

Trauma-informed Practice for Parents/Carers



What is Trauma?

Trauma refers to experiences or events that overwhelm a person's ability to cope and feel safe. It can look different for every child, but common examples include:

- Single events – such as an accident, a bereavement, or a medical emergency.
- Ongoing experiences – such as neglect, abuse, or instability at home.

Why it Matters:

Trauma changes how the brain and body respond to stress. This means it can affect how a child feels, thinks, learns, and behaves. It doesn't always show up as "acting out." Sometimes it looks like:

- Withdrawing or "shutting down"
- Being constantly "on edge" or anxious
- Being seen as "difficult" when in fact they are doing their best with the nervous system they have

A Different Way of Looking at Behaviour

A key shift in trauma-informed care is moving from asking "What's wrong with you?" to "What happened to you?" When children's behaviour is challenging, it's easy to see it as naughtiness or defiance. But often, behaviour is a way of communicating feelings they can't yet put into words. In stressful moments, their nervous system may be in Fight, Flight, or Freeze mode – reacting from survival rather than calm reasoning. By asking "What happened to you?" we replace judgement with curiosity. This helps us understand what's really going on, whether it's tiredness, sensory overload, feeling unsafe or a painful memory being triggered.

From there, we can move to "What do you need to feel safe, connected and supported?" This approach helps children calm down, re-engage and feel cared for. And importantly, this isn't just for children with known trauma histories. All children benefit when adults respond with empathy, curiosity and support. Over time, this builds trust, resilience and strong relationships.

How You Can Help at Home

Supporting a child through trauma doesn't require big changes. It's the small, consistent things you do that make the biggest difference. Here are some simple principles:

- **Keep routines predictable.** Clear expectations and consistency build trust and security.
- **Prioritise connection.** A warm greeting, using your child's name, or a quick cuddle can set the tone before addressing behaviour.
- **Help them calm before expecting them to engage.** When a child is overwhelmed, they can't learn or listen. Simple tools like Happy Breathing or a few quiet minutes can help.
- **Set boundaries with empathy.** Rules are important but how we explain and enforce them matters. Gentle, consistent boundaries help children feel safe and respected.
- **Be flexible and compassionate.** Every child's needs are different. Responding with understanding, rather than automatic punishment, supports long-term wellbeing.
- **Create a calm environment.** Your tone of voice, body language and even the way spaces are arranged can help your child feel safe.
- **Look after yourself too.** Children thrive when the adults around them are supported. Modelling self-care helps your child learn healthy coping strategies.

How myHappyMind Supports Your Family

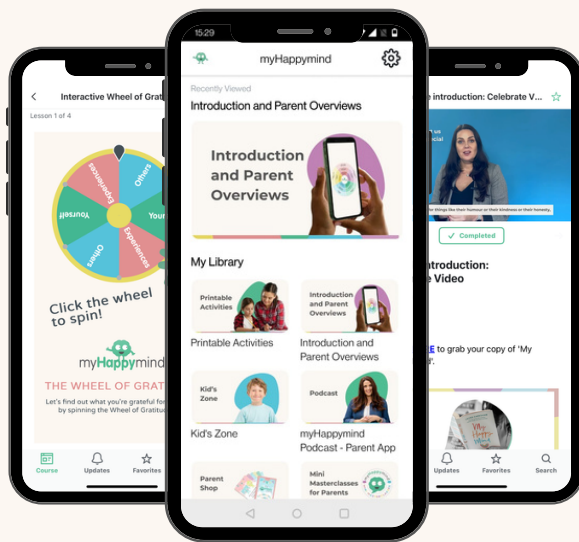
Because your school already uses myHappyMind, your child is learning skills that directly support trauma-informed care. Each module helps children build resilience, feel safe and manage emotions in a way that's simple and easy to use every day.

- **Meet Your Brain** – Helps children understand what happens in their brain during stress and how to calm down.
- **Celebrate** – Builds self-esteem and a strong sense of identity.
- **Appreciate** – Teaches gratitude, helping children's brains focus on safety and positivity.
- **Relate** – Strengthens safe and trusting relationships.
- **Engage** – Develops resilience, purpose and goal-setting – all protective factors for long-term wellbeing.

On The myHappymind Parent App, You Also Have Access To:

- Happy Breathing tools to practise at home
- A mini masterclass for parents on this topic
- myHappymind Places resources to use together as a family

By combining these tools with empathy and connection, you can give your child the strong foundation they need to feel safe, supported, and ready to thrive.



If you haven't already, download the parent app to access the resources by scanning the QR code below...



YOU WILL NEED THIS AUTHENTICATION CODE TO SIGN UP



**If you have any questions, contact us at
hello@myhappymind.org or 01625 447547.**

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