Embedding Trauma Informed Practice in Schools and Public Services.

Author: Jane Pepa Fellowship: 2020



the CHURCHILL fellowship

Image on page 1 the NYC sculpture on 6th Avenues and 55th called ‘listen’ created to encourage passersby to reflect (Photo credit Author)

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1. Acknowledgments

I cannot thank enough the Churchill Fellowship for this opportunity, although my travels have predominantly been 4 years in the making, due to the impact of the pandemic and work restrictions, I have had the opportunity to complete some hybrid work, deepen my understanding of Trauma, Attachment and ACES, change my career to align with my research and eventually complete visits in Norway and the USA, supported by the Fellowship throughout.

I must also acknowledge the support of the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership, giving me the opportunity to take the time to visit the USA and interweave my learning around the training.

This report would not be able to have been written without some of the wonderful people I have met along the way, the support of the team at the John Jay Research team, Research and Evaluation Center John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, the team at Center for Youth Wellness, a program of Safe & Sound and the team at the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress and CTIPP Campaign for Trauma Informed Policy and Practice.

My thanks go out to all those who shared their time and insights with me but specifically I would like to thank……

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And lastly but by no means least I have to thank my family who have been behind me throughout this journey with love and support.

2. About the author

I became a teacher in 2001 in South Preston and throughout my 20+ year career as a teacher I realised I wanted to understand more about why children were falling out of the system. After 5 years as a Head of Year and unable to stop the permanent exclusion of one of my pupils, I felt I needed to work with more challenging pupils behaviourally. I changed jobs and went to work in a PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) in Chorley, during this period our family life changed dramatically, I became pregnant with my second child and my 10-year-old son was diagnosed with Epilepsy.

Throughout this period my coping mechanism was to go into hyperdrive trying to understand neurological and physiological behaviours, I read books on psychology and anything I could find on Frontal Lobe Epilepsy. What I found was not only helping me understand what was happening to my son but was also developing my teaching skills and deepening my understanding of the children I was supporting within school.

I moved to Blackpool and started running a Key Stage 4 PRU as an Assistant Head, this was a steep learning curve as we navigated trying to develop a curriculum during austerity, a rapidly deteriorating building, redundancies and an acute realisation that issues with the brain and mind in children are far more likely to develop where children live in unsettled environments.

In 2013 we moved to Manchester as a family and I went back into mainstream teaching, in the hope I could change outcomes and develop systems to support children with

ACES, Trauma and Attachment earlier, I very quickly realised that in that, and the following school, education had not moved on it had become even more ostracising for these pupils. Especially for my son, which truly broke my heart and gave me an ikigai to change outcomes for children no matter their start in life.

3 Years later I left and went to work in Liverpool, firstly as a Deputy Head, then 5 years as a Head of a Special School. During this period, I started to work for Liverpool Local Authority, delivering training in Health and Wellbeing for staff and parental training in Trauma and Attachment. I steadily deepened my understanding of Trauma, Attachment, ACES, the Brain and the Gut, Sleep, Mindfulness, Circadian Rhythms and used this to gain my NPQEL supporting primaries, specials, and secondaries across Liverpool.

Often throughout my career I have seen the prevalence of a history of Domestic Violence, Trauma, Attachment and ACES on the impact of the individuals mental health, increase risk of violence, aggression, coercive behaviour, carrying of weapons and incarceration, I've seen first-hand how this pipe-line of school to prison can be perpetuated and accelerated through educational exclusion and I've seen where it can be diverted with connection, hope, understanding, compassion and belonging.

In September 2022 I ended my teaching career, proud of my school and that I was leaving it in safe hands. I began a new chapter delivering Trauma Informed Practice first in Bracknell and Liverpool. Becoming the education lead for Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership across all the five broughs of Merseyside. More recently I've started PhD with John Moore's University in embedding Trauma Informed Practice in schools and public Services.

3. Executive summary

This report outlines the findings from the online training I completed in Boston (Online), visits to Norway, New York, San Francisco, and San Antonio. Although the online training and the visits have been over a number of years, they share a collective theme of supporting schools and the community with a Trauma, Attachment and ACES lens.

Within this paper I explore the reasons for researching the community-based interventions and how they are impacting on their local communities, how they are funded and recruit staff. I will share insights in to how they work with or without police to reduce violence and heal the community from Trauma and shift the perspective towards resilience.

We know that embedding Trauma Informed Practice can support individuals with complex needs, but it also supports the whole community from the people it employs to the people it serves.

Key Findings of TIP (Trauma Informed Practice)

- How creating schools and community buy in leads to greater resilience and tolerance to stress and challenges
- Trauma Informed Policies and Practices supports a sense of safety and security with the individuals they serve and employees.
- Greater employee satisfaction which reduces rates of turnover of staff
- Work environments conducive to TIP community and teamwork improve outcomes for all
- Improved collaboration and communication
- The reduction or elimination of silos
- Greater diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Successful systems for feedback and organisational improvement
- Teams with increased creativity, confidence, and problem-solving skills
- Feelings of mutual respect, which increases loyalty and allows open dialogue
- Employees who value the opportunity to work with their organisations relishing training and skills and on-going wellbeing support for themselves

4. Aims & Purpose of the Research

The aim of this research has changed over the past 4 years but always with an underlying theme of embedding Trauma Informed Practice.

The purpose was 3-fold:

- Firstly, to support schools in developing whole school Trauma Informed Practice and therefore reduce exclusions.
- Understand community-based interventions in reducing violence, addressing, minimising, and treating secondary traumatic stress and to meet the needs of the young people with a TI public health approach.
- To develop training for public services to create a wraparound system of support for children and adults who have experience Trauma, Attachment and ACES difficulties.

Over my career I have experienced lots of different measures e.g. Guidance, SEND code of practice, OFSTED, HMI inspections, observations, expectations, and influences driving school behaviours. Over the years, I have witnessed unlawful exclusions and deliberate tactics to drive out unwanted pupils from mainstream, PRU and Special education. Including unlawful exclusions, 'off rolling' which can be defined as 'exercising undue influence over a parent to remove their child from the school under the threat of Permanent Exclusion and encouraging them to choose elective home education or to find another school placement, schools failing to meet specific

conditions before they are reintegrated, all too often this includes pupils with SEN or disability and the school feels they are unable to meet.

