The lived experience of the child

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Working Together For Children
Gweithio’n Gytan Ar Gyfer Plant
The lived experience of the child

Case studies

Please note that the names of the children in each of these case studies have been changed.

Please also note that the practitioners speaking are not from the same team that worked with each child.
Aaron
Usually around 1 year

- Pulls to stand
- Walks around furniture
- Takes first steps
- First word
- Points for interest
- Enjoys cause and effect toys
- Early symbolic play – cup/brush
- Attachment style recognisable

Aaron

- Unable to get into a sitting position by himself
- No words
- Casting toys/ mouthing toys
- ‘Not bothered’ by Mums departure and return
- Lack of curiosity in others
What are Aaron’s feelings when his mother leaves the room and then returns, both in terms of himself and how he views his mother?
Janet
Usually around 8 years

- Established friendships
- Self esteem dependent on peers
- Conscience developing can tell difference between cheating/winning
- Self motivated
- Conform to rules
- Recognise emotions and beginning to self regulate
- Motivated to learn

Janet

- Not liked by her peers
- Unkind and blames others
- Lies
- Needs adults praise and attention
- Volatile emotions, gives way to aggressive urges and lashes out without meaning to
- Not achieving her potential academically
Arousal in traumatic attachments

Hyper-arousal (aggression, impulsive behaviour, children emotional and behavioural problems – ‘Fight or flight’ response)

Window Of Tolerance

Hypo-arousal
(dissociation, depression, self harm etc)
1 minute exercise

Please jot down on post-its provided
(no discussion please!)

What does Janet’s aggressive behaviour tell you about her self esteem and how she might be feeling at the time?
Shelley
Shelley’s story
Usually around 14 years

- Peers very important
- Increasing independence and choices
- Popularity and belonging to groups
- Appearance: individual style versus “tribal” recognition
- Privacy cherished

Shelley

- Withdrawn/ sad
- Closed down
- Unaware of appearance
- Exhausted
- False affect – upset tearful with youth worker but bright and cheerful with Mum
Three types of resilient child

1. Children who do not succumb to adversity in spite of their high risk status
2. Children who develop coping strategies in situations of chronic stress
3. Children who have suffered extreme trauma and recover and prosper

What factors in Shelley’s history might be used to support Shelley and promote her recovery at this point?

1 minute exercise

Please jot down on post-its provided
(no discussion please!)
Jack
Jack’s story
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jack Usually around 17 year old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Transition to adulthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Risk taking within limits of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not fully capable of understanding complex concepts/relation between behaviour and consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Crucial for safe transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Safe supportive positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Homeless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Depressed/suicidal ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cannabis affecting motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 'Bad crowd'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Disengaged from family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Brain and Maltreatment

- Cortisol and stress
- Oxytocin and affiliation/development of empathy
- Dopamine and reward seeking behaviour
What do you think Jack’s earlier relationship experiences might have been in the light of his recent behaviours (theft, cannabis dependency, depression)?
The lived experience of the child

Overview of how neglect has an impact on the psychological, cognitive and emotional development of a child

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Impact of Early Maltreatment on the Neurological System

Maltreatment and trauma in early years results in:

• Overdevelopment of neurophysiology of brainstem and midbrain (anxiety; impulsivity; poor affect regulation; hyperactivity);

• Deficits in cortical (problem-solving) and limbic function (empathy)
Survivors of childhood abuse and neglect often suffer from health problems long after the abuse has ended.

- Higher rates of healthcare use
- Higher healthcare costs
- More reported symptoms
- More chronic pain syndromes
- Overall less satisfaction with their health
Outcomes of disorganised attachment

Follow-up of children disorganised at 1-year at age 6 (Lieberman and Amaya-Jackson 2005);
- controlling behaviours toward parent;
- avoidance of the parent;
- dissociative symptoms;
- behavioural/oppositional problems;
- emotional disconnection;
- aggression toward peers;
- low social competence in preschool

• Associated with significant psychopathology in childhood and later (Green and Goldwyn 2002)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>0-20 months</th>
<th>20-30 months</th>
<th>3-4 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insecure avoidant attachment</td>
<td>Negativity in play</td>
<td>Negativity in play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecure disorganized attachment</td>
<td>Reduced social interactions</td>
<td>Delays in complex language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive skills</td>
<td>Deficits in memory performance</td>
<td>Difficulties with emotion discrimination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developmental delay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive withdrawn behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 studies, 349 cases, 237 controls</td>
<td>3 studies, 125 cases, 113 controls</td>
<td>4 studies, 86 cases, 125 controls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Features in the Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4-5 years</th>
<th>5-6 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Poor peer relationships-less socially interactive, more aggressive, conduct problems</td>
<td>Insecure avoidant attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delays in complex language</td>
<td>Poor peer relationships-rate self as angry, oppositional, others as sad/hurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulties with emotion regulation</td>
<td>Low self esteem</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulties with discrimination of emotion expressions-bias for sad faces</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helpless outlook-‘others’ not as source of help</td>
<td>Less moral-inclined to cheat and break rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6 studies, 110 cases, 128 controls</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 cases, 155 cases, 155 controls</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Aged Children 5-14 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Peer relationships</th>
<th>Emotion/Self perception issues</th>
<th>School Performance</th>
<th>Parent child Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aggressive</td>
<td>Poor socialising skills</td>
<td>Low self esteem</td>
<td>Low IQ</td>
<td>hostile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hostile</td>
<td>disruptive</td>
<td>worthless</td>
<td>Literacy numeracy +/-</td>
<td>Negative interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impulsive</td>
<td>disliked</td>
<td>Depressive symptoms</td>
<td>Poor at complex tasks</td>
<td>Expect little support from parent in response to distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention deficits</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Mood swings</td>
<td>Poor auditory processing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet/withdrawn</td>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty interpreting emotions</td>
<td>problem solving, planning and abstract thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adolescence

• Massive brain development and hormonal upheaval (reorganisation and pruning)
• More efficient / less adaptable
• Frontal lobes not fully developed till 25 years (executive function)
• Amygdala driven (fight / flight behaviours / over react!)
• Dopamine / human reward system (novelty seeking)
• Opportunity for new emergent resilience – second chance for developmental change
Biological and Psychosocial Interrelationship

- Low serotonin – aggression in boys, depression in girls
- Poor family relationships and high testosterone – more risks, lies, theft, truancy
- Disorganised attachment aged 1, best predictor of serious psychopathology in adolescence
- Alcohol and substance misuse – impact on memory loss, attention, psychomotor speed, planning ability
- Cannabis use and risk of later psychosis
• The longer that a child is left, the greater the damage.

• Ask the Child! what is their view of themselves? Do they feel they can turn to their parents for help? What do they think their parents view of them is? What is the depth of their friendships?
If you know the child from one setting, eg Education, and you have concerns, it is essential that you explore the observations of others who may see the child eg in Health.

Don’t forget - more common that neglect co-exists with other forms of abuse. Look!
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Questions for delegates

How can you use this knowledge about the impact of neglect on the development of children and young people (like Aaron, Janet, Shelley and Jack) to inform the key components of interventions at each of these stages?

a) to prevent neglect before it has started
b) to intervene when problems first arise.
cccc) to prevent recurrence or persistence in established neglect