory Action Research approach, this qualitative study elicited the perspectives of autistic students, parents and educators. Interview techniques were significantly adapted for students who gave iterative feedback on questions and themes.

Engagement:
This work is highly relevant to researchers seeking to work with complex, vulnerable cohorts and to all stakeholders in education.

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Experiencing Supervision: A Trauma-Aware Approach to Supporting Educators in Schools

Kharidi G[1]
[1]Neuroscience

Aim:
To develop a clear understanding of supervision as a professional reflective practice, distinct from EAP, mentoring, therapy, or informal conversation. This workshop supports educators and leaders to recognise supervision as a trauma-aware structure that strengthens practice, reduces isolation, and provides a purposeful space for the emotional and cognitive load of school-based work.

Background/Context:
While supervision is well established in counselling and allied professions, its application in education remains limited despite increasing recognition of educator stress, secondary trauma, and sustained emotional load. Educators frequently carry complex student-related experiences beyond the classroom without structured opportunities for reflection. This workshop challenges common assumptions such as “I just need to toughen up” and “informal conversations are enough,” repositioning supervision as a professional and sustainable support.

Relevance:
This workshop directly links trauma-aware practice with educator wellbeing by addressing where educators process ongoing emotional and cognitive demands, supporting more regulated, reflective responses in practice.

Contribution:
The workshop introduces supervision as a scalable reflective structure that can strengthen staff wellbeing, professional judgement, and organisational capacity within trauma-aware school environments.

Description:
Participants will engage in a structured, “micro-supervision” experience using a professionally relevant moment from their practice, supported by clear prompts and boundaries for safety.

Engagement:
Participants will actively experience structured reflection, enabling them to recognise its impact and leave with one practical next step for implementation.

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Improving Educator Secondary Traumatic Stress, Burnout and Compassion Satisfaction through Professional Development: National survey insights

Armarego C[1]
[1]The Flourish Movement

Aim:
Examining Impact and effectiveness of Professional Development (PD) for Educators in relation to management of Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) across 2285 Australian educators.

Background/Context:
Educator Professional Development (PD) requires significant time and financial investment. Reviewing its effectiveness in reducing Burnout (BO), STS and increasing Compassion Satisfaction (CS) is critical in supporting educators working in high trauma environments.

Relevance:
Commonly accessed PD for educator STS were evaluated for effectiveness by 2285 Australian Educators. This research correlated the effectiveness to the STS, BO and CS scores to determine impact. PD that was rated as not effective had poorer outcomes on STS, BO and CS than those who had no PD. This demonstrates that poor PD is not effective and even detrimental to individuals. Highly effective self-care training had the greatest positive impact across all three constructs over other forms of PD, clearly demonstrating a protective effect.

Contribution:
This research provides strong evidence about the impact and effectiveness of different types of PD for positive impact on STS, BO and CS. This is important to allow educators, Schools and System wide services to choose their training wisely, not only to meet their needs but of a quality that has positive outcomes.

Description:
A national survey with interviews explored both the prevalence of STS, and impact of training on STS. Analysis identified PD that had protective and detrimental effects for STS, BO and CS.

Engagement:
Highly Engaging/interactive presentation style; sharing key findings in the type of PD with implications for individual, school and system wide PD strategies.

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Beyond Strategies: How Trauma-Aware Professional Learning Shapes Teacher Identity, Mindset, and Sustainability

Moffat R[1,2]
[1]Alphacrucis University College , [2]Queensland University of Technology

Aim:
This presentation introduces an emerging doctoral study investigating how early-career teachers interpret trauma-aware professional learning and how these experiences shape their developing professional mindset, beliefs, and identity.

Background/Context:
Trauma-aware education is increasingly embedded within policy, professional learning, and school reform initiatives. However, existing research has predominantly focused on student outcomes, program evaluations, and implementation frameworks. Far less attention has been given to how teachers themselves experience and make meaning of trauma-aware professional learning, particularly during the formative early years of practice when professional identity and pedagogical beliefs remain fluid.

Relevance:
Understanding teacher interpretation is critical for trauma-aware practice. Trauma-aware education places significant relational, emotional, and cognitive demands on educators, yet professional learning models often assume knowledge acquisition naturally translates into practice change. Examining teachers' lived experiences provides insight into the tensions, uncertainties, and meaning-making processes that shape sustainable trauma-aware pedagogy.