I wanted to examine the outcomes for children and staff following whole-school training using a Trauma Informed approach and with an understanding attachment, relationships, physiological responses, neuroscience, the impact of trauma on behaviour and the sensory systems, ACES, and child development unfortunately there remains a paucity of academic evidence which is why I embarked on this journey and my PhD. Instead, I have focused on community-based interventions, therapeutic interventions, and any influence over the education systems for change.

5. Approach & Methodology

I had intended for my entire Fellowship to be based in the USA, starting with for 5 days training at the Cape Cod Institute (funded by my school). As the global pandemic took away my opportunity to travel I undertook a five day training course online with Besel Van de Kolk, looking at the impact of Trauma on the body as I felt as a teacher and leader I was seeing the impact of trauma on behaviour but did not understand how to support the development of practices to meet the needs of individuals.

During the period of not being able to travel I researched Domestic Violence, Paterson's Coercion theory and outcomes for children with a history of DV. With my visit to Norway, I wanted to develop my understanding of the impact of DV, IPV (Intimate Partner Violence) and coercion within school settings and the impact on the education of those involved.

I took to reading extensively on the subject of trauma and healing especially taking on board the work of the Deepest Well *Healing from the long-term effects of childhood adversity* by Dr Nadine Burke Harris which resonated on the connections between adversity, poor health outcomes and the multigenerational legacy of violence, poverty, substance abuse and crime. The Bay Area of San Francisco and Merseyside have much in common. Looking at Trauma, Attachment and ACES from a public health perspective and seeing that support, interventions and TI change does not come about in silos but when the community is able to heal and we know each child is raised by a village so to truly support a child one must support the village, town, city and the region.

In New York and through my work with the Violence Reduction Partnership in Merseyside I was able to make contact with the John Jay Research team who opened up numerous doors across the boroughs and supported organising visits to community-based interventions, resources and projects and including experiencing several spontaneous interactions who weren't scheduled in my research plan.

In San Antonio I attempted to visit numerous provisions, including the university of Houston to see their program for social workers on Trauma Informed Practice, a school I

was informed was an excellent Trauma Informed provision in Fort Worth but the greatest resource and support came from Dallas with a plethora of Trauma Informed Practice, Principles, Frameworks, Organisational Approaches and Evaluation.

6. Trauma Informed Practice in the UK

We know that in Liverpool in a population of 114, 258, International evidence suggests that 1 in 6 adults (aged 18+ years) have experienced 4 or more ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and 61% at least 1 ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) and 9% 4 or more ACES. (ASHTON, M 2024 Stat of Health in the City: Liverpool 2040)

Therefore, in a world where 223 million people carry the burden of trauma and ACE's it's safe to assume that at least some of those people are ones that go to school and live in our communities. The cumulative impact of ACEs, domestic violence and other traumatic experiences are associated with multiple ill-health consequences, academic deficiencies, mental health disorders, and violence across the life course. Of these adults, many of them are left untreated and unaware of how trauma impacts their relationships, workplace performance, and physical health.

Trauma Informed Practice in the UK is not a statutory training like Safeguarding for many institutions, it's not delivered in teaching practice or across Local Authorities, to the people who are trying to meet the needs of individuals with Trauma. To complete a longitudinal study on the impact of trauma informed training on youth violence would require a public health sustained approach and require years of evidence. In doing a meta-analysis of trauma informed training across the UK I was able to find individual delegate evidence however, not the impact on whole school key performance indicators. Many of the training packages were remote or recorded, full day sessions or bespoke for individual staff. Many had high cost to the school settings or were pilots across a small number of schools.

I set out on this Fellowship to identify if community-based interventions and trauma informed practice within those community-based interventions were having an impact on changing outcomes for those communities and how they were reaching the most hard to reach, complex, traumatised individuals and if they were seeing the buy in from schools. Through this report I will discuss Violence Reduction and Trauma hand in hand as violence reduction does not happen without a change in perception.

When staff become trained in assessing, observing and understanding behaviour, they develop understanding of what behaviour communicates and know how that relates to the individuals' readiness, ability to engage and are able to select differentiated strategies to address specific learning gaps. Adapting provisions/institutions to help the most vulnerable and challenging individuals to reengage with services in a collective approach. To create pivotal points of change in behaviour, it is critical to see Trauma and Violence Reduction about human beings, developing personal understanding of trauma, aiding understanding, self-compassion, empathy, compassion for others and influencing policy not just practice.

7. Oslo, Norway the Norwegian Trauma Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies

My visit to the Norwegian Trauma Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies gave me opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the impact of Domestic Violence and IPV (Intimate Partner Violence) on school populations. Carolina shared research on terrors, violence and findings from her studies in schools including coercive behaviour within school settings and the impact on the education of those involved. We discussed Poly-victimisation and the impact on pupil's feelings of desertion and betrayal by adults especially in relation to dismissing absences as truancy. This visit was the first time in 23 years I was not preparing for a new term, it gave me the confidence to challenge myself (including using scooters to get everywhere) and see the opportunity that I could develop my skills as a researcher and start a PhD.



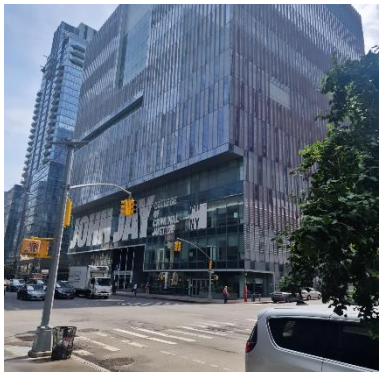


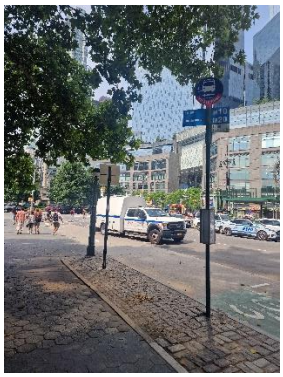
(Above includes from the left my transportation method for getting around Oslo, Sagene Community Centre Church and the Nobel peace centre in Oslo, Photo credit Author)

The following day I was able to able to have lunch with Inga Marte Thorkildsen, opposite the church above, Inga is a former Politician and Schools Minister, she has been trying to embed Trauma Informed Practice in schools across Oslo and was having the same challenges and coming across the same resistance to change that I was experiencing in Merseyside and Bracknell. I found this meeting extremely helpful as we talked at length about the need for policy change and buy in from senior staff.

8.New York

John Jay Research Team

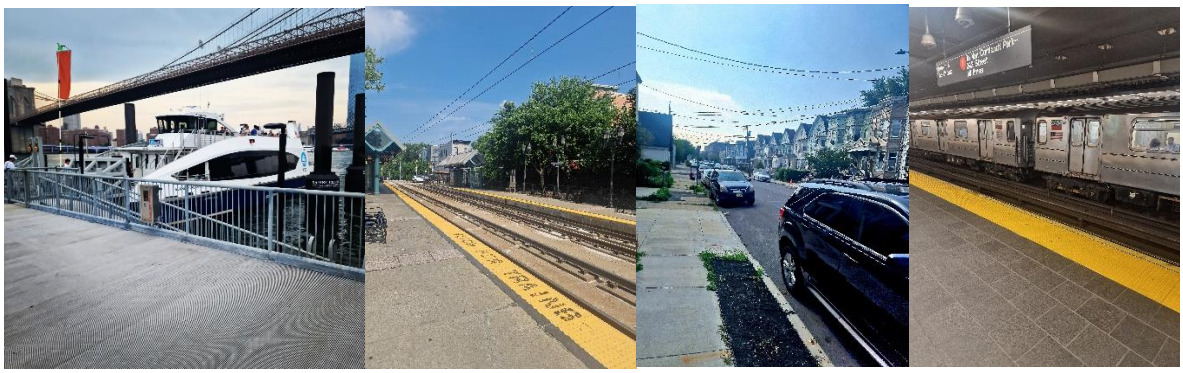


(From the left The John Jay College of Criminal Justice, the research team at John Jay (Photo Credit Rebecca Balletto) and Central Park, Photo Credit Author)

My first day of research in New York took me to meet the team at Research and Evaluation Center John Jay College of Criminal Justice, not that far away from Central Park. I cannot thank Becky and Jeff enough for their support in opening up opportunites

to visit interventions and community based violence reduction, promoting safety and peace in the communities.



(From the left New York Ferry, New Jersey Light Rail, New Jersey Street New York Subway, Photo Credit Author)

During my time in each of the three regions I was going to visit I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances of life in each area. For the 2 weeks I was in New York I decided to stay in New Jersey and travel around by Light Rail, Path Train, Subway and Ferry. Working in Merseyside with it's five boroughs and the 5 boroughs of New York, I was curious about the the different challenges they faced and how their interventions overlapped or met the needs of their community bespokely.

The John Jay had completed research on whether communities can ensure the health and security of residents without depending on law enforcement, and include strategies focusing on the "root causes" of violence this we discussed at length and they were interested to know how the Violence Reducation parternships or units function in the UK.

We discussed funding and the limitations we all face with yearly drop offs of funding therefore struggling to retain key staff who may have worked tremendously hard to build rapport and trust in community-based programs, staffed by familiar and credible messengers with often complex traumatised individuals but require long term contracts and job security. We shared the deep frustrations and collective understanding that community outreach staff must be relatable to the population of vulnerable youth and young adults most at risk for violence involvement individuals who are marginalised, "hard to reach," and at the highest risk for negative health outcomes are also likely to be chronically alienated, disconnected, and distrustful of traditional structures and systems of support[1] however, we are also acutley aware that the focus can changes for different political influences, yet the most effective methods for preventing violence could take years to reach their maximum effect.

We discussed youth interventions, cure violence programmes, including opening up opportunites for even small amount of travel with targeted youth workers 'Violence Interupters' for some individuals who have never been out of the small radius of their block to see more proseperous/affluent areas of New York, these 'Violoence interuptors give them credible messages and act as life coaches. This had been my experience in

[1] (Advance Peace n.d. a; Boag-Munroe and Evangelou 2012)

teaching, that often children had been marginalised by their small radius of knowledge. DYCD Interventions that support second time around parenting classes for grandparents now in custody of the grandchildren. School based interventions, community outreach, the harmful effects of the justical process, how long adolences can be incarceted without a court date, meeting the needs of the post incarceration community, including football, based interventions and how they had researched the cost-efficient reductions in violence and the long term impact of each.

9. Man Up
Brooklyn

My next visit took me to Brooklyn to visit A.T. the founder of Man Up Inc a 'real' street community based none-for-profit organisation delivering after school, youth, summer day, employment readiness, job development, housing, mentorship, athletics, anti-gun violence and advocacy programmes. **Man Up**'s mission is to serve urban neighbourhoods as a **M**ulti cultural, social services **A**gency for **N**eigbourhood improvement and for the complete **U**nderstanding of emergency **P**reparedness! They state - We are committed to turning our outrage into action!.



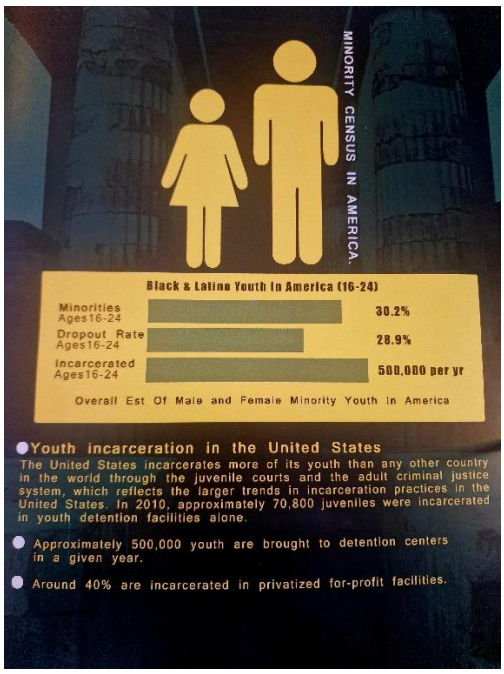


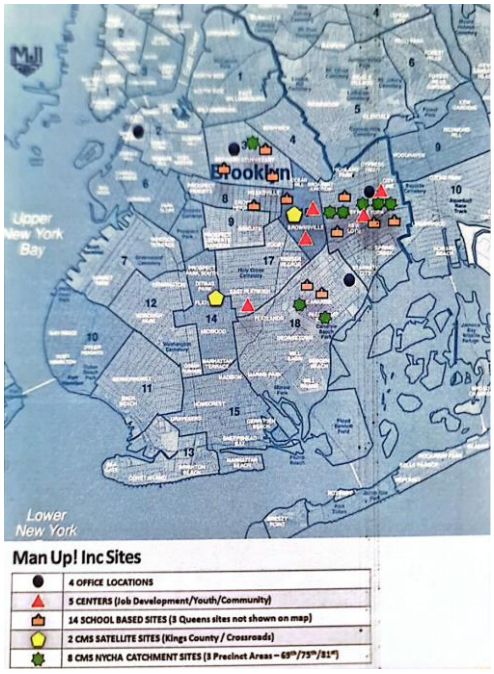
(From the left Man Up Inc Headquarters Brooklyn, the Man Up bus, A.T. Mitchell and Jane Pepa, Photo Credit Author)

Andre T Mitchell (A.T.) is the founder and CEO of Man Up Inc (a Cure Violence organisation in NYC), the first New York City Gun Violence Prevention Csar and Co-Chair and of the Gun Violence Prevntion Task Force.
I was privaledged to meet him and discuss the Man Up services, interventions and the Pillars:

- Cultural youth
- Employment services
- Anti violence
- Fatherhood engagement
- Sports
- Music and Cultural Arts
- Community Advocacy
- Emergency Care for troubled teens

A.T. shared the minority census data on youth incarceration data highlighting the disparties for Black and Latino youth in America.





(From the left Man Up Inc data on minority census information, the Man Up Inc sites shared with Jane Pepa, Photo Credit Man Up Inc Agency Package)

Man Up operate out of several locations from school based interventions, job development centres, business and youth training centres, hospitals, juvenile detantion centres and universities. There is also Wo/Man Up! A sisterhood of social diplomats innitiative. They have vans like the one above that go out into the community they also have cars including the HOOD WATCH. These serve to deliver neighbour hood interventions should the community need direct interventions to reduce down possible post trauma retaliation.

Non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic adolescents reported higher levels of PV (poly-vicitimisation) and trauma-related mental health symptoms. Recent violence was more common among African American youth (57%) compared to adolescents who identified as Latino (43%), White (33%), or other racial/ethnic groups (33%)[2]

We talked about how the research reveals that traumatic experiences disproportionately affect minority youth. How these experiences including historical/generational trauma, immigration and acculturation stressors, experiences of discrimination, family violence, and community violence and impact on their potential, how his interventions are trying to build a better and safer community, as A.T. puts it one neighbourhood at a time, creating 'Credible Peers' and violence intruption and fighting crime for public safety.

These populations face higher rates of psychosocial disparities such as poverty, lack of education, barriers to health and mental health services, and exposure to multiple

[2] Pumariega AJ, Jo Y, Beck B, Rahmani M. Trauma and US Minority Children and Youth. Curr Psychiatry Rep. 2022 Apr;24(4):285-295. doi: 10.1007/s11920-022-01336-1. Epub 2022 Mar 14. PMID: 35286562; PMCID: PMC8918907.

stressors such as discrimination, racism, community violence exposure, and immigration and acculturation stresses therefore the Man Up pillars are trying to address each area to impact on reconnection, opportunity, finacial independence, self esteem and entrepreneurship. One of the interventions I looked at was East Coast Tacos, Man Up and DAPS food production facility in New York encouraging people to apply and explore their expertise in the kitchen, taking them right through the process of set up and production.

The multiple stressors above are resulting in increasing rates of mental health morbidity, such as depression, suicidality, stress-related disorders, school disciplinary actions, incarceration, and placement in state custody. However, A.T. sees these individuals who may have historically experienced high levels of violence can also be individuals who can act as 'credible messengers' using their lived experience and being 'credible peers' at Man Up, they have an intensive training programme in crisis intervention, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, social work and case management using public health protocols that can impact positively on the outcomes of their neighbourhoods.

In 2022 homicides and shootings in Brooklyn had dropped from a peak in 2020, Shooting by 31% and Homicides by 21%. *A study from the John Jay Research team found that comparing South Bronx and East New York to similar precincts that did not implement Care Violence programmes (CVP) found the presence of the of the program was asscoiated with a greater decline in pro violence norms over time.* [3]

Serious disputes 33% (No CVP) in comparison to 12% (CVP)
Gun Injuries in comparision between East New York (No CVP) fell 50% in Flat Bush Brooklyn (CVP)

When I arrived back at my apartment and switched on the television the first person that appeared on the screen was the one I'd just been chatting to, following an incident that had happened in NYC on the week of my arrival A.T. was being interviewed by CBS news on how they had been supporting the community following neighbourhood tensions after the brutal murder of a woman.

10. Brooklyn
Abdul Nasser Rad Campaign Zero

Another very hot sunny day in Brooklyn brought me to Dumbo to meet Abdul for a coffee, Abdul Nasser Rad is Managing Director, Research & Data at Campaign Zero and an applied researcher focused on the political sociology of US criminal legal systems. Abdul had joined Campaign Zero from the New York City Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) where he was responsible for research and data initiatives for the Police Reform and Reinvention Implementation Taskforce, Office of Neighborhood Safety, Case Processing, and Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes. He's aslo completing his PhD at Oxford in Sociology.

[3] Cure Violence Programs in NYC - Data Team https://council.nyc.gov/data/cure/.

Since it launch in August 2015 Campaign Zero has designed and launched research and advocacy projects that have defined their respective field they work as a research-based platform to move to an understanding of public safety beyond policing. Focusing on:

- Public Safety Beyond Policing
- Shrink the Reliance and Power of the Police
- End Mass Incarceration
- Fundamental Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency
- Direct Support & Advocacy

Over 1,000 people are killed by police every year in America. On July 6th Whilst I was in the US Soyna Massey who had called the police to report a suspected prowler outside her home was shot dead by the police officer who had come to investigate, the situation had escalated quickly when Sonya Massey approached her stove to tend to a pot of boiling water. Campaign zero call on local, state, and federal lawmakers to take immediate action to adopt data-driven policy solutions to end the violence and hold police accountable.

"Shift existing resources from police to instead hire civilian first responders, conflict de-escalators, and violence interrupters from underrepresented communities."[4]



(From the left the view of Brooklyn Bridge from Dumbo, the building where Abdul let me work for the day and the central working space inside Photo Credit Author)

Abdul and I discussed community based interventions including MAP facilitators, neighbourhood Stat meetings and how they are getting to the heart of community based greavences and able to hold the police and Local Authorites to account, the prevalence of Domestic Abuse in the US police force and post covid the increase in violence and gun crime affecting the 5 boroughs.

Abdul explained that 200 million dollars was distributed across 15 housing authorities to increase job training, youth services, housing and healthcare but that more recently

[4] DeRay Mckesson Campaign Zero

the Mayor had been chanelling more funding resources into policing. Abdul explained about the Denver (STAR) Support Team Assisted Response research pilot program that paired medics and clinicians in a van to respond to disorderly conduct, trespassing and drug use and how Denver successfully sent mental health professionals, not police, to hundreds of calls.

We discussed the crucial roles of Outreach Workers (both in NY and Merseyside) and he explained Violence Interuptors are often employed from local communities (many have been fromerly incarcerated and having belonged to street gangs) working to discourage and denormalise violence. He explained the CMS (Crisis management system) was launched 2013 to deliver a multi agency approach to reduce gun violence in NYC. In 2023 64 million dollars was invested in CMS and Cure Violence programs.



(Image from the Campaign zero website Photo Credit Campaign Zero)

Unfortunatley although I think Abdul and I could talk until the cows come home, he had another meeting to get to, we have stayed in touch and have planned repeated online meetings.

11. Queens
Life Camp Inc

I had the honour of meeting Erica, AU and Kheperah at Life Camp Inc. I will be forever grateful for the time and opportunity to learn from their interventions. They state - A better world starts with a better neighborhood. Life Camp Inc (Love Ignites Freedom thru Education) was founded in April 2002 by Erica Ford and they ar[5]e one of the leading violence prevention and intervention organisations in America.

"Everyday people are walking around infected with the disease of violence. And the trauma - the catalyst for this disease - often goes unaddressed. It's time to MAKE PEACE A LIFESTYLE."
Erica Ford

[5] *About LIFE Camp*, https://www.peaceisalifestyle.com/about-1.

Life camp provides youth and families that have been impacted by violence the useful tools they need to stay in school and out of the the criminal justice system. They offer workforce training, conflict mediation, a hospital responder programme, legal aid, theraputic services (I was privaledged to experience this), arts and cultural interventions, youth leadership and peace keepers and many more services. They have a fleet of all orange vehicles they can send out including the PEACE BUS. They use an app called the Citizen App to monitor the community area for acts of violence or social unrest.

Erica and I discussed issues in Chicago and the difference when communities work collectively to impact change and where there is not a collective response to violence. She explains that resilience is sustainability's precursor - a society's adaptation of the capacity to overcome its foremost social-economic threats, be they social, economic, and/or environmental. A resilient Southeast Queens is one where violence is suppressed, and the lifestyle that causes it is transcended through social and economic development led by an alliance of local stakeholders.



(image from the Life Camp Inc Website Photo Credit Life Camp Inc.)

Kheprah and I spent time discussing psychological safety and sensory interventions post a traumatic event using conventional therapeutic and wellness services that promote self-care and healing from the mental and emotional impact of trauma. We shared concerns over the levels of diagnosis of conditions in a population with histories of Trauma, Attachment and ACES are prevlalent. Concerns over young people's experience of being out of the education system, their vulnerability to gangs and the impact of domestic violence on outcomes for children.

AU explained about the credible messengers and the Violence Intervention and Prevention Specialists (VIPS) who are the frontline workers who canvass the communities daily, and monitoring the app, mediating conflicts and de-escalating gun violence, while I was there they went out on a call in one of their fleet of orange vehicles. Their mentoring programme for youth participants, is to prevent them from entering the school-to-prison pipeline. They also distribute educational and informative materials to community members and partners. We discussed gun crime v's knife crime and the impact on society.

Their approach incorporates:

Reducing Gun Violence
Developing teens and young adults into peer leaders by providing positive alternatives to violence.

Creating Connections
Building partnerships between community stakeholders to address youth violence as a public health issue.

Building Healthy Families
Providing an array of services that address the mental, physical, and emotional wellness needs of parents and families impacted by the trauma of gun violence.

Developing Leaders
Creating an evidence-based service model that will provide community stakeholders with the necessary skills and resources to effectively implement positive change within themselves and within their own communities.

Scaling up Results
Creating replicable violence intervention models that can be implemented nationwide.

They state:
Violence is a public health crisis, and we need to heal our whole community from the ground up. They provide their community with a wide range of Wraparound Services and Educational Opportunities. They have regular programming at the I LOVE MY LIFE Center and through the Peacemobile. Their programs and special events include I LOVE MY LIFE Days, Financial Literacy Classes, Wealth Building Courses, Peace Week, Census Outreach, Behavioral Management Courses, Youth WorkForce Programs, Emergency Work Programs, Technology Learning Lab, among others. [6]

During my time at Life Camp I was immensely priviledged to be given a tour of the peacebus and experience some of the interventions they use to support the reduction of dysregulation. I was in awe of the amazing capacity of this mobile intervention to fulfil mutliple roles in supporting communities. Not to mention the fact that it has the capacity to expland in the middle and create a space large enough to deliver yoga sessions.

