

## Child Trauma And Disrupted Attachment

Tania Withington – Evolve Therapeutic Services, Brisbane North  
Janet Harris – Take Two, Victoria

## Presentation Outline:

- Trauma and disrupted attachment and implications on child development
- Implications for the care system
- Strategies for management and intervention
- Practical examples

## Attachment

- Attachment is a key task of childhood development
- Children require a protective supportive and accessible care giver to assist in child development tasks
- Social, emotional, cognitive and biological development are highly interrelated
- Emotional and behavioural regulation

## Types of Childhood Trauma

- Child Abuse
  - Physical
  - Sexual
  - Emotional
  - Neglect
- Victim/witness of violence
  - Domestic
  - Community
  - school
- Accidents i.e. car
- Disasters
- War/terrorism and refugees
- Medical i.e. transplant
- Traumatic grief

## Trauma Symptoms in Children

- **Emotion**
  - Fear
  - Sadness
  - Anger
  - Anxiety
  - Dysregulation
- **Cognitive**
  - Irrational beliefs
  - Distrust
  - Distorted self-image
- **Behavioural**
  - Avoidance
  - Violence
  - Bullying
  - Poor social skills
  - Substance abuse
  - Self injury

## Relationship between Attachment and Trauma Recovery

- A child requires a secure attachment to recover from trauma
- A secure attachment enables a child to access internal and external resources to deal with trauma

## Paul: 14 years

<p><b>History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Early history parental substance abuse and neglect</li> <li>■ Mother deceased, father unknown</li> <li>■ Long term foster carer</li> <li>■ Strained relationship and communication between Paul and carer</li> <li>■ Multiple deaths of key foster family members</li> <li>■ Multiple school placements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Stealing</li> <li>■ Substance use</li> <li>■ Explosive verbal aggression</li> <li>■ School refusal</li> <li>■ Absconding</li> <li>■ Poor social relationships</li> <li>■ Doesn't engage with professionals</li> </ul>
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## Paul: Care System Challenges: Activity

- Safety
- Health
- Education
- Family
- Accommodation

## Paul: Care System Challenges

<p><b>Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Absconding</li> <li>■ Environment i.e. streets?</li> <li>■ Substance use</li> </ul> <p><b>Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Diet?</li> <li>■ Hygiene?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Family</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identifying positive adults</li> </ul> <p><b>Accommodation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Safe</li> <li>■ Stability and Predictability</li> <li>■ Flexibility and control</li> </ul> <p><b>Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ School absenteeism</li> </ul>
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## Sharon: 15 years

<p><b>History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Indigenous</li> <li>■ Mother murdered 4years old</li> <li>■ Moved to maternal grandmother and step-grandfather</li> <li>■ Grandmother alcoholic – neglect</li> <li>■ Foster care</li> <li>■ Returned to father. Abandoned at school</li> <li>■ Foster care until carer pregnant</li> <li>■ Foster care with conditions – Grandmother died</li> <li>■ Residential care</li> </ul>	<p><b>Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Substance abuse</li> <li>■ Not taking medication leading to hospitalisation</li> <li>■ School absence</li> <li>■ Violence with peers</li> <li>■ Sexually promiscuous</li> <li>■ Poor social relationships</li> <li>■ Poor family relationships</li> </ul>
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## Sharon: Care System Challenges: Activity

- Safety
- Health
- Education
- Family
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## Sharon: Care System Challenges

<p><b>Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Diabetes management</li> <li>■ Sexual behaviour</li> <li>■ Antisocial peers – violence</li> <li>■ Absconding</li> </ul> <p><b>Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Substance abuse medication</li> </ul> <p><b>Culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Community connectedness and identity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Family</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Rebuilding relationships</li> </ul> <p><b>Accommodation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Stability</li> <li>■ Predictability</li> <li>■ Consistent boundaries and rules</li> </ul> <p><b>Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ School absenteeism</li> </ul>
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## Elements of Effective Intervention

- Thorough assessment
- Collaboration across support systems
- Planned responsiveness
  
- STOP, THINK, CONSULT AND PLAN

## Intervention Example

- Assessment for therapeutic formulation
  
- Stakeholder Group/Care Team
  
- Stakeholder/Care Team Coordinated Care Plan

## Assessment Process

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>File reviews</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Child protection</li> <li>■ Child and youth mental health</li> <li>■ Accommodation provider</li> <li>■ Education files</li> <li>■ Medical files</li> </ul> </li>   <li>■ <b>Standardised Assessment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ i.e. Speech and language</li> <li>■ i.e. Cognitive Assessment</li> <li>■ i.e. Trauma Symptom Checklists</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Interviews</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Child protection worker</li> <li>■ Child</li> <li>■ Family members</li> <li>■ Foster carers</li> <li>■ Accommodation providers</li> <li>■ Education</li> <li>■ Counsellor/Therapist</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## Stakeholder Group/Care Team

- Parallel to assessment and intervention
  
- Includes all relevant support people
  
- Coordinated service delivery including case planning and problem solving

## Stakeholder/Care Team Coordinated Plan

- Establishes communication pathways
- Identifies roles and responsibilities
- Structured goal setting, monitoring and evaluation
- Seeking solutions
- Shared commitment to outcomes
- Shared accountability

## Example of Collaborative Intervention for Sharon

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Accommodation – stability and consistency with boundaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Training for staff           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sharon's story</li> <li>■ Health management</li> <li>■ Individualised strategies</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ House rules / routine</li> <li>■ Reward system</li> <li>■ Risk management</li> <li>■ Mentoring</li> <li>■ Regulation of emotion and behaviour</li> </ul>
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## Example of Collaborative Intervention for Sharon

- Family – build relationships
- Letter / telephone contact
- Supervised or supported direct access
- Family education
- Family therapy
- Resource support i.e. transport

## Therapeutic Goals

- Establishing trust
- Developing insight
- Integrating past into present
- Emotional and behavioural self-regulation
- Developing sense of identity
- Addressing grief and loss

## In Summary...

- Trauma and disrupted attachment has significant impact upon a child's development
- Collaborative systemic interventions are an effective method of creating pathways for positive change

## Take Two Victoria

- Non-government, state-wide service
- Metropolitan and regional teams
- Clinical, training and research
- Systemic framework for practice
- Multi-disciplinary teams
- Children 0-18 years on child protection orders with complex emotional, psychological and behavioural needs

## Evolve Therapeutic Services

- Cross-government, state-wide initiative
- Metropolitan and regional teams
- Clinical, training and research
- Systemic framework for practice
- Multi-disciplinary teams
- Children 0-18 years on child protection orders with complex emotional, psychological and behavioural needs

## Contact Details

Tania Withington  
Team Leader  
Evolve Therapeutic Services, Brisbane North  
Child and Youth Mental Health Service  
Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District  
07 3355 8999 BH

Janet Harris  
Senior Clinician  
Berry Street Victoria - Take Two Program  
Gippsland  
03 5134 5971 BH