

10 QUICK STEPS

# Transforming Behaviour, Improving Well-Being & Mental Health in Schools



## About Us

At Trauma Informed Schools Wales, the Welsh arm of TISUK, we're tackling the mental health crisis affecting children and young people with **evidence-based training** and consultancy.

Our mission is simple: **empower schools and communities** to support children and young people to talk about their feelings, experiences and painful life events with an emotionally available adult. We have the evidence ~ Relationships harm, **relationships also heal**.

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# 1

**Self-care.** Not selfish, but *essential*. Our training equips adults to consider and take steps to ensuring that they look after themselves, so that they can be emotionally available to look after their students.



# 2

### **ACE Informed Approach**

Know about the impact of Adversity on the developing brain and importantly, the mitigating impact of an emotionally available adult. We teach staff to buffer the effects of trauma, helping children regulate emotions and process difficult life events.

# 3

### **School as a Safe Space**

Make schools places of healing, where students can talk about painful experiences and receive appropriate support.



# 4

### **Behaviour as communication**

Understand that all behaviour is communication of an unmet need. If we can have curiosity (rather than judgement) about the underlying feeling, then we can support the feeling, meet that need, and change the behaviour.



# 5

## Be Trauma Sensitive

Recognise and address trauma-related behaviours in a sensitive and supportive way. 'Can you help me understand?' is softer than 'why did you?' Separate the behaviour from the child with a *'firm on the behaviour and gentle on the child'* (Dr. Margot Sunderland) approach.

# 6

## Whole School Culture

All staff, equipped to be emotionally available adults, create a culture where students feel safe, heard, and supported. Creating environments where staff mental health is also prioritised, reduces burnout and improves overall school wellbeing.



# 7

## Prevention and Early Intervention

Catch them before they fall; preventing mental health problems before they escalate by helping staff spot early signs of distress and provide timely support.



## Targeted Support

Offer arts-based interventions to support children and young people dealing with mild to moderate mental health challenges, such as anxiety and stress.

# 8

# 9

**Know your limits of competence and how to refer on** for more than moderate mental health problems, refer to specialist agencies whilst *still* providing emotional availability

# 10

## Take it outside

20 minutes a day outside is sufficient to bring down cortisol levels and top up your own serotonin. Nature impact the brains of children and young people, even when they don't enjoy it!



# 11

**BONUS**

**Join a Trauma informed Schools or Community Training...** to really learn the why, what and hows of Trauma Informed and responsive practice.

In a climate of nowhere near enough funds in schools, **increasing mental health needs**, issues with **behaviour, non-attendance** and an overall **lack of wellbeing** for children, young people and adults, we need to do something radical.

We need an army of **kind, compassionate and well-trained** practitioners, skilled in knowing what to say, how to be, how to support children to heal from their painful life experiences.

We're not just talking trauma informed, we're talking trauma recovery.

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