It includes a full working kitchen and fire place, a space for eating giving the experience of being in their a homely safe space. In their kitchen they concentrate on creating healthly food, we discussed at length Ultra Processed Food and the impact it was having on communities in food poverty. In the space with the sofas they had foot massagers, their interventions are focused on healing the whole self. In a separate room they had a quite, peaceful intervention area for theraputic interventions (see the picture below with the large singing bowl) again this room had multiple purposes depending on need allowing either quiet time, therapy or games, at the back of the bus was a recording booth and recording equipment. We discussed at length the need for creative space and opportunity to heal from trauma. It is a phenominal intervention for communities, offering a mobile safe space for individuals and families who may have experienced trauma and at times it also works as a community shield.

[6] LIFE CAMP - PEACE IS A LIFESTYLE https://www.peaceisalifestyle.com/.



(From the left Jane Pepa, Erica Ford and Kherperah Kearse Photo Credit Author)





(Pictures from inside the Peacebus Photo Credit Author)





(Pictures from inside and outside the Peacebus Photo Credit Author)

The visit to the Life Camp Inc became even more relevant post the tragedy in Southport. We know that in times of adversity, individuals may develop deep fears and a sense of mistrust for organisations/institutions, they can be both real and perceived. These feelings of betrayal can make individuals more vulnerable to misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories.

The peace bus is crucial evidence that instead building solidarity, community, resilience and power through collective action is critical when confronting collective trauma and ending the self-perpetuating cycles of disturbance and division that often result therafter.

12. San Francisco

Safe and Sound & the Center for Youth Wellness







(Pictures from outside and inside the Safe and Sound Building and the Centre for Youth Wellness Photo Credit Author)

After 2 weeks in New York in temperatures over 100 degrees on public transport, San Francisco was welcome respite (and I rented a car), having read extensively on the interventions by Dr Nadine Burke Harris at the Center for Youthwellness I was so excited to learn about the programmes and interventions they were using. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to discuss parenting programmes, I cannot thank Gabriela enough for the resources she shared that have already been put to good use in writing a

TI parenting programme for Merseyside. Unfortunatlely Gagan was unable to meet me during my visit due to an injury but Linda showed me around the provision at the famous Safe and Sound fire house and had a wealth of knowledge to share.



(Pictures from inside the Safe and Sound Building Photo Credit Author)

I was given a tour of the building and was able to see the different types of rooms for different age groups (above) and different theraputic interventions, (Bottom right) they're collective reception (including clothing/books/community collections for families) their room at the back (bottom left) with outdoor access for very small groups of children whilst family mediation happens. Although this room has the feel of a primary school setting they use this room for all age groups but only in small numbers 1-3 and dependant on family dynamic.



(Pictures from inside the Safe and Sound Building Photo Credit Author)

Safe and Sound is partly funded by the state through family court referrals and partly funded by donations. The dynamics of families that they work with in San Francisco have changed over the last fifty years and they have been working to pioneer an approach to prevent and reduce the impact of childhood abuse, neglect, and trauma.

Child abuse and neglect, and the trauma they can cause, are complex problems with far-reaching consequences to individuals, communities, and society as a whole. Their spaces and rooms are designed to support children and adults through the theraputic process together, healing the whole family. They state: Change happens when we recognise that child abuse and neglect are not someone else's problems.

Linda and I discussed limitations with funding, coming back to yearly funding streams and the inability to retain quality staff without ongoing sustainble funding. Linda explained about the the cycle of initiatives due to the San Francisco Ballot and the latest buzz intervention not supporting long term public health approaches.

Research shows that

- Traumatised children are 77% more likely to require special education as well as have higher rates of school absenteeism and poorer academic performance.
- Traumatised children are 59% more likely to be arrested as juveniles, and 28% more likely to have an adult criminal record, making it more difficult to find employment.
- Adolescent victims of child abuse are 200% more likely to be unemployed as adults and are more likely to receive public assistance.
- Victims of trauma have 21% higher long-term healthcare costs, a higher incidence of chronic health problems, mental health issues, and substance abuse throughout adulthood.

Staff at safe and sound are from a variety of backgrounds in social care, education, biofeedback, billigual theraputic care, mental health specialists, family advocacy etc. they co-create a family and child well-being system, in partnership with communities, to keep children and families safely together. Often when families can come through the court system this can increase the complexities and challenges of mediation and healing but they keep coming back to focusing on the child.

I've supported many schools and provisions across my career and you often get a feel as soon as you walk through the door, either you can feel the tension, the adreneline the staff and pupils are giving off or you can feel the calm. Whilst I was there interventions and fmaily groups were taking place however this was calm, this was safe, this was warm.

They state how they get there together is with the following:

- Working across the generations – to empower children, enable parents and support families
- Ensure all families have access – to the relationship, resources and nurture that can protect and heal them
- Enagege more people across communities – across systems and societies to co-create change
- Use data and evidence to innovate – creating programmes to improve outcomes [7]

[7] *Our Approach - Safe & Sound*, https://safeandsound.org/what-we-do/our-approach/.



(Picture inside the Safe and Sound building in the staff room Photo credit Author)

We also discussed the drug, homelessness, poverty and migration problems in San Francisco, but this was not a problem only saw in San Francisco, I came across these issues everywhere throughout my stay, I was struck by the very small child (3or 4yrs old) clinging to his mothers shirt as they interwove the trucks and cars at the junction of a highway trying to sell fruit to the passing cars.

During my stay in the Bay Area the Governor had called for the removal of homelessness encampments across California. In the centre of San Fancisco these encampments had taken over large parts of the city centre, car parks and the sides of streets. Whilst I was driving through, trying to park I realised I couldn't get even down one of the streets. It was obvious how much Trauma these individuals were living with and without carefully constructed interventions the systems or removal without support, would only perpetuate structural violence. The encampment resolution teams were out in force supported by a few SF homeless outreach team but I fear by reinforcing systemic oppression the problems of homelessness, drug issues and encampments would just move to another location.

This feeling was reinforced by the political rhetoric being used about how they would make living on the street an unpleasant experience, making the assumption this was a choice of lifestyle.