Contribution:
This research offers a shift in focus from program effectiveness to teacher meaning-making. It highlights trauma-aware professional learning as identity work involving belief negotiation, emotional labour, and professional self-construction. Findings aim to inform the design of professional learning, induction, and educator wellbeing frameworks.

Description:
The study adopts a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, using semi-structured interviews and reflective journals to explore early-career teachers' lived experiences.

Engagement:
The presentation will engage participants through reflective prompts and applied examples that connect research insights to professional experience.

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Presence over Presents - When Success Masks Relational Deprivation

De Laine R[1], Lucas C[2]
[1]St Joseph's Institution International, [2]German European School Singapore

Aim:
To professionally equip educators and school leaders to identify, prevent, and respond to relational and developmental trauma, specifically focusing on the masked presentation of affluent neglect through a culturally responsive and trauma-informed lens, particularly in high socioeconomic and culturally diverse educational settings.

Background/Context:
Affluent neglect, a form of relational trauma, is frequently obscured by markers of success like material provision and academic achievement. In diverse school communities, this harm is further concealed by varying cultural norms regarding parenting, achievement expectations, and social stigma surrounding emotional vulnerability. Manifestations such as hyper-independence, perfectionism, emotional restraint, or high-functioning anxiety are often misattributed as resilience or cultural traits, rather than indicators of unmet attachment needs. This means traditional safeguarding frameworks, which often prioritise visible disadvantage, may fail to detect covert relational trauma in some educational settings.

Relevance:
A comprehensive, trauma-aware educational approach must extend identification protocols beyond socioeconomic adversity to ensure equitable and accurate recognition of relational harm across all culturally diverse and high-performing school environments.

Contribution & Description:
Grounded in attachment theory and interdisciplinary research, this session will delineate actionable strategies for prevention, early identification, and systemic, trauma-informed responses. It provides educators and leaders with evidence-based, practical tools designed to enhance early identification, align policy, and implement culturally responsive safeguarding practices that effectively recognise hidden relational trauma.

Engagement:
Participants will engage in high-impact activities, including case analysis, guided cultural reflection exercises, and a structured safeguarding self-audit, to facilitate the direct application and successful implementation of learning within their specific professional contexts.

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Trauma-informed adult education in Australia: preliminary findings on landscape and staff development needs

Yen F[1]
[1]Australian Trauma Education Centre | QUT

Aim:
To share preliminary findings from a doctoral study examining the current landscape of trauma-informed adult education in Australian higher education institutions and recommended approaches for staff development and learner support.

Background/Context:
A policy scan of publicly available documents revealed predominantly reactive policies supporting counselling, safe environments, and harassment prevention, with limited integration into teaching and learning. Student surveys highlighted insufficient communication, demand for mandatory paid staff training, and the value of academic flexibility and relational support. Staff surveys emphasised needs for foundational training, trauma-informed pedagogy, and enhanced student support pathways. Focus groups with professional and academic staff across vocational and university settings confirmed reactive identification, institutional barriers, including cultural oversights, and sessional workloads, alongside strong calls for culturally responsive training that incorporates Indigenous First Aid and Ngangkari healers, centralised referral portals, flexible credit transfer policies, and sorry business support.

Relevance:
The findings directly illuminate gaps in trauma awareness and trauma-informed practice for adult learners impacted by trauma within Australian higher education.

Contribution:
Evidence-based recommendations for mandatory culturally responsive staff development, centralised support infrastructure, flexible policies, and systemic integration offer practical pathways to strengthen learner outcomes and staff wellbeing sector-wide.

Description:
Mixed-methods design incorporating a policy scan, separate staff and student surveys, and focus groups with professional and academic staff in vocational and university settings in Australia.

145

From behaviour to engagement: A trauma-aware framework for secondary schools

Buckingham T[1,2]
[1]Balmoral State High School, [2]Queensland University of Technology

Aim:
To present a practical, secondary school-based professional learning framework that supports trauma-aware practice through a focus on student engagement, relationships, and staff sustainability.

