

How to Support a Young Person who may have experienced Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Developmental Trauma

Some Key Signs and Symptoms which may be present

In addition to signs and symptoms for PTSD:

Attachment & relational patterns: avoidant or clingy, over friendly/sharing or withdrawn, separation anxiety v heightened independence, difficulties and problems in friendships and relationships. Strong feelings of abandonment v rejection and blame towards others.

Emotional dysregulation: Highly Anxious, hyper-vigilant, strong expressed emotions, self-harm, poor organisation, difficulties with change.

Behavioural communication: Stealing, disruptive, hoarding, offending behaviours. Substance & alcohol misuse, Harmful sexual behaviour

Sensory problems: strong dislike of certain foods, textures, textiles, temperature, specific touch,

Severe dissociation: loss of time & memory, sudden change in thought/presentation, poor focus, often appears to be day dreaming

Fragmentation: voice hearing, distorted & confused memories/reality

Processing & learning: Poor cognitive skills and possible difficulties in learning

Low self-image/identity: including feeling worthless. negative self-perception, seeking new identity, self-blaming, feelings of shame & denial.

Regression: to earlier developmental stages in play, speech, behaviour.

Cut off and distant in interactions and feeling, plays alone, no expectation or wish for others presence.

Some **Neuro-developmental type traits** as seen in ASC/ADHD

Top tips on how to support a young person you have concerns may have experienced C-PTSD

- Be calm, patient & understanding
- Encourage the use of 'grounding' e.g., movement, breathing, relaxation.
- Find a balance between giving space and time and being present and available as and when needed.
- Support a sense of present safety and trust whilst recognising this may take for them to believe and feel.

What to do once you've identified a concern or difficulty

- Talk to their school/college to support their understanding of the child's experiences and how this may affect them.
- Let a GP know your concerns if you feel a child needs mental health support
- Let other professionals know if you feel a child is at risk and is not safe. E.g. Children's Services.

Useful Resources for more information

Books:

- The strange & curious guide to trauma - Sally Donovan
- The boy who built a wall around himself - Ali Redford
- The Kids guide to staying Awesome and in control. Simple stuff to help regulate their emotions and senses
- The simple guide to Attachment difficulties in children - Betsy De Thierry
- Everyday Parenting with security and love - Kim Golding

Complex trauma:

www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/a-z-guide/trauma



Scan this link to download the slides from this workshop.