13. San Antonio/Dallas and Houston

Karissa M. Luckett Center for Youth Wellness a Programme of Safe and Sound

I am forever endebted to Karissa for her support thoughtout the Fellowship, she has provided me with connections, opportunites, resources, research and Trauma Informed Practices and frameworks. I was hoping to meet in person and visit Dallas but by the time I got to the last 4 days of my trip I was exhausted from differnet times zones, multiple heatwaves and lack of gluten free food. Karissa and I have remained in contact online and she has been extremely supportive in the creation and implementaion of Trauma Informed assessment tools, interventions and the evaluation of the training across Merseyside. Through her support since returning to the UK I have been able to create resources for the public services across Merseyside.

Campaign for Trauma Informed Policy and Practice

I did participate in a meeting with CTIPP Campaign for Trauma Informed Policy and Practice in schools looking at the training and skills of staff, Trauma Informed Policies and Practices, on school and district level including community buy-in with Trauma Informed Practice and reflections on learning, also discussing information regarding the house bills that are driving change.

Texas Fort Worth John T Elementary

John T Elementary moved towards a Trauma-Informed Transformation due to the issues they were facing in children walking out of classes, violence in the classrooms: In 2017, the Superintendent mandated a trauma-informed district-wide initiative. These schools focused their first 5 days on relationship-building and teaching emotional regulation. This also included teaching staff and administators having a full day of training run by specialists, this continued with several refresher training sessions throughout the year, and weekly emails with relevant tips.

At least 5 adults greet students creating a welcoming atmosphere. They participate in a ‘morning circle’ this is to practice self-regulation and build connection. The school includes offers of free water and snacks, each classroom has a calm corner, the school has a a wellness room, and the opportunity of physical activity and movement breaks built in throughout the day. There is a drive to encouraged teachers to not to remove recess as a punishment. They have self-regulation posters that line the hallways. In contrast to the traditional methods of discipline, they chose to teach students what they could have done, including opportunities to re-do and apologise, reinforcing self-regulation and school suspensions are a last resort.

Following the introduction of TIP in the school year 2017-2018, suspensions had decreased from an average of 445 a year to just 19 and for the first time they passed their state exams, teacher retention dramatically increased, and the school itself

became a calmer place to learn. I did try to visit this school during my visit but was unable to make contact with staff and could not find evidence of continuing impact.

Nanakuli-Waianae complex
We discussed the finding from Trauma Informed education changes in the culture of the school, creating tiers of Trauma Aware and Trauma Skilled administration and staff to create social conriectiveness, provide concrete support in times of need, teach social and emotional competence, and promote resilience, attachment and belonging, capability, and self-empowerment and shift from a disciplinary to relationship orientated inclusionary practices.

As such they had seen a reduction in the suspension and absenteeism rates, bullying and harrasment levels reduced and a 10% increase in graduation and early college enrollment together with improvements in teacher retention rates.

The pilot programme goal of the pilot program was to replicate the results of the Nanakuli-Waianae complex area trauma-informed education program throughout all schools in the Castle, Kailua, and Kalaheo complex areas, including elementary, intermediate, and high schools, and pre-kindergarten programs that are part of the elementary school. The pilot program was set to finish on the 30th June 2024.

Their findings had common elements of evidence included for a truly Trauma informed practice in schools to have:

- Training to develop understanding of Trauma, Neurology, Kindness
- Trauma Informed Policies that support self-awareness, self regulation and basic safety needs
- Physicological safety with buy in from SLT, demonstrated and modeled from the top
- Leadership having conversations and processes that continue to evolve
- Behaviour is seen as communication and unmet need rather than an act of defiance
- Strong relationships with key staff, measures are in place to repair harm
- Community buy in with community initiative to reinforce Trauma based solutions.
- Punishment without oportunity for restoration did not exist

None of this can come in a one size fits all, they need to be adapted to be throughout the provision itself and have buy in from all the levels of school staff and community. They have to look at the consistency of staff and the workforce across the span of a childs time in school. Some State Education Agencies and State Departments are looking at what makes a Trauma Informed Inclusive Classroom and the posible challenges. The Virginia Department for Education had looked at how to phase in TI education, what inclusive classrooms are and TI best practice. In Massachusettes the department of elementary and secondary education looked at the benefits of inclusive programmes including training, ideas for universal design, positive behaviour

intervention and support and social emotional learning. Specifically looking at structures, policies and procedures to create more inclusivity and training across Pensilvania school environment, including families, communities and how to make individuals valued members of the student community.[8]

At the federal level whilst I was in America the Supporting Trauma-Informed Education Practices Act (Hayes) brought forward in order to:

- "Develop or improve prevention, screening, referral, and treatment and support services to students"
- Implement schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports, or other traumainformed models of support
- Provide professional development to teachers, teacher assistants, school leaders, specialised instructional support personnel, and mental health professionals
- Engage with families and communities to increase awareness of child and youth trauma. [9]

Unfortunatley this bill is unlikely to move forward in this calender year due to the elections taking place in America in November, it's introduction however, shows that this is a movement forwards.

Some of the other examples of legilation include:
Texas House Bill 4111
Mandates specialised trauma-informed workforce training to enhance access to holistic, high-quality, trauma-informed services and supports for those who participate in the state's Medicaid managed care program.

U.S. House Bill 1405 & Senate Bill 670
Enhances trauma-informed training for the workforce that engages with human trafficking to facilitate providing compassionate, comprehensive support, and also implements formal supervision structures as well as knowledge-building requirements regarding building professional resiliency while mitigating the impact of occupational hazards such as vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout.

Hawaii House Bill 850
Establishes the Trauma-Informed Education Pilot Program, focusing on mental health education for all who interface with the school environment, and implementing trauma-informed strategies within the school system as backed by the success of similar prior initiatives to foster supportive, trauma-responsive schools and communities.

Nevada Assembly Bill 285

[8] Pennsylvania School System Optimized Inclusive Practices in Pennsylvania Framework https://www.pattan.net/assets/PaTTAN/00/005ae2a0-c5ae-4233-809c-439b7dfb3dbd.pdf
[9] Hayes Introduces Bill to Bolster Mental Health Services in Schools | Press Releases | Congresswoman Jahana Hayes (house.gov)

Proposes amendments to public school disciplinary standards, mandating the creation of progressive discipline plans that incorporate restorative justice, alternative approaches to conflict resolution and de-escalation, and social-emotional learning interventions, alongside comprehensive training for educational staff on multi-tiered support systems, positive behavioral interventions and supports, trauma-informed practices, collaboration among school staff and community partners, and effective responses to trauma and chronic stress, aiming to positively enhance school climate for all who interface with the school system.