Background/context:
In secondary settings, student disengagement is often understood and responded to as behaviour, rather than as a reflection of underlying needs related to regulation, connection, and context. while trauma-aware approaches are increasingly recognised, there remains a challenge in translating these approaches into consistent and sustainable everyday classroom practice. this project draws on leadership experience and postgraduate research to develop a trauma-aware professional learning framework implemented in a secondary school, with design principles adaptable across diverse educational contexts.

Relevance:
This work responds to the need for trauma-aware approaches that are developmentally appropriate and sustainable for educators. while grounded in a secondary context, the framework reflects challenges common across settings, including the need for consistent, relational approaches to behaviour and engagement.

Contribution:
The framework provides a staged model that supports shared language, consistent responses to behaviour, and reflective practice. developed in a secondary school, it offers a transferable structure that can be adapted across settings, demonstrating how trauma-aware principles can be embedded within existing systems without adding to workload.

Description:
The framework is delivered through a series of modules across the school year, supported by baseline and follow-up staff data. it integrates neuroscience, restorative practice, and relational pedagogy, with a focus on practical application.

Engagement:
The session will include guided reflection, discussion prompts, and opportunities for participants to apply ideas to their own contexts.

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Weaving the Web of Trauma Awareness

Bennetts S[1], Longaretti L[1]
[1]Deakin University

Aim
This presentation reports preliminary findings from a cross-disciplinary study exploring university staff understandings of trauma awareness and perceived needs for a coordinated, cross-disciplinary approach aligned with academic and industry expectations.

Background and context
Australian universities are operating in environments of increasing psychosocial risk, with widespread staff stress and burnout reported nationally. At the same time, university staff across multiple disciplines frequently engage with trauma impacted students, colleagues, and industry partners, particularly in teaching, leadership, professional placements, and student facing roles.

Relevance
Although accreditation frameworks and professional standards across fields such as health, education, social sciences, law, and business emphasise trauma-aware practice, there are limited university-wide approaches to trauma aware education across disciplines. Instead the responsibility for developing trauma-aware capability is often devolved to individual disciplines, programs, or staff. Establishing a baseline understanding of trauma awareness across university and industry contexts is critical to the development of trauma-aware education for staff and students that responds to industry needs.

Contribution: The baseline data generated by this study provides a foundation for the development of coordinated, university-wide, industry focused, trauma aware education.

Description
The findings from this mixed-methods study highlight shared and discipline specific needs for trauma awareness, demonstrating relevance beyond individual roles to organisational and industry contexts.

Engagement
This presentation will provide an opportunity to engage in interactive discussion, inviting participants to reflect on trauma-aware practice within their own professional and industry contexts.

P150

Benefits of Trauma-Informed Individualised Regulation in Education.

Dossetor J[1], Husi T[1], Newman A[1], Gwynne K[1]
[1]Dalwood Spilstead Family Support Service

Aim:
The Dalwood Spilstead Family Intervention and Support Service (DSS Service) provides a trauma-informed tertiary service for families facing inter-generational trauma and child protection issues with young children.

Background/Context:
The Spilstead Model (SM) has been designed to maximize the benefits of key Evidence-Based practice within a client centred, trauma-informed approach with services for both parents and children provided from the one team.

Relevance:
Consistent with international research children referred commonly present with delays in both developmental and emotional regulation (60% - 85%). A therapeutic preschool program is therefore offered focusing on “bottom-up” intervention targeting regulation, relationship and individualised education. Children between 12 months - 6 years attend two days per week in small groups with allied health support.

Contribution:
A 10-year longitudinal study of families from the DSS Service, evaluating the effectiveness of SM, showed sustained improvement in parent-child relationships, child-wellbeing and reduction of parent stress (large effect size between 0.77–1.67 ($p<0.01$)). Further data from the NSW, Child Protection Service indicated that the SM had a 96% engagement and participation rate with families referred from the child protection service, 33% higher than the 63% state-wide average.

Description:
The SM, founded on attachment theory and the Neuro-sequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT) case planning framework, is underpinned by team cohesion providing consistent, co-regulating relational experiences. Circle of Security (CoS), Marte Meo and Highscope approaches further support the model and are integrated into the psychoeducation and family counselling services for parents.

Engagement: Incorporating mixed media (oral, slideshow, and video) presentation.

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