

Safe, Seen, Supported: Trauma-informed practices for Early Childhood Education and Care



OVERVIEW

Safe, Seen, Supported is a trauma-informed workshop designed for educators who want to understand how adversity shapes children's development, behaviour and relationships. Grounded in contemporary neuroscience, humanistic psychology and the Phoenix Cups Framework, this workshop explores how trauma impacts the developing brain, particularly the stress-response systems, and how children's behaviour reflects their best attempts to meet their needs with the skills and capacities they have in the moment.

Rather than focusing on behaviour management, educators learn to create environments where children experience safety, connection and empowerment. We unpack types of trauma, recognise signs of survival states, and explore how predictable routines, relational regulation and attuned interactions can buffer stress and support healing. The workshop highlights the remarkable neuroplasticity of the developing brain and the vital role educators play in cultivating calm, responsive and inclusive learning spaces.

With a strong focus on practice, educators leave with practical strategies that align with the National Quality Standard and Child Safe Standards, and with renewed confidence in their capacity to support children to thrive.

WE WILL...

- Develop a clear understanding of trauma, survival states and the neurological systems involved, using accessible neuroscience and real-world early childhood examples.
- Explore how trauma impacts children's need for safety and connection, and consider how predictable, relational environments support children.
- Engage with practical strategies that prioritise co-regulation, attuned interactions, rhythms and rituals, and empowering children's autonomy.
- Participate in collaborative reflection, action planning and problem-solving to embed trauma-informed, needs-meeting practices into your unique service context.

DELIVERY MODE OFFERINGS:

1. Self-paced online course
2. Full-day face-to-face session (up to 5 hours)
3. Live online webinar
4. After-hours in-service workshops with teams (up to 2.5 hours)

"I completed this course [and now have] much more confident knowledge about what is the rights of children and how I needed to change my programming to ensure all children are heard and included appropriately."
- Amanda R

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PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

By the end of this workshop, participants will possess:

1. A comprehensive understanding of how trauma impacts the developing brain, behaviour and learning.
2. The ability to recognise signs of stress and survival states in young children without pathologising or labelling them.
3. Practical, relational strategies for supporting children through co-regulation, predictability and empowerment.
4. Confidence in using the Phoenix Cups Framework to identify unmet needs and design supportive responses.
5. The skills to reflect critically on their own pedagogy and make intentional changes that strengthen children's sense of safety, trust and belonging.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Neuroplasticity & Stress-Response

Dr Parisa Gazerani

Demonstrates how the brain changes through relationships, modelling and predictable environments, underpinning the workshop's focus on co-regulation and healing through connection.

Self-Determination Theory **Ryan & Deci**

Children thrive when their core psychological needs are met. Children's wellbeing grows when environments actively support autonomy, competence, and relatedness as the foundations of children's capacity to learn, relate, and regulate.

Guidance Approach

Dr Louise Porter

Focuses on children being supported rather than controlled, prompting educators to respond with empathy, skill-building, and relationship-based practice rather than consequences or rewards, using empathy proactivity to support children's skill development.

Theory of Constructed Emotion

Dr Lisa Feldman-Barret

Children learn to understand their unique emotional experience through exploration of their world, sensory input and exploration and rich interactions with adults and peers. Enriching children's emotional vocabulary and modelling regulation, educators support brain and emotional development.

KEY LINKS – NATIONAL

Alignment with National Quality Standard

- **QA1** – Educational Program and Practice (Elements 1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2): Strengthens intentional, responsive and attuned practices that promote holistic wellbeing.
- **QA2** – Children’s Health and Safety (Elements 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.3): Supports environments that prioritise emotional safety, co-regulation and trauma-informed risk reduction.
- **QA5** – Relationships with Children (Elements 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.2): Deepens educators’ capacity to form trusting, respectful relationships that foster children’s emotional security and self-regulation.

Alignment with EYLF v2.0

Principles

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships: Central to trauma-informed, needs-based guidance.
- Equity, inclusion and diversity: Supports practices that honour children’s lived experiences without judgement.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives: Encourages culturally safe environments that respect connection, belonging and community healing.

Practices

- Responsiveness to children: Uses attuned, relationship-based approaches to support stress recovery and emotional growth.
- Learning through play: Honours play as a regulator, healer and multi-cup filler.
- Collaborative partnerships with families: Builds shared understanding of children’s needs, rhythms and stress responses.

Learning Outcomes

- Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity: Supports children to feel safe, valued and understood.
- Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing: Enhances co-regulation, emotional literacy and resilience.
- Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners: Reduces stress-based barriers to engagement, exploration and problem-solving.