This meeting of individuals across Teacher, State Departmental staff and CTIPP staff all trying to embed TI practice was really helpful in understanding the collective challenges, where other people are at in their embeding of trauma informed practice, how we all need to start at the top with quality training and the take time to build connection with complex individuals as this can pay dividends. We shared resources and discussed limitations of how do we ensure that all levels from state systems and programs and communities are supporting needs with a TI lens, using the same language and same foundation of knowledge. This meeting allowed me to really focus on how do we work collaboratively, not in silos and how we weave all that support together, I really liked Michelle Walters take on it, 'it should be woven into the fabric of the blanket that covers us in all the work that we do'

Conclusion

Although this journey to complete my Fellowship has been over 4 years in the making and the purposes of my visit have changed to a degree over the last 4 years. What I have found is that my work, my studies and my IKIGAI have all come together, in the words of Michelle, they've interwoven.

I wanted to change outcomes for children in schools, starting off with the online training with Besel Van de Kolk on Trauma and the body in 2021, but the problem isn't individual schools, it's the systems, the lack of awareness of what Trauma is, the policies, the stakeholders, the mutli-agency partners etc. My empirical observations and research lead me to visit Norway 2022, this coincided with changes in my career focusing on the delivery of training to embed Trauma Informed Practice, and my perspective. When I left teaching I remember saying to a collegue, in this school I can only support 68 pupils at a time, what if I could support 68 teachers or 68 schools. Now I deliver Trauma Informed Practice Training all over Merseyside by Jan 2025 we will have supported over 3000+ staff in public service across the five boroughs. On all of my visits on this trip I have met individuals with a passion for supporting the public health approach to Trauma Informed Care/Practice and the knowledge that we cannot do it alone. This Fellowship has culminated for me in a deeper understanding of what foundations need to be in place for true Trauma Informed Practice.

Whether we call it Violence Reduction, Trauma Informed Practice or Community Peace Interventions, it is integral that we empower whomever is working in the community and with the community with the tools to understand Trauma from the physiological,

neurological and potentially system transformational level if we are to stop the transmission of intergenerational trauma and retraumisation of individuals.

We cannot heal the trauma of individuals with only one perspective, we have to deal the whole person which incorporates all of their lives. School plays a large part in that healing process however, it is only a small part of the over all life span of the population. Trauma Informed community based interventions, community based training and community lead support, done **with** individuals not **to**, will have a much greater chance of sustaining support, reducing violence and healing from Trauma.

Recommendations



(Image of MVRP's collective TIPT Source Author)

All services need a Trauma, Attachment and ACES Informed level of understanding, this training must iincorporate neuroscience, physiology, the importance of play and attachment, conflict resolution and de-escalisation techniques, if the knowledge, understanding and langusge used is the same organisations can be independent in their cultures, practices and commitments.

All servies must understand vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and retraumatisation

There has to be buy in from all levels e.g. schools, stakeholders, local authorities, government, we cannot work in silos

There has to be collective TI shared language including understand of behaviour and body language and restorative practice

Community based interventions need to be lead by credible individuals with a deep understanding of TIP



(Image of MVRP's 6 TIPT principles Source Author)

These 6 Trauma Informed Principles form the key ingredients in embedding TIP and preventing secondary traumatic stress in staff and the populations they serve.

Trauma Informed Practice cannot be a tick box, it needs to provide guidance on how trauma can affect people's experience of services. Of what can be done to to reduce traumatisation at every level of an organisation. Our interactions with everyone matter as do our interactions with each other.

"I've learned that people will forget what you have said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Maya Angelou

Trauma informed practice includes creating physical and sensory enviornments that are accesible, welcoming, inclusive and with the potential to heal, we have to be aware of potential trauma reminders and create culturally and linguistically resonsive environments to the people and communities they serve.

Create relational environments includes creating one that is caring, respectful, empowering and transparent, striving for emotional safety and flexible and responsive to an individuals or families need.

Becoming a TI organisation is a long term, tranformative process that requires education, thoughtfulness, purposeful planning and sufficient resources and planning. It requires organisations to look at these:

- Organisational commitment and infrastructure
- Staff support and supervision

- Relational environmental understanding from a physical and sensory perspective
- Understanding of the intake (first contact) of the community/clients
- Clear, accessible information about what services are on offer and how
- Community partnerships
- Feedback and evaluation

The challenges we face in supporting the community with TI practice require a multifaceted approach that emphasises connection, solidarity, and accountability. If we can come together to address these issues collectively, we can work toward a more just and equitable society.

Trauma Informed Practice promotes:

1. **Connection**: it encourages open dialogue and collaboration to bridge divides and foster understanding.
2. **Empowers Communities**: Supporting grassroots movements and community organising to demand systemic change and meet the needs of that community.
3. **Holds Institutions Accountable**: Advocating for transparency, policy reforms, and diverse representation in decision-making.
4. **Educates and Raises Awareness:** Promoting critical thinking and media literacy to combat misinformation and disinformation.

By focusing on these strategies, we can create an environment where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable future. More recently it has become undeniable that engaging in brave conversations about delicate subjects has become increasing challenging, while we are recovering from, finding significance in and reshaping our shared historical and ongoing emotional wounds we have to remember that together we are stronger, in peace and with a collective voice. In the words of A.T. We are committed to turning our outrage into action!

Collective trauma in the context of emotional dysregulation can bring us to lose sight of one another's humanity, this can then manifest as hypervigilance and heightened sensitivity. When we fee unsafe, these feeling can perpetuate reactivity rather than actively listening, within the context of what we are seeing happen right now we can see an increase in conflict within communities and the world.

"Everyday people are walking around infected with the disease of violence. And the trauma - the catalyst for this disease - often goes unaddressed. It's time to MAKE PEACE A LIFESTYLE."
Erica Ford