

Emerging Minds Webinar Series

Infant and Child Mental Health

**Emerging
Minds.**

**National Workforce
Centre for Child
Mental Health**



Webinar 5

Supporting children's mental health after trauma

7:15 pm to 8:30 pm AEDT
Monday 25th February 2019

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Emerging Minds and MHPN wishes to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Australia upon which our webinar presenters and participants are located.

We wish to pay respect to the Elders past, present and future for the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Indigenous Australia.

Webinar series

This is the fifth webinar in the Emerging Minds, Infant and Child Mental Health series.

The final webinar is:

- Engaging with children and parents with complex needs – a systems approach to be held on Tuesday 16th April.

Tonight's panel



Dr Sara McLean
Psychologist, SA



Dr Jackie Amos
Psychiatrist, SA



Phoebe
Lived Experience
Advocate, Qld



Facilitator: Dan Moss
Workforce Development
Manager,
Emerging Minds

Learning outcomes

Through an exploration of children's mental health after trauma, participants will be better equipped to:

- Identify the impacts of trauma and adversity on the developing brain and how this might affect a child's behaviour, social and cognitive functioning
- Describe effective applications of preventative approaches that can reduce the likelihood of mental health and behavioural concerns developing in children at different stages of their lives
- Identify individual family contexts of children and parents who present to services after trauma and ways to have helpful conversations, providing ways forward and hope.

Lived Experience Advocate's perspective

Understanding Marissa's situation

- What she has been through
- What she is going through
- Possible shame and guilt
- Her ways of protecting Noah, past and present

Lived Experience Advocate's perspective

Understanding what worries Marissa

- What is she worried about for herself?
- What is she worried about for Noah?
- What is she worried about for their relationship?

Lived Experience Advocate's perspective

Support Marissa in order to strengthen her

- Her situation is still raw, so build up her self-esteem and confidence
- What is going well for Noah? What is working well with your relationship with Noah?
- Ask questions, and acknowledge what she is doing
- Show empathy for Marissa and Noah
- Go out of your way to make contact with positive messages to show care

Lived Experience Advocate's perspective

Ask about Noah

- Find ways to open up the conversation about Noah
- What does Marissa think Noah understands about the situation?
- What does Noah worry about?
- What does Noah want to happen?
- Consider hearing from Noah directly

Lived Experience Advocate's perspective

Practitioners concerns about Noah

- Find ways to raise your concerns about Noah sensitively
- Telling Marissa what to do risks a lot
- Talking earlier about what's working well helps

Lived Experience Advocate's perspective

Work with the school

- The school has tried to help previously, work with the school again
- Work with the school about the bullying
- Work with the school to help Noah
- Explore other options such as part-time attendance

Lived Experience Advocate's perspective

Link with support services

- Have a good knowledge of support services, so you can point Marissa and Noah in the right direction

Psychiatrist's perspective

What about seeing Marissa and Noah together?



Dr Jackie Amos

I would like to consider the idea that seeing Marissa and Noah together supports Marissa's place as the most important person in Noah's life and offers unique opportunities for healing from past trauma.

Psychiatrist's perspective

Dyadic therapy with mothers and children



Dr Jackie Amos

- Within family therapy, there is a long history of promoting opportunities for healing by engaging with the whole family
- Dyadic therapies are routinely offered to mothers and their infants and toddlers
- Could dyadic therapies drawing on the attachment and trauma literature and family, effectively address the impact of historical family violence on the present?

Psychiatrist's perspective

Rationale

- Noah and Marissa have been through the domestic violence together and are now both facing the issue of bullying
- Children can't be protected from something that has already happened
- Family violence tends to isolate people from one another by stifling conversation, dyadic work can reconnect people by opening up conversation
- Dyadic work keeps the child's perspective central and maximises opportunities for corrective emotional experiences.



Dr Jackie Amos

Psychiatrist's perspective

What might this look like in the consulting room?

- A mother parenting her child in the context of family violence needs to keep her eyes on the perpetrator to be alert to possible dangers to their children
- The child can feel unseen, unheard and unprotected
- Seeing Noah and Marissa together supports Marissa in attending fully to Noah's experience and Noah has the experience of being seen and heard.



Dr Jackie Amos

Psychiatrist's perspective

What might this look like in the consulting room?



Dr Jackie Amos

- The therapist can have conversations about Marissa's reasons for wanting to take him out of school and how this links to her regret that it wasn't possible to leave her violent partner sooner
- This can help Noah to understand that Marissa's timing for leaving her violent partner is not a message about her love for Noah: demonstrated by her desire to protect him against the bullies at school.

Psychiatrist's perspective

Is it safe?

Dyadic work can be used safely where the mother has capacity (at least some of the time) to think about her child's experience and have some empathy for them

Remember: the child will nearly always have seen the mother's distress so this is not necessarily a contraindication for dyadic work. This can also be the subject of a healing conversation.



Dr Jackie Amos

Psychologist's perspective

Trauma, adversity and child development



Dr Sara Mclean

- I. Impact of trauma on brain development
- II. Evidence informed principles for working with trauma
 - Cognitive behavioural approaches
 - Dyadic 'attachment' approaches

Psychologist's perspective

I. Impact of trauma on brain development

Brain 'pathways':

Hypervigilance, biological rhythms, sensory processing alterations

Brain efficiency:

Memory, executive functioning, language development

Social orientation:

'Orientation' re: social fear and social rewards

May be more difficult for Noah to engage in age appropriate developmental tasks and new learning. Specific interventions to address these issues can support Noah's development and learning



Dr Sara Mclean



Psychologist's perspective

II. Effective interventions

Cognitive Behavioural Approaches:

- Psycho-education
- Exposure, processing of memories and uncovering schemas
- Cognitive processing and restructuring
- Building tolerance and management of emotions and effective coping and problem solving skills.

Supporting Noah and Marissa



Dr Sara Mclean

Psychologist's perspective

II. Effective interventions

Dyadic Approaches:

- “Attachment” and relationship
- Narrative of trauma
- Building (parental) tolerance and management of emotions; parenting skills; family connection and coping skills.

Supporting Noah and Marissa



Dr Sara Mclean

Psychologist's perspective

Selecting an approach

- Age of child
- Trauma history and current presentation
- Parental factors - safety
- Therapeutic preference and qualifications
- Pragmatic concerns



Dr Sara Mclean

Q&A Session



Dr Sara McLean
Psychologist, SA



Dr Jackie Amos
Psychiatrist, SA



Phoebe
Lived Experience
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Facilitator: Dan Moss
Workforce Development
Manager,
Emerging Minds

Resources and further reading

Other supporting resources associated with this webinar can be found in the Supporting Resources Tab at the bottom of the screen.

For more information about Emerging Minds, visit our website

www.emergingminds.com.au

Thank you for participating

- Please ensure you complete the *feedback survey* before you log out.
Click the Feedback Survey tab at the top of the screen to open the survey.
- Certificates of Attendance for this webinar will be issued within four weeks.
- Each participant will be sent a link to the online resources associated with this webinar within two weeks.
- The next webinar in the Emerging Minds webinar series is titled Engaging with children and parents with complex needs – a systems approach and will be held on 16th April

This webinar was co-produced by MHPN and Emerging Minds for the Emerging Minds: National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health (NWCCMH) project. The NWCCMH is led by Emerging Minds and delivered in partnership with the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), the Australian National University (ANU), the Parenting Research Centre (PRC) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

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Thank You

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