Alignment with Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

- **Standard 1.1** – Physical, social and intellectual development: Deepens understanding of how trauma affects learning, behaviour and development.
- **Standard 1.2** – Know learners and how they learn: Strengthens educator insight into children’s stress responses, needs and regulatory capacities.
- **Standard 4.1** – Support student participation: Supports inclusive, responsive environments where all children can engage safely and confidently.
- **Standard 4.3** – Manage challenging behaviours: Reframes “challenging behaviour” as stress-related needs, promoting guidance-based, trauma-informed approaches.

Alignment with National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Principle 1 – Child safety and wellbeing are embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

- Encourages leaders to prioritise emotional safety and relational pedagogy so that wellbeing is considered in every policy, routine and interaction.
- Supports services to design predictable, calm environments that reduce stress, uphold children's rights and promote trust.

Principle 3 – Children are empowered and participate in decisions affecting them

- Promotes everyday practices that offer children meaningful choice and agency, helping them rebuild control after experiences of stress or adversity.
- Models language that invites children into shared problem-solving, strengthening their sense of belonging and contribution.

Principle 5 – People working with children are suitable and supported

- Encourages ongoing reflective practice to help educators recognise personal triggers, biases and assumptions that may influence interactions with children.
- Strengthens staff capability through trauma-aware knowledge, increasing confidence in responding to children's distress with calm, attuned presence.

Principle 8 – Staff are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe

- Builds educators' understanding of trauma signs, stress responses and survival states, enabling early identification of when children need extra support.
- Supports staff to use co-regulation, modelling and predictable relational strategies to prevent escalation and maintain emotional safety for all children.



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KEY LINKS – QLD

Alignment with the Kindy Uplift Key Priority Areas

Culturally Safe, Inclusive & Responsive Programs

- Builds educator capability to create emotionally safe, culturally attuned environments for all children.
- Supports equitable access to co-regulation and relationally rich experiences that buffer stress.

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives

- Encourages practices grounded in connection, belonging and community healing.
- Promotes educator reflection on colonisation's intergenerational impacts on safety and wellbeing.

Equity and Access for All

- Supports universal design approaches that benefit all children, especially those experiencing adversity.
- Strengthens educator reflection on bias, assumptions and decision-making that affect participation.

Social & Emotional Learning

- Deepens educator understanding of stress, emotions and behaviour so children experience co-regulation and safety.
- Builds capacity for attuned, trauma-aware interactions that foster resilience, empathy and emotional growth.
- Supports predictable routines and rituals that strengthen children's needs for security and connection.

Alignment with QKLG

Identity

- Strengthens children's sense of safety, trust and belonging through attuned, respectful relationships.
- Supports environments where children feel seen, heard and valued regardless of their histories.

Connectedness

- Promotes inclusive, community-minded practices that nurture connection with others and the learning environment.
- Encourages educators to embed cultural safety and relational practices into everyday rhythms.

Wellbeing

- Deepens educator understanding of stress, emotions and behaviour so children experience emotional safety and co-regulation.
- Enhances children's capacity for resilience, emotional regulation and healthy coping through predictable, relational environments.

KEY LINKS – VIC

School Readiness Funding Menu

Please note this workshop is not on the SRF menu. It can however be utilised under flexible funding provisions. For more information on flexible funding go to the Victorian Department of Education website here:



For more information on the Phoenix Support SRF offerings, including those on the menu as well as flexible funding options, head to our website here:



Alignment with the SRF Priority Areas for use under Flexible Funding Options

Access & Inclusion

- Strengthens educators' ability to reflect on biases, assumptions and decisions that influence children's access to safe, nurturing environments.
- Supports trauma-informed adjustments that enable equitable participation for all children.

Communication (Language Development)

- Builds children's emotional vocabulary and capacity to express needs safely and confidently.
- Strengthens interactions that model attuned language, reflective listening and co-regulatory dialogue.

Wellbeing (Social & Emotional)

- Enhances educator understanding of trauma, stress and co-regulation to support emotional wellbeing.
- Builds predictable, relational environments where children feel secure enough to explore, learn and connect.

Alignment with VELDYP

Outcome 1: Identity

- Builds environments where children feel safe, respected and understood, strengthening their sense of identity.
- Encourages educator reflection on how beliefs, biases and decisions shape children's experiences and sense of self.

Outcome 3: Wellbeing

- Strengthens co-regulation, emotional literacy and resilience through trauma-informed, relational practices.

Outcome 4: Learning

- Reduces stress-based barriers to engagement, enabling deeper exploration, curiosity and problem-solving.
- Supports children's executive functioning, persistence and confidence through safe, supportive learning